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Transforming Neighborhoods, Changing Communities:

Collective agency and rights in a new era of Urban Redevelopment in

Washington, DC

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Transforming Neighborhoods, Changing Communities:

Collective agency and rights in a new era of Urban Redevelopment in

Washington, DC

By

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To my parents and brother,

Who have cheered me on inexhaustibly

and taught me the importance of unexpected journeys…

And the rewards at the top

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Transforming Neighborhoods, Changing Communities:

Understanding the implications of physical and demographic change in

Washington, DC

Kathryn Leigh Howell, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2013

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As the demand for center city living in the US has grown, housing has been used to revitalize neighborhoods and contribute to the tax base of the city. I investigate the ways that change, fostered and shaped in part by federal and local housing and planning policies, affects low income neighborhoods undergoing redevelopment at the level of "community." To study these issues I study the Washington, DC neighborhoods of Columbia Heights: In less than ten years, this neighborhood was transformed by planning and housing policies from a primarily low-income, isolated neighborhood to a truly mixed income neighborhood housing residents of varied ethnicities and income levels.

Using an ethnographic approach, I interviewed residents, policy makers, agency staff, advocates, and housing developers; conducted archival research on planning documents,

newspapers, blogs, neighborhood list-servs, and public hearing proceedings; and observed - both directly and as a participant – in public parks, commercial establishments, public hearings, community, tenant and organizational meetings, and at rallies and town halls.

My findings suggest that the District of Columbia, neighborhood groups, housing advocates, and developers instituted some of the best practices in urban planning and housing policy, which led to a mixed income neighborhood with a focus on dense, mixed-use and multi-modal transit oriented development. However, in spite of – or perhaps because of – dramatic changes in the concentration of poverty, through the combination of the preservation of existing affordable housing and the addition of higher income new residents, low income residents' sense of community, political power and access to amenities changed significantly. Moreover, the focus on place and physical amenities that has been a hallmark of large scale redevelopment has implicitly devalued less tangible elements of neighborhood life related to use-value, community cohesion, and culture. Further, the implied benefits of mixed income communities for low income households, combined with the narrative of urban decline and rebirth that echoes across American cities have combined to justify the social, political and physical displacement of existing residents.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

From the top of the hill on 13th Street in Columbia Heights the Washington Monument and the Capitol are still clearly visible two miles away. But older residents tell me about the views of the city that were once possible from their apartments on 14th Street, before the landscape was densely covered by the development of office buildings, residential and retail services. This was before tall, mixed use buildings overpowered both the small apartment houses built in the early 20th Century and the low rise garden apartments of the middle of the 20th century, built shortly after the neighborhood was rocked by riots and disinvestment. You could still see the Capitol and all of downtown. Now the cranes, a hallmark of the rapid redevelopment of downtown Washington, DC, dominate the view from the steep edge of 13th Street. Columbia Heights and the surrounding neighborhoods are, like downtown, so dramatically different that they seem unrecognizable to many long term residents. Once a quiet neighborhood, virtually unknown to most of white DC, Columbia Heights has become a destination for shopping, eating, drinking, and urban living for many young white migrants to the city.

Like many US cities in the past decade, Washington, DC has experienced rapid changes citywide. Dubbed "Chocolate City" in the early 1970s when the black population was more than 70 percent, Washington, DC saw its African American population decline to a narrow 50.1 percent majority by 2010. The change in population has meant increases in neighborhood ethnic, racial, and income diversity. Further, the changes also have impacted the political climate and support for housing, planning and redistributive laws. The District's housing and redevelopment policies were intended to balance the effort to attract new residents with policies aimed at preserving affordability for long term low

income residents in neighborhoods such as the northwest neighborhood of Columbia Heights. However, tensions have increased between city government staff and many longtime residents, and between new and old residents throughout the city.

Across the United States, similar increases in residential construction and subsequent demographic changes have resulted in conflicts in urban neighborhoods historically home to low-income, minority communities. These changes have been rooted in policies in place since the mid-twentieth century when cities, in partnership with the Federal government, sought to counter the flight of jobs and residents to the suburbs by "modernizing" central city neighborhoods and business districts (Kruse, 2007; Jackson M. I., 2008). Initially justified as physical slum-clearance, these redevelopment projects have typically eschewed public process and ignored existing community members and institutions to "revitalize" urban centers (Stone, 1989; Jackson M. I., 2008).

Urban renewal and highway development projects had a particularly strong impact on many central city ethnic and low-income communities. The resulting backlash engendered a shift in thinking about the nature of low income neighborhoods, the competence of neighborhood-based groups, and, for a time, a trend toward greater support for community-based development. Despite its problems, urban redevelopment has remained a focal point of federal and local policy throughout the past century (Hyra, 2008; Jackson K. T., 1985).

Current federal housing policy again focuses on physically changing historically low-income neighborhoods. Despite its stated concern with providing housing options for low-income residents, policy rarely addresses the existing and resulting social

organization and infrastructure of the community. This focus on physical place over social space, or the spaces of interaction, has resulted in fundamental changes in the collective voice, identity, and power of low income communities (Davis, 1991; Crenson, 1983), the acceptable social norms of behavior within the community (Freeman, 2006; Venkatesh, 2006) and on the social networks of individual households within these communities (Kleit R. G., 2005).

The causes and nature of neighborhood change have long been debated. The Chicago school of sociology argued for a system of neighborhood succession whereby neighborhoods naturally transition from "good" to "bad" over time, with good neighborhoods moving to the periphery (Park, 1984 (1925)). The argument for a natural succession set the stage for a technical, apolitical view of neighborhood change that has influenced policy and practice by normalizing central city decline (Dear, 2002). More recently, after years of decline stemming from urban renewal, white flight and long term disinvestment, cities have framed neighborhood change in terms of the positive effects of poverty deconcentration on low income households and on crime rates in order to encourage investment by developers and new residents (Newman K. , 2004). Researchers have framed neighborhood change as both emerging from intentional investment by upper middle class residents (Smith, 1979), and from targeted investment by development capital and city governments (Harvey, 1996). Harvey (1996) argues place-focused redevelopment emphasizes the exchange value of neighborhoods over their use value, thus de-valuing existing physical and cultural structures (Harvey, 1996).

As neighborhoods change, federal and local housing policy has focused on building and preserving affordable housing--defined in terms of *units* preserved. This implicitly allows

future low income renters to benefit from the new amenities brought by gentrifiers such as improved infrastructure, parks, retail, and services (Freeman, 2006). This focus on individual and unit-based development in federal policy, at the expense of an existing community, is seen in mobility programs like Moving to Opportunity (Briggs, Popkin, & Goering, 2010; Goering, 2005) and Gautreaux (Rosenbaum, 2000), as well as place-based programs like HOPE VI (Manzo, Kleit, & Couch, 2008) and in tax incentives such as the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit (Julian & McCain, 2009). Programs also increasingly emphasize the importance of urban design, at times arguing that good design can foster inclusion, (Cisneros, 2009; Talen, 2002) often ignoring existing histories, cultures and social institutions that existed in those communities (Day, 2003; Kleit R. G., 2005).

Notably missing from policy and planning discussions is how remaining low income residents will be affected by changing demographics and community norms. As balances of power and interests in changing communities shift within neighborhood organizations, public discourse, and city government, new and old residents increasingly conflict, and often, long term residents are no longer able to take an active role in their communities (Davis, 1991; Freeman, 2006; Crenson, 1983).

Using an ethnographic case study of redevelopment in the Columbia Heights neighborhood of Washington, DC, I investigate the ways that change, fostered and shaped in part by federal and local housing and planning policies, has affected the neighborhood at the level of "community." In other words, do long term residents still feel a part of the social and cultural spaces they once inhabited? How has the process of redevelopment impacted the neighborhood as a community, through the social networks,

formal and informal social institutions and other aspects of community that give residents' lives meaning? What role have nonprofit organizations played in the way that the neighborhood has changed and responded to those changes?

In this chapter, I introduce the case of Columbia Heights, describing briefly the history of the neighborhood and how it has changed over the past decade. I also briefly discuss how this case fits into the broader discussion of housing policy, neighborhood change, and urban redevelopment. In addition, I introduce my position as a researcher and my approach to researching this case. Finally, I explain the organization of this dissertation.

Columbia Heights was redeveloped between 1999 and 2008. The focus of redevelopment was a collection of parcels purchased by the city after the 1968 riots as part of the city's urban renewal plan and designation of blight. They were sold to developers at a discount beginning in 2002, and the parcels brought with them land development agreements and deed restrictions requiring affordable housing set-asides, compact, sustainable design, and affordable big box and small local retail. Simultaneously--though not in coordination with redevelopment plans--the City ensured the preservation of existing affordable housing (and thus the ability of current low income residents to stay) through traditional housing finance mechanisms. In less than ten years, the neighborhood went from being a primarily low-income, isolated neighborhood to a truly mixed income neighborhood housing residents of varied ethnicities and income levels.

The neighborhood is described by City agencies and elected officials, new residents, and other upper middle class residents throughout the city in "before and after" terms. In interviews, conversations, blogs, and news media, people spoke about neighborhood

Figure 1 Reference map of Columbia Heights, Washington, DC

history in terms of watershed moments: before and after the riots, and before and after the redevelopment. Because of perceived gains in safety and amenities – particularly in terms of the built environment - this is viewed by many as a very positive change, justifying the redevelopment. At the same time, changes in the enforcement of norms for behavior in public spaces, the weakening of protections for low income residents, and the redevelopment of public spaces have exacerbated divides in Columbia Heights and changed the daily lives of long term residents of the neighborhood. The goals of mixed income housing and community development initiatives are grounded in the assumed intersection of social and physical spaces. Yet the ongoing divides between neighborhood residents based on race, class and age have made achievement of key goals of mixed income communities, such as access to education and job networks, unlikely. Interactions

across these divides in the social spaces of the neighborhood remain rare, despite their share use.

Divided and layered communities are not new to Columbia Heights. Historically the neighborhood has been a crossroads of race and class. When the neighborhood first developed, the neighborhood was all white and was proudly "free from the objectionable classes." (Columbia Heights Citizens' Association, 1904). However, it was flanked by Howard University and the Shaw/U Street neighborhood, a community of free African Americans that developed after the Civil War and became a center for black culture and education. In a 1929 book on housing in Washington, DC, the author reported that while it was acceptable for whites to live on the same physical block as blacks, whites would

Figure 2: Area map of Columbia Heights

not live in the center of the block if it was inhabited by African Americans. Rather, they would live on the corner of the same block with a door opening to a different street (Jones, 1929). In 1955, a local newspaper reported that the all-white, all homeowner neighborhood association, which had, among other things been opposed to school desegregation, was unable to remain solvent because the membership had declined (1955). In interviews, I spoke to

residents who were or knew those who were the first African Americans west of 13th

Street, the dividing line of the 1950s. Typically, however, the opportunity to cross this line was limited to "professional negroes" in apartment buildings or the middle class African Americans who could afford to purchase homes after restrictive covenants were no longer enforceable.

Now the line moves the other direction. One white resident and housing activist who has lived in the neighborhood for twelve years told me that the line of "safety," where white people felt comfortable, was first 14th street, then later shifted east to 11th Street. Now she believes that it's around Sherman Avenue or Georgia Avenue. Over the past century, Columbia Heights has been where the line was blurred; it has been contested, with multiple disconnected communities existing in the same spaces. The social space of diverse communities has overlapped with the physical spaces claimed by these communities. Bryan, a white father and long term activist in the neighborhood articulated the current contrast of diversity in the midst of socioeconomic isolation: "In a way it's like Martin Luther King's dream if you look at the diversity. But the question is are we really entering each other's lives, or are we just living next to each other and standing in line in Target next to each other, or Giant [supermarket]?"

Arguably, this case exemplifies many of the "best practices" advocated for planning, housing policy, and redevelopment. The public community processes to determine the way in which the neighborhood would change began in 1996 with a series of meetings convened by the nonprofit, community-based Development Corporation of Columbia Heights (DCCH) and continued with a design charrette attended by more than 300 residents over three days in late 1997. A smaller working group of residents continued to meet through the following year. Further, the City had used its position and discounts on

the sale of the land to require developers to guarantee that at least 20 percent of the units built were affordable. The development agreements yielded approximately 250 units of new affordable housing. Moreover the City's three housing agencies invested more than $62 million in subsidies to preserve existing subsidized housing and to enable residents of varying low and moderate income levels to purchase their buildings under the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) between 2002 and 2009. The highest concentration of tenant purchases over the history of TOPA has been in Columbia Heights. In addition, much of the affordable housing built in the 1970s on 14th Street retained its Project-Based Section 8 subsidies or has been preserved through the use of federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits. By 2010, roughly 18 percent of the housing units in Columbia Heights were income-restricted. Further, Columbia Heights and its neighbor Adams Morgan together represent the largest concentration of units that may be subject to rent control in the city[1] (Tatian, 2011). Many of these units have also been preserved through the efforts of tenant advocates and organizers funded by the City. Through those combined efforts, low income residents have found themselves in a mixed income, transit-oriented neighborhood that is a "destination," rather than an isolated neighborhood in the heart of the city.

Figure 3: Demographic Change in Columbia Heights, 2000-2010

	Total Number			Share of the Population	
	2000	**2010**	**Change**	**2000**	**2010**
Black	17,114	12,662	-26.0%	56.2%	39.8%
White	1,983	8,517	329.5%	6.5%	26.7%
Hispanic	9,945	8,858	-10.9%	32.7%	27.8%
Total	30,445	31,846	4.6%	100.0%	100.0%

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[1] There is no comprehensive list of units subject to rent control in the District of Columbia. All calculations are estimates from the Office of Tax and Revenue's Real Property Database using the assumptions under the Rent Stabilization law. Researchers can only determine which properties may be subject to rent control.

Yet despite these efforts to make it possible for long term residents to stay, the neighborhood has undergone substantial change, morphing from a majority black, low-income neighborhood to one nearly evenly divided between black, white, and Latino residents between 2000 and 2010. Figure 3 illustrates the change in the total number of residents by race and ethnicity, as well as each group's share of the total neighborhood population. The non-Hispanic White population increased by roughly 330 percent, while Non-Hispanic black and Hispanic populations declined by 26 percent and 11 percent, respectively. As a result, the shares of the population held by minority residents have changed dramatically. Although many residents have been able to remain in Columbia Heights, African Americans, who represented more than half of the neighborhood population a decade ago, now represent 40 percent, while whites increased from 7 percent of the population to 27 percent, and the Latino share declined from 33 percent to 28 percent. This rapid upending of neighborhood demographics has exacerbated clashes between new and old residents that have become frequent in discourse, politics, and on the street.

Over the past several years, I have observed and investigated these issues in Washington, DC, first as a DC Government employee and later as a researcher and resident. As a policy specialist in housing and community development for the District between 2007 and 2009, I saw the neighborhoods changing through the lens of an agency that had fought to preserve affordable housing through programs such as the tenant first right purchase program, by helping to finance the purchase of buildings by low income tenants and also by funding the technical assistance tenant groups needed to navigate this

complex process. Yet from my vantage point as both a city employee and a resident, I found that people were still unsatisfied with the results of the redevelopment.

When I returned to graduate school, I wanted to understand why people were still displeased with a neighborhood that had seemingly nailed the punch list for redevelopment. From a policy perspective, the City seemed to have done things right. In addition to the housing opportunities and amenities brought by redevelopment, long term, low income residents who had experienced decades of disinvestment and socioeconomic isolation could presumably now benefit from proximity to their new higher income neighbors, according to theories advanced by proponents of mixed income affordable housing development. In 2012, I spent a year conducting ethnographic fieldwork in the northwest DC neighborhood of Columbia Heights to better understand the changes, focusing on the roles played in this process by community members and organizations, nonprofit institutions, and government programs and agencies. Specifically, I investigated what the changes to the neighborhood have meant for the low income people who have remained in Columbia Heights. I hoped to understand the challenges and opportunities associated with staying in a community that had changed dramatically over a short period of time. I hung out with and interviewed residents in the public spaces of the neighborhood who had lived in the neighborhood as homeowners, renters and squatters for decades.

My findings suggest that the District of Columbia, neighborhood groups, housing advocates, and developers instituted some of the best practices in urban planning and housing policy, which led to a mixed income neighborhood with a focus on dense, mixed-use and multi-modal transit oriented development. However, in spite of – or

perhaps because of – dramatic changes in the concentration of poverty, through the combination of the preservation of existing affordable housing and the addition of higher income new residents, low income residents' sense of community, political power and access to amenities changed significantly. Moreover, the focus on place and physical amenities that has been a hallmark of large scale redevelopment has implicitly devalued less tangible elements of neighborhood life related to use-value, community cohesion, and culture.

Further, the implied benefits of mixed income communities for low income households, combined with the narrative of urban decline and rebirth that echoes across American cities have combined to justify the social, political and physical displacement of existing residents. These long-time residents often remain due to a structurally produced lack of options, and also a strong sense of community rootedness. The DC narrative about redevelopment has linked support for policies, people, and community spaces pre-dating the current wave of redevelopment to what are viewed as the dark days of DC government, in which corruption, poor service provision, violence, and poverty were common outputs of local policies.

In contrast to the primary narrative suggesting substantial benefits flowing from redevelopment to the low income residents of Columbia Heights, through a strong planning regime and the investment of developers and new residents, I argue that what benefits accrued to these residents resulted from tenant protections instituted by the first generation of City Council leaders after Home Rule was granted in 1975. These protections stressed the residents' right to remain in their community, regardless of income or renter status. Moreover, the significant investment in affordable housing that

ensured some long term resident tenure in Columbia Heights was less an output of careful planning interventions than of advocacy by tenant organizers, a structure of laws and policies that ensured protection in cases of neighborhood change, and a stock of existing HUD-assisted housing in Columbia Heights. Advocates have used their ability to organize tenants, along with a strong professional network and knowledge of District government, to maintain a seat at the table in order to influence funding, legal protections and programing that supports, creates and preserves affordable housing.

At the neighborhood level, political and social contestation is seen in the ways in which public spaces are managed and changed. Newer residents have formalized aspects of the neighborhood, through the creation of neighborhood organizations and the management and redevelopment of public spaces. Although framed as improvements that make the community safer, more democratic, and more accessible to businesses and new homeowners, such formalized rules and practices have also defined access to power and, conversely, exclusion. Physical changes in the neighborhood have focused on formal "place-making" that invokes the imagery of the economic powerhouse era of pre-riot Columbia Heights, rather than the more recent history of the community. This focus on a period predating the experience of long-time residents devalues existing community cohesion and fabric and thus the primary function of these public spaces for long term residents. This formality engenders a feeling of safety for new residents, who are accustomed to sanitized spaces and formal ideas of transparency. Through this formality, new residents are better able to read the political, social and physical landscape. However, this formalization has had the effect of excluding long term residents while

enabling new residents to take control of organizations, spaces, and norms of behavior in the neighborhood.

My argument is organized as follows. In order to put the current push for mixed income redevelopment into context, I begin by reviewing theoretical and empirical literature on a set of issues central to the assumptions of this approach. As discussed in the following chapter, the desire for mixed income development is predicated on assumptions regarding the toxicity of low income neighborhoods for health, safety, and social mobility; causal narratives about the deterioration of low income and downtown neighborhoods and about the rising demand for dense, center city neighborhoods that combine a mix of housing, residents, and amenities; and narratives questioning the ability of low income communities to govern themselves.

In particular, I review evolving arguments regarding the proper role of planning in shaping the redevelopment of poor neighborhoods, the tensions around defining and representing communities geographically, the effects that living in a poor neighborhood is thought to have on poor people's lives, and the strategies advocated for creating meaningful community control over local conditions. This then leads into a discussion of current gaps in our understanding of these issues and how this dissertation aims to address them. Specifically, I argue that although much research has examined mobility programs that move low income residents into new low poverty neighborhoods, the impact of living in a socioeconomically diverse community has not been studied in the context of gentrifying neighborhoods. To address that gap, I posed the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between place, sense of community and identity for long term residents?

2. What does the ongoing presence of long term residents give them access to in their changing neighborhoods?

3. How are long term residents represented in the community?

I then discuss the methods used in my research as well as my approach to it, and how my position as a researcher, resident of Washington, DC, and a former policy analyst for the District government shapes my vantage point.

Chapters four through six present the findings of my research, and relate them to the issues that motivated this study. I begin by presenting the city's history of planning and policy initiatives in low income communities since it gained greater political autonomy through "home rule" in 1975. Chapter four also explores the interactions between these planning and policy interventions and the neighborhood residents. I discuss planning initiatives in Columbia Heights beginning with the urban renewal policies immediately following the 1968 riots. I conclude this history by discussing the 1997 public charrette process for redevelopment of the sites the City gained control of after the riots, and subsequent implementation of resulting plans in the past decade. I found that the planning regime for the redevelopment continues to involve efforts at inclusivity base on race and ethnicity. However, as the neighborhood continues to change and those involved in initial processes are fewer in number, inclusivity as an outcome – particularly as it relates to race and income – has become challenged.

In chapter 5, I describe the way in which advocates for the neighborhood and for low-income people across the city have used the District's policy and planning landscape to

fight for neighborhood issues, preserve housing and services, and advocate for policy changes to serve low income and long term residents in the neighborhood. I found that much of the stability of affordable housing in Columbia Heights was derived from the long term action and advocacy of affordable housing practitioners acting through a citywide network. In fact, the work of tenant organizers, affordable housing developers, policy advocates has largely driven the effort to preserve neighborhoods. Moreover, although their advocacy for low income housing has remained strong, the opportunity for residents to intervene in planning decisions at the City level remains blocked due to the strong growth regime that dominates city politics.

Finally, I discuss the ways in which long time neighborhood residents have built community, managed their neighborhood, and contested access to political and social space in the neighborhood as Columbia Heights has changed. The changes in the neighborhood have brought new norms of governance. New residents, unaccustomed to the informality that characterized management of spaces and organizations throughout the recent past, have formalized the allowed uses of redeveloped parks both as a means of better understanding and managing norms of behavior in the community. As a result, these public spaces have not been the arena for true mixing of new and old; affluent and low income; or racial minorities that is one of the assumed benefits of mixed income communities.

In chapter seven, I summarize my findings and place them within the larger movement toward mixed income communities as the dominant policy frame for affordable housing, including how policies predicated on assumptions about low income communities and residents have shaped social and political change in the neighborhood. Further, I discuss

the role of long term policy and planning interventions, including housing advocacy to preserve affordable housing and City policy to keep long term residents in place. These activities have encouraged agency in low income communities and have recognized the basic right to the city for all neighborhood residents by acknowledging residents' rights for stay in their communities. Although their right to stay is formalized in affordable housing policy and advocacy practice, translating this into a real right to participate in their communities is challenged by conflicts with new residents over the existing culture of the community.

Chapter 2: People, Place and Space, Evolving conceptualizations of agency in urban communities

The way in which agency in poor communities has been viewed by scholars, planners and policy makers has been a function of the way the community has been defined for theoretical, planning or policy purposes, the value that has been placed on low income or minority communities by scholars and policy makers, and the way each group acknowledges and regards the voices of the community. The agency communities are assumed to possess or lack, and that they have been able to assert in the past impacts the way that policy and planning decisions are conceptualized and practiced in low income communities. This has been particularly the case in urban housing and redevelopment policy in the past century.

Framed by scholars and policy makers alternately as a social welfare policy issue, community development opportunity, and a macroeconomic problem, redevelopment and affordable housing policy have been embedded in larger philosophical debates about the deserving and undeserving poor, the proper role of government in spurring development, and in the management of economic issues (Hayes, 1995; Trattner, 1994; Slessarev, 1988). More recently, housing activists and scholars have revivified the community development frame by focusing on the relationship between housing and justice, with authors describing this as part of a basic 'right to the city', (Mitchell, 2003), as "the right to change ourselves by changing the city" (Harvey, 2008), or as an individual right to decide where to live (Julian & McCain, 2009).

Historically, affordable housing policy also has embodied tensions between federal and local government control of goal setting; geographical program targeting and social

space; and local city planning and housing functions. Federal control has been used to focus on larger equity (Hayes, 1995; Newman & Lake, 2006; Slessarev, 1988) and (more recently) sustainability goals (Mueller & Steiner, 2011). Local government has gained greater control over the implementation of housing programs since the 1970s, increasing tensions between federal policy intent and local growth regime politics related to development rules and priorities (Basolo, 2000; Stone, 1989), NIMBY battles (Segrue, 2005; Basolo, 1999), and to policies and development practices shaping local racial and income segregation (Segrue, 2005; Jackson K. T., 1985; Jackson M. , 2008). For both federal and local government, the focus on physical aspects of place over community has reflected a trend toward seemingly apolitical, technical planning and policy actions that privilege technical "expert" knowledge and competence over community-based knowledge and experience.

Current policy discussions highlight the relationship between housing and neighborhood context. Historically, residents of poor neighborhoods, like the communities in which they live, have been thought to embody threats to the moral and physical health and safety of the city (Vale, 2000; Riis, 1890). More recently, scholars and activists have argued that the neighborhoods themselves are toxic for the residents who live in them (DeLuca & Dayton, 2009; Massey & Denton, 1998). They argue that low income residents can benefit from living in proximity to higher income neighbors who can expose them to middle class norms, wider job networks and improved educational outcomes (Briggs, Popkin, & Goering, 2010). However, theoretical and policy arguments about the benefits of mixed income communities are based on assumptions about the inability of residents of low income communities to act to improve their own conditions.

They also justify policy responses that redevelop and disperse low income communities in the name of improvements in the health, safety and welfare of not just the residents of the redeveloped communities – but of the future neighborhood residents and of cities themselves.

This chapter will consider the theoretical and historical context for implementing current "mixed income" affordable housing policies at the local level by reviewing: 1) the framing of planning and policy responses to the problems of poor communities historically; 2) how living in a poor neighborhood is thought to affect poor people's lives; 3) the tensions around defining and representing community geographically; and, 4) the strategies for creating meaningful community control of local conditions in poor communities. The chapter concludes by assessing the current gaps in our understanding of the implications of promoting mixed income communities for low income residents.

Planning and Policy in Poor Neighborhoods

The problems of poor neighborhoods and their residents have been an ongoing focus of policy and planning since the early twentieth century. Interventions have been framed as apolitical, rational ways of fixing the poor through the demolition and reconstruction of the built environment thought to shape their behavior. However, as social movements grew in strength in the 1960s and 1970s, a critique of that perspective grew that allowed for greater input – if perhaps perfunctory – for low income residents in neighborhoods across the country. These efforts were based on different assumptions about the motivations and abilities of low income residents (Perry, 1973; Katz, 1989). Unfortunately, the neglect of urban physical infrastructure and the dramatic cuts in funding for community services and community development in the latter part of the 20th

century reduced the capacity for community-based groups to act in meaningful ways. These changes have left many communities bereft of resources to maintain basic services, economic power, and stable physical infrastructure in the early 21st century. The resulting poor conditions have left these neighborhoods vulnerable to the new wave of renewal plans that have emerged over the past two decades.

At the close of the 19th century, Riis (1890) and his counterparts in London presented images of depravity and public health threats in urban tenements that shocked Victorians (Hall, 2002). To remedy these conditions, settlement house reformers such as Jane Addams would change communities by "saving the immigrant from his (and, especially her) own errors and excesses" (Hall, 2002, p. 42) and elevating "the moral tone of the segregated populations" (Park, 1984 (1925), p. 9). Further, although public health was cited as a primary concern, Vale argues that "in matters of public health, there is a fundamental ambiguity about whether the "public" object of concern is those who already suffer from the problem, or those who might be presumed to suffer in the future – either physically or economically" (Vale, 2000, p. 56).

Researchers from the Chicago School of Urban Sociology in 1925 argued that the growth in racial segregation in American cities was "primarily a reflection of black housing preferences or a natural outcome of the migration process" (Massey & Denton, 1998, p. 33). They argued that settlement patterns in cities were "dynamic, free-market competition" for land use (Sampson & Moreoff, 2000, p. 2). This segregation, like the ethnic enclaves of previous generations, was viewed as temporary (Park, 1984 (1925)) because "voluntary segregation would eventually break down as acculturation brought assimilation" (Hall, 2002, p. 437). Meanwhile, the suburbs were opening for

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development, offering affordable homes for white families using Federal Housing Administration (FHA) mortgages, leaving black families segregated in neighborhoods that had been deemed unsafe for investment by the FHA. (Jackson K. T., 1985).

The focus on rational, apolitical planning and market-driven, natural succession of neighborhood conditions, combined with the broader definition of neighborhoods as geographical (rather than social) places, legitimized the wave of urban renewal that followed World War II in cities. Planners saw urban development as a technical function requiring specific skills and a knowledge base that disregarded local knowledge and individual needs in favor of experts who could rationally evaluate the options available and discern the best choice (Brooks, 2002). While white families continued to migrate to growing suburbs and continued housing discrimination kept poor black families from leaving inner city neighborhoods (Jackson K. T., 1985; Hall, 2002; Jackson M. , 2008), city and federal government hoped to prevent further deterioration and irrelevance of the city through urban renewal projects. By defining neighborhoods as blighted or dangerous, local governments could justify the clearance of low and moderate-income communities in the name of progress and modernity (Jackson M. , 2008; Briggs, Popkin, & Goering, 2010). Davidson (2009) argues that urban renewal "not only ignored existing urban fabric, but also paid far too little heed to those living in the communities targeted by that renewal" (p. 2).

The Civil Rights Movement, as well as the community destruction caused by urban renewal, generated strong critiques of the "belief that planners, using the rational planning model, could articulate goals for and speak on behalf of a community without the direct involvement of the community" (Peterman, 2000, p. 38; Brooks, 2002).

Advocacy planners argued that to remedy the exclusion of marginalized groups, professional technical assistance should be available to help them navigate the process and articulate their needs to city planners (Brooks, 2002; Peterman, 2000). Further, advocacy planners such as Davidoff argued that planning is inherently value-laden, and that those values cannot be removed from the process (Davidoff, 1965). Rather than being detached and neutral in planning processes, advocacy planners were encouraged to engage with marginalized groups to bridge gaps between city agencies and the communities impacted by their plans. (Checkoway, 1994; Brooks, 2002).

As federal policies for housing and community development changed during the late 1960s and early 1970s, advocacy planners working with marginalized groups helped to by-pass or minimize the role and autonomy of local governments in decision-making around redevelopment (Jackson M. , 2008; Slessarev, 1988). Beginning in the late 1960s, as the effects of urban renewal became visible and the Civil Rights Movement gained strength (Davidson N. M., 2009), funds often went directly to community organizations in minority and low income communities, helping to build a cohort of grass roots leaders (Peterman, 2000; Twelvetrees, 1989). The results of these efforts included the creation of community development corporations and community mobilization within communities to "oppose threats to their physical integrity or to take advantage of federal programs" (Gittel & Vidal, 1998, p. 34). These groups assisted with job creation or the development of affordable housing, as well as provided "a political voice for poor and racialized minorities previously excluded from decision-making" (Newman & Lake, 2006, p. 45). Further, after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, housing and community development interventions "sought to break down

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remaining discriminatory barriers as well as to compensate African-Americans for past inequalities by providing programs especially designed to uplift the inner city poor" (Slessarev, 1988, p. 369).

Though federal funding to community organizations was short-lived, Twelvetrees (1989) argues that communities remained empowered and organized in spite of the local government's reluctance to include them in the decision-making for redevelopment. These groups continued to organize to provide services when the government and private sectors failed (Twelvetrees, 1989; Rubin, 2000), to protest destructive redevelopment schemes (Gittel & Vidal, 1998; Jackson M. , 2008; Peterman, 2000) and to advocate for greater redistribution of resources for low income households (Newman & Lake, 2006; Peterman, 2000). However, as cities changed, "attempts, even successful ones, to exert power and gain control of neighborhoods seemed to be futile in places where resources had fled, disinvestment was rampant, and those responsible for decline were, often as not, located outside the neighborhood and were well insulated from advocacy organizing tactics" (Peterman, 2000, p. 50). Conversely, the growth in the organization of neighborhood groups spread to middle and high income neighborhoods, resulting in a growth in NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) activism that built and reinforced the growing racial and socioeconomic segregation in metropolitan communities (Fisher, 1984; Kruse, 2007).

In the late 1960s, the increasingly segregated ghettos erupted in violence as "the planet as building site collided with the 'planet of slums'" (Harvey, 2008, p. 428), particularly following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The efforts to redesign cities and marginalize the poor had resulted in rising frustration among blacks in segregated

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communities. The Kerner Commission report, issued shortly before the 1968 riots, "concluded that the riots [of 1967] stemmed from the persistence of racial discrimination and a historical legacy of disadvantages…but one factor was clearly identified by the commissioners as underlying all other social and economic problems: segregation" (Massey & Denton, 1998, p. 59). The report recommended policies to remediate that issue, including using federal housing programs to desegregate communities and passing legislation prohibiting housing discrimination (Hall, 2002). In spite of the passage of the Fair Housing Act later that year, which banned discrimination in the rental or sale of housing, "not only did the ghetto fail to disappear; in many ways its problems multiplied. As segregation persisted, black isolation deepened, and the social and economic problems that had long plagued African American communities worsened" (Massey & Denton, 1998, p. 61).

Further, pushback from state and local governments about the loss of funding discretion, combined with the number and complexity of federal categorical grants and the election of Richard Nixon, ultimately led to the passage of the Community Development Act of 1974 (Twelvetrees, 1989). This act, which, among other things, created the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, gave more power to state and local jurisdictions in redevelopment (Hayes, 1995; Schwartz, 2006). CDBG was the start of a trend of devolution of responsibility away from the federal government to local planning departments and state and local housing and community development departments, which would continue with the creation of the state-administered Low Income Housing Tax Credit—the primary funding source for the production of affordable housing today (Schwartz, 2006).

Over time, planning theorists shifted their focus to creating the conditions for open discourse among competing ideas. The theory of communicative action supports the use of language, verbal or nonverbal, to build consensus, rational agreement, and group learning (Habermas, 2004; Brooks, 2002). Forester and others take communicative action theory a step further to argue that the only way to gain consensus is to first share and acknowledge past and present grievances and fears of those in disagreement before moving forward. Rather than having a professional planner act as intermediary, communicative action theorists argue that groups and individuals should represent themselves and have the opportunity to interface directly with those who disagree. (Forester, 1999; Friedmann, 2008; Sandercock L. , 2004). This concept fits well within the structures of community participation for federal housing funds which gives residents the opportunity to speak for themselves in public hearings and meetings about proposed plans. The recognition of local knowledge and competence advocated by Forester and others was a departure from the traditional role that local planners and policy makers had taken earlier in the 20th century (Schwartz, 2006). However, while compliance with federal policy requires public participation, consistent with the theory of communicative action, implementation often falls short of the intention for meaningful participation as suggested by Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation (Arnstein, 1969).

Similar to New Deal era public housing policies that allowed for local norms and planning practices to dominate equity concerns (Jackson M. , 2008; Hayes, 1995), devolution of federal funds since the 1970s has fueled the existing regime-based politics of local political landscapes (Basolo, 2000; Segrue, 2005; Stone, 1989). Stone defines regime politics as "informal arrangements that surround and complement the formal

workings of governmental authority" (1989, p. 3) often centered on a pro-growth agenda with an emphasis on the central business district over neighborhoods. Due to the local nature of capital and development, state and local governments face particular pressure in the implementation of federal and local housing policies. Because land regulations are largely local or state-controlled, real estate developers lobby at the local and state level for zoning changes, beneficial regulation or for support in particular land deals (Harvey, 1996; Stone, 1989). Local governments are also pressured through NIMBY concerns and the pressure to attract businesses and residents, meaning that affordable housing and equity concerns remain highly politicized and personal at the local level (Basolo, 1999)

In spite of brief interludes of community-based control and planning in the 1960s and 1970s, redevelopment policy is once again framed as a bricks and mortar intervention, with "vibrant" (future) communities thought to be an organic output of that intervention (Klemek, 2009; Katznelson, 1981). Alternatively, some researchers and activists support the normative argument that remaining or defending the right to remain one's neighborhood, regardless of tenure status, constitutes a right to the city (Mitchell, 2003) or, "the right to change ourselves by changing the city", rather than just a right to passively inhabit the city (Harvey, 2008). In many ways, this argument is a reprise of the CDC movement in the 1960s and 1970s that supported community-based control of community revitalization through community development corporations and legally through oppositional civil disobedience.

Mitchell differentiates between "rights talk," - or the discourse of rights - and legal rights. He argues that while discourse has power and can help to justify power – and that rights talk provides "a set of instructions about the use of power. But they do so by becoming

institutionalized – that is, by becoming practices backed up by force," through the creation of a legal right (Mitchell, 2003, p. 27). He further argues that the institutionalization of rights produces space by changing the way in which power is used and appropriated. The right to the city, Mitchell and others argue, must be taken, rather than given by the state or capital, offering an implicit critique of traditional housing finance mechanisms which treat membership in communities as an anonymous social service based on the units available and the income of the applicants (Mitchell, 2003; Merrifield, 2011). It is separate from – though can be institutionalized by – legal rights. The idea of a right to the city challenges the dominant hegemony of development and capital by arguing that, in spite of the exchange value of economic development and neighborhood construction of physical place, residents' use value of the community is of greater weight (Harvey, 1996). Moreover, the right to the city arguments suggests that, regardless of the type of housing (single-family or multi-family) or type of tenure (rental or homeownership), marginalized residents have an equal, if different, stake in the city.

In practice, this means, as Sandercock argues, that planners "need to be attentive to how power shapes which stories get told, get heard, carry weight" and ensure they listen to and share more than one story or narrative (2003, p. 12). Lefebvre contends that knowledge cannot be separated from ideology and from lived experience, and thus is layered and dynamic. In fact any effort to separate knowledge from ideology or lived experience reinforces a common sense or single story. He also argues that a "true space" or hegemony of space is concealed and made to seem apolitical and rational through false consensus. Further, to try to create a single true space would reinforce existing power structures which control difference and create sanitized spaces. Thus Lefebvre argues

contradictions, or multiple stories exist in space and these contradictions manifest

themselves in contests over dominance of the space itself (Lefebrvre, 1991).

These concepts have important implications for planning. In arguing that the creation of a

single conceptualization of space is inherently political and power-laden, Lefebvre's

theories can be used to identify the ways in which planning is used to manage fear, create

order and organize people and uses in redevelopment. Moreover, due to the role that

regime politics play in cities, planners and policy makers often only hear those with the

power to access government who then define the narratives of redevelopment (Stone,

1989). To address these challenges, Sandercock (1998) suggests that "if we redefine

"planning" to include the community-building tradition – what we might call planning

from below – then we create the possibility of a far more inclusive set of narratives,

embracing…communities who have all, in response to their exclusion from mainstream

planning, developed counterplanning traditions of self-help, community solidarity, and

community organizing for social and economic development" (pp. 9-10). Sandercock's

planning from below suggests a strong place for community-based organizations, led by

organic intellectuals who might form tenant organizations, or smaller organizations

focused on community development. These organizations might play a translation role

between government officials and residents who often use different "languages" to

describe community strengths, frame challenges, and discuss possibly solutions. The

issues of representation and meaningful participation will be discussed in a later section.

The effects of living in a poor neighborhood

The toxicity of poor neighborhoods for those who live in them is an idea dating back to

the early twentieth century as Riis and others revealed the conditions in the slums of

western cities (Riis, 1890; Hall, 2002). There was a belief, as Vale and others argue, that

good people came from good neighborhoods and bad people came from bad

neighborhoods (Vale, 2000; Jackson K. T., 1985). This idea of toxic neighborhoods

really advanced as researchers began examining the impact that structural racism

(Massey & Denton, 1998), chronic unemployment (Wilson W. J., 1996), and

concentrated poverty had on family and child outcomes (Briggs, Popkin, & Goering,

2010). To address these issues, policy-makers and researchers have advocated enabling

the mobility of poor people to higher opportunity neighborhoods and redevelopment of

the built environment to integrate poor households into mixed income communities

(Briggs, Popkin, & Goering, 2010; Julian & McCain, 2009; Day, 2003; Kleit R. G.,

2005).

By the end of the 1970s, after decades of abandonment by middle class whites and

blacks, "the image of poor, minority families mired in an endless cycle of unemployment,

unwed childbearing, illiteracy, and dependency had coalesced into a compelling and

powerful concept: the urban underclass" (Massey & Denton, 1998, p. 4). Moreover, the

underclass has been characterized by extreme detachment from the labor force, social

isolation and persistent poverty. Four theoretical explanations were offered for the Urban

Underclass: a culture of poverty, racism, economics, and welfare dependency (either for

incentivizing poverty or for its lack of comprehensive efforts) (Peterson, 1991; Briggs,

Popkin, & Goering, 2010; Massey & Denton, 1998).

The structural concentration of poverty, it was argued, "deprive[s] residents not only of

resources and conventional role models, but also of cultural learning from mainstream

social networks that facilitate social and economic advancement in industrial society"

(Sampson & Moreoff, 2000, p. 19). The effects of social isolation, according to Wilson and others, are distinct from those described as resulting from membership in a culture of poverty because such isolation is argued to provoke adaptive responses to the structural constraints and opportunities of concentrated poverty rather than an internalization of norms (Wilson W. J., 2009; Sampson & Moreoff, 2000; Briggs, Popkin, & Goering, 2010). The structural view of poverty led researchers to argue that neighborhoods themselves were toxic, contributing to poor family and child outcomes. In recent years, this also provided a justification for physical and social overhauls of communities, including public housing communities in a wave of gentrification (Freeman, 2006; Goetz E. G., 2013).

It is further argued that persistently poor neighborhoods have broken social relations, including high levels of anger, demoralization, fear, diminished interaction, and informal cooperation, as well as diminution of responsibility for neighborhood safety and quality (Brown & Richman, 2000). Wilson's classic argument was that the "movement of black middle class and high-way industrial jobs away from historically black urban communities had created a new and isolated "urban underclass" defined by *concentrated minority poverty in inner city neighborhoods"* (Briggs, Popkin, & Goering, 2010, p. 36) By the end of the 1970s, he argues, this migration took social networks and organizations vital to social control and advancement out of the central city. In contrast, Segrue (2005) argues that middle income blacks never intended to be part of poor black communities in Detroit. Rather, they moved out as formerly white-only neighborhoods opened up for ownership by middle income African Americans. Similarly, Kruse (2007) and Stone (1989) found spatial and social division in the black community in Atlanta as

opportunities for employment and housing opened up for middle class African Americans. Sampson and Morenoff (2000) argue that researchers have been short-sighted in the analysis of cities and neighborhood change by ignoring history from the post war period forward because "many of the social and political foundations for the emergence of an underclass that Wilson and others have pointed to…were laid down in the 1960s" (p. 16), including class divisions within the black community and discrimination in lending.

Within neighborhoods, Wilson (1996) argues that high levels of social organization (measured by the level of weak and strong ties, institutions, formal organizations, and social control) ensure that adults "are empowered to act to improve the quality of neighborhood life" (p. 20). This social organization is necessary for the success and flourishing of neighborhood stability, mobilization and advancement (Crenson, 1983; Jackson M. , 2008), or more specifically in the development of social capital, or the "networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (Brown & Richman, 2000, p. 171). Conversely, lack of such control, as evidenced through physical signs of disorder, lead to a further breakdown in control. In the early 1980s, Wilson and Kelling (1982) introduced the Broken Windows Theory, which suggests that disorder in communities is actually a cause of crime. Further, small amounts of disorder such as a broken window will indicate a breakdown of community control, increasing neighborhood fear and engendering further disorder. Conversely in a later experiment, Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) found little evidence that physical disorder leads to crime. However, policies based on this concept have remained standard practice in maintaining order (Duneier, 1999).

Neighborhood effects researchers suggest that because the environment in which a person

lives has an impact on their educational outcomes, social mobility and job opportunities,

low income and minority households should move to mixed income communities that

will help them build social capital. There are two types of social bonds thought to

produce social capital: strong ties and weak ties. Strong ties are the networks and

relationships that facilitate survival and close relationships for households. Weak ties

provide access to networks and information that help residents access jobs, better schools,

and other advancement opportunities. At the individual level, studies have found

significant strong ties among low income households that depend on neighbors for

assistance such as childcare, transportation or short term loans (Dawkins, 2006; Manzo,

Kleit, & Couch, 2008; Kleit R. G., 2010; Stack, 1974). Manzo et al. found that

"residents' social experience was not characterized solely by the commonality of low

incomes, housing vulnerability, and living with stigma, but rather was characterized in a

positive way by the different people who lived there (Manzo, Kleit, & Couch, 2008, p.

1873). However, it is important to note that social and kin networks have the potential for

both helping and hurting residents' long term outcomes in terms of educational

attainment, delinquency, and length of tenure (Briggs, Popkin, & Goering, 2010).

Weak ties are used to "navigate a wider middle-class world and provide entry to someone

attempting to break into that world" (Freeman, 2006, p. 149). Bourdieu argues that

different classes have a *habitus*, or collective cultural competency and behavioral

expectation that signify inclusion into a class and create a lens through which that class

views and acts in the world. These competencies may include public behavior,

knowledge of negotiating educational or employment structures, or "appropriate" ways to

access governmental or neighborhood organizations and resources (Weininger, 2005).

Through weak ties, it is assumed that low income households in mixed income

communities might acquire middle class cultural habits which expand job and social

networks (Briggs, Popkin, & Goering, 2010; Goetz E. G., 2002; Rosenbaum, 2000).

Though strong ties are important for daily survival and community, researchers point to

the advancement potential from weak ties as one of the most important benefits of mixed

income communities.

The ways that such ties might be built forms the focus of additional research. Through

social networks and bridges between networks, individuals may be able to benefit from

membership in multiple groups (Granovetter, 1983; Lin, 1999). Other studies suggest that

to form strong ties across class lines, there must be institutions - such as neighborhood

groups or community centers - that offer residents the opportunity to interact in equal

status situations (Rosenbaum, 2000; Kleit R. G., 2005; Briggs, Popkin, & Goering, 2010).

Further, the physical layout and proximity of households may also play a role in the

formation of strong ties, as was found in research on HOPE VI neighborhoods (Kleit R.

G., 2005) and in gentrifying neighborhoods in London (Davidson M. , 2010). Yet to date

little evidence has been found of strong or weak ties between social groups in studies of

mobility such as Gautreaux and MTO, HOPE VI or of gentrifying neighborhoods

(Freeman, 2006; Kleit R. G., 2005; Briggs, Popkin, & Goering, 2010; DeLuca & Dayton,

2009; Rosenbaum, 2000). However, some studies suggest that childhood networks may

be a gateway for social capital as parents work to navigate childhood friendships,

childcare and education (Dawkins, 2006; Kleit R. G., 2005; Davidson M. , 2010).

On the other hand, considerable research has found evidence of conflict between income groups in changing neighborhoods. In Freeman's work on gentrifying neighborhoods in New York City, he found conflict around neighborhood expectations of behavior as newcomers, accustomed to one set of neighborhood rules question the legitimacy of the existing norms into which they have moved, including uses of public space, relationships with police, and quiet hours in the neighborhood (Freeman, 2006). Research on Baltimore, New Orleans, and London neighborhoods found similar outcomes with low income residents experiencing increased tension and conflicting expectations as neighborhoods changed (Crenson, 1983; Davidson M. , 2010; Parekh, 2008). Ethnographic research on homelessness has found strong evidence for the formal and informal enforcement of social norms of the dominant class of the community who are typically, business owners, homeowners, or city government officials (Duneier, 1999; Dooling, 2009; Mitchell, 2003).

These tensions may also be manifested in the misunderstandings and misreading of those social norms (Park, 1984 (1925)) between white and black residents around family structure (Stack, 1974), street life and activity (Anderson E. , 1999; Duneier, 1999), employment (Wilson W. J., 1996; Kirschenman, 1991) and informal economies (Venkatesh, 2006). Anderson argues that the "alienation from mainstream society and its institutions" has created "a kind of institutionalized oppositional culture, a reaction to a history of prejudice and discrimination that now finds its way into schools and other institutions" (1999, p. 323). While race may not be the only factor, the presence of race as a factor exacerbates divisions in norms of behavior in gentrifying neighborhoods.

These symbolic boundaries between groups, particularly ethnic groups, are reinforced by the years of social and spatial segregation that have caused "white suburban residents to be not just ignorant of but actually afraid of the city." Further, "they have grown up in isolation, separated from others, and have developed their attitudes and behaviors toward African Americans in the absence of risk and productive interaction. They are nurtured on simplified myths of difference, danger, and hostility" (Goldsmith, 2002, p. 133). The segregation and white flight that concentrated poverty and race in the urban core also concentrated white middle class households in the suburbs, changing the expectations and social norms of suburban middle class residents (Kruse, 2007).

These conflicting norms may help to explain why, contrary to research that argued that the proximity of low income residents to higher income residents would lead to increased access to social networks, Kleit (2005) and Freeman (2006) both found little evidence that new residents in changing communities were interacting with long term residents. Further, many new norms have been enforced through increased surveillance by police, new neighbors, and private security as part of an effort to impose order on what many new residents see as a previously disorganized, low income community. This may be particularly true in spaces once ungoverned by police, which have now been redeveloped or otherwise taken and used by new residents.

Moreover, the conflicting definitions of the community as place-based, rather than person-based have been expressed through the contradictory narratives of the neighborhood past and present by different groups of residents, as well as outside actors such as developers and City officials (Davis, 1991). Davis also suggests that the loss of control of space by low income residents decreases political power for low income and

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minority residents in the neighborhood to define the community's history. Davis furthers

Newman and Lake's argument that there has been growing spatial "displacement of

resistance and activism through the physical reconstruction and regeneration of space"

(2006, p. 57). In this context, community control is about the control of redevelopment,

retail, and community activity. This suggests that as neighborhoods change and low

income households are increasingly in the minority in a community, their interests may

not be adequately represented if they are spatially dispersed in individual units of

housing.

Over the past century, the characterization of neighborhoods as moral and health hazards

that are detrimental to one's life chances has been predicated on the assumption that

neighborhoods are primarily physical spaces. Planning interventions in those

neighborhoods were viewed as apolitical and rational, and decisions to redevelop

neighborhoods through programs such as urban renewal were thus seen as technical

exercises to address physical blight. This view masked the relationship between the

production of blight and the rapid suburbanization of America, enhanced through

discriminatory lending practices and the neglect of urban neighborhoods. Instead, people

inside and outside of the community battle for the power to define the community's

needs, norms, and future. The ability to take this power, though on its face democratic,

often overwhelms the poor and others who have a smaller voice in the community,

meaning that they will no longer be an important constituency at the City level.

Defining and Representing Community in Neighborhoods

Conflicts over defining and bounding neighborhoods for the purposes of representation

and development are rooted in conflicting views of neighborhoods as primarily physical

places or as communities. Community, in turn, has been defined in both geographical and social terms by residents, City government, theorists and advocates. These boundaries are sometimes assumed to overlap with official neighborhood boundaries designated by city government, other times assumed to be defined by demographic or social groups, classes, and races without regard to location (Davis, 1991; Crenson, 1983). The demise of legal segregation, ongoing immigration from the developing world, and gentrification pressures on central neighborhoods in growing cities have produced neighborhoods that are less homogeneous than the segregated communities of the past (Peterman, 2000; Leventhal, Brooks-Gunn, & Kamerman, 2000). These conflicting conceptions of community, as well as the dominant perceptions of low income communities specifically, have impacted the way community development and community control has been approached by City government and developers (Jackson M. , 2008; Manzo, Kleit, & Couch, 2008).

Though planning and policy practice and research has defined communities as geographical places that contain residents, scholars have debated whether we should see neighborhoods as geographically bounded spaces or as a community of people (Davis, 1991; Crenson, 1983). Leventhal et al (2000) argued that "viewing communities as places – as neighborhoods or as geographical or bureaucratic locales – suggests that communities are manageable units around which to organize and deliver services" (p. 192), implying a certain level of control over the space by those defining it. Moreover, as Peterman states, "neighborhoods are more than physical places and rarely do they have distinct boundaries" (2000, p. 34). Similarly, Leventhal et al (2000) argue that neighborhoods may also be considered as "face," or a community as a system of social

supports and relationships, or as space, defined as "built places for activity – living working and political organizing" (p. 198). To these authors, it is the interaction of space, place and face that determine neighborhood strength and identity (Leventhal, Brooks-Gunn, & Kamerman, 2000; Peterman, 2000). Brown and Richman argue for a place-based definition that includes a social component, or that a neighborhood contains "an ongoing meaningful pattern of social behavior and generates some *symbolic value for its residents"* (2000, p. 170).

However, these conflicting definitions of community frequently lead to debates among residents about the spatial and symbolic boundaries of neighborhoods. Crenson (1983) discovered differences in residential conceptions of communities in his exploration of Baltimore neighborhoods based on race and income. Cresswell states that "value and meaning are not inherent in any space or place – indeed they must be created, reproduced, and defended from heresy" (1996, p. 9). The argument that, not only is the definition of community contested, but it also has to be defended fiercely to be maintained means that not only is representation at stake in a more formal sense, but also that the day-to-day control of neighborhood space is disputable as communities change.

The meanings of neighborhood spaces have been particularly challenging as neighborhoods change and the value and meaning of communities is contested by new and old residents (Davis, 1991; Crenson, 1983; Freeman, 2006). Although neighborhood residents generally retain a parochial focus on maintaining or improving the conditions in the neighborhood and often face conflict amongst diverse goals, elected officials are also pressured to increase income, property and sales tax revenue through the attraction of high income residents and high-grossing businesses in more citywide concerns. These

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divergent goals often come into sharp relief in decisions about issues such as zoning and increases in density, tax incentives for business development, and parking. The relative power of communities across the city and resident groups within the neighborhood may mean that groups such as homeowners or higher income residents have more power to influence citywide decisions (Crenson, 1983; Davis, 1991).

This combination of NIMBY activism and regime politics, along with devolution of affordable housing development to local and state governments, makes activism on behalf of and the construction of housing for very low income residents difficult. Because affordable housing development is now funded locally and built and managed by nonprofit and for-profit developers, affordable housing is caught up in local development politics, and the agenda is set by those with the ability to access elected officials and agency staff (Hayes, 1995; Schwartz, 2006). While residents have more opportunity to voice opinions through formal public participation requirements in federal funding, Fainstein argues that "deliberative democracy operates poorly in situations of social and economic inequality" (2010, p. 29), suggesting that the voices of low income residents may get lost as cities change and inequality both within and among urban neighborhoods increases. Further, the nonprofit developers who depend on the City for funding are reluctant to advocate for deeper subsidies or challenge city policies for deep subsidies because they do not want to jeopardize their funding stability (Newman & Lake, 2006). However, this challenge may be overcome with an umbrella advocacy organization able to diffuse the responsibility for the critique such that no one organization is penalized (Rubin, 2000).

After a decade of Reagan politics it was assumed that, not only were market solutions to

housing problems the only rational method, but that they were a win-win for governments

and developers (Allmendinger, 2002; Hayes, 1995). In addition, the decrease in federal

funding for redevelopment meant that local governments needed to find new sources of

funds (Twelvetrees, 1989). Neighborhood and regime politics increase the pressure to

maximize efficiency and produce a higher number of units with a smaller public subsidy,

away from high income and opportunity communities. Through public-private

partnerships, the local jurisdiction could address inner city disinvestment, while

businesses gained financially. In short, the city could support the market's effective

functioning, while still gaining affordable housing, attracting new residents, and

developing "good city form" through Planned Unit Developments and Inclusionary

zoning laws (Talen, 2002; Day, 2003). Hyra (2008) argues these efforts resulted in a

reprise of urban renewal in many core neighborhoods through gentrification. Further, this

paradigm has encouraged the commodification of communities, focusing on their

exchange value for investors and tax revenue over their use value for residents. Equity

concerns, existing social structure, and culture become a secondary part of the negotiation

of tax benefits, disposition agreements, and affordable housing set-asides to change the

physical geography of the neighborhood (Newman & Lake, 2006; Harvey, 1996).

More recently, an increased demand for sustainable and walkable cities by new higher

income residents has further bolstered the case for redevelopment in the city. Elected

officials seeking to attract new residents and developers hoping to attract renters and

buyers, have changed parking requirements, improved transit, increased density, added

bike lanes, and built neighborhood shopping. However, in their study of one Austin

neighborhood, Mueller and Dooling argue that the redevelopment goals are centered on economic development and pay little attention to existing communities and their needs. Further, they state that "redevelopment plans espousing sustainable development goals but ultimately driven by economic development goals ultimately have disastrous consequences for current vulnerable residents" (2011, p. 218).

Strategies for creating community control

The City typically looks at neighborhoods through the lens of economic development: increasing the tax base, attracting businesses, and providing jobs. Conversely, neighborhood organizations and planning processes are often the sites of intense conflict over the right to define, represent and set standards in the neighborhood. In the new era of urban change, causal narratives about the reasons for and effects of urban decline are a large part of the justification for power shifts. Without opportunities for community control, the formal participatory processes linked to redevelopment can overwhelm groups of residents such as the poor, renters, people of color, or seniors who may represent smaller portions of the neighborhood or have been framed as part of the problem in the dominant narrative of neighborhood change. Further, while they may not be part of formal organizations, they may have informal institutions that manage behavior and interaction between neighbors in particular spaces.

In contrast to the outside portrayal of low income communities as lacking meaningful organization and as toxic environments to be avoided, researchers have found informal community and economic institutions that provide meaningful structure in neighborhoods. Anderson argues "the inner-city ghetto economy is delicately balanced between (a) low-income jobs, (b) welfare payments, and (c) the underground economy of

drug dealing, prostitution, and street crime. When the regular economy fails or contracts, the other elements tend to pick up the slack, and when these fail, residents become ever more desperate, giving rise to the local irregular economy. The irregular economy may be characterized as a barter system, which works by an exchange of favors" (1999, pp. 317-8). Similarly, Venkatesh found that there was a system of organization of small churches, unregulated businesses, and gangs that structured social relations in Chicago (Venkatesh, 2006). Both authors argue that the system of organization adapted to a structural context of joblessness and lack of government intervention or assistance once federal funding for community development and welfare payment was reduced. In interviews with former public housing residents, Kleit (2005) found strong evidence of strong ties and community structure that residents missed when they were displaced during HOPE VI redevelopments in Seattle. The lens through which outsiders view low income communities may create an incomplete picture of life in low income communities. Further, they do not capture the order seen and experienced by low income residents themselves through their informal institutions, organizations, and family structures.

Though initially emerging from the community-based and identity politics of the Civil Rights and welfare rights movements, Community Development Corporations and other community-serving organizations have reacted to the changes in the political and funding environment (Piven, 1977). Stoecker (2003) argues that CDCs' heavy dependence on federal and foundation funding has caused them to focus too much on physical redevelopment and not enough on services or oppositional politics through community organizing. Further, he argues that the two activities are in opposition because of the necessity of maintaining good relationships with funding organizations. This challenge of

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increased federal funding led some structuralists to question whether the mainstreaming of service provision through federally funded organizations "constituted genuine progress" toward equity (Fainstein S. a., 1995, p. 182). Cloward and Piven (1977) argue that inclusion of protest movements into mainstream organizations was actually counterproductive in terms of moving their agendas forward.

Initially CDCs were intended to be based and staffed within the neighborhood itself and focused on neighborhood areas. They were intended to be a source of neighborhood empowerment, with the ultimate goal of community control through community organizing (Peterman, 2000). Currently, "community development corporations view themselves as representatives of their communities, and external agencies such as local government, banks, and the intermediaries commonly accept them as speaking on the community's behalf" (Gittel & Vidal, 1998, p. 38). However, many critics have raised concerns about whether CDCs who are governed and staffed by nonresidents can adequately represent the interests of the community (Stoecker, 2003). Kelly (1976) provided evidence forty years ago that increased community control leads to better performance of community development corporations. On the other hand, critics argue that "community development corporations reproduce inequality since they help government evade its responsibilities as well as making very little positive differences to ghettos" (Twelvetrees, 1989, pp. 189-90). However, CDCs are generally believed to be necessary to provide equitable housing development (Twelvetrees, 1989; Schwartz, 2006).

Conversely, community-based organizations (CBOs) are governed and staffed by members of a particular community and are organized to serve, mobilize, or advocate for

that community. Additionally, community-based organizations are often less

professionalized than their CDC counterparts and are more focused on community

organizing and oppositional politics. Therefore, they are less likely than CDCs to access

governmental resources such as funding, technical assistance and political influence

(Gittel & Vidal, 1998). Stoecker (2003) argues that both community-serving CDCs and

community-based organizations are necessary in order to be effective and equitable in

redevelopment efforts. This is due to the focus of the former on development of physical

units and the latter on advocacy and ensuring equity in redevelopment.

Community-based control is also important in the development of local knowledge, and

increasing collective power. Davis suggests that cooperative housing such as limited

equity cooperatives decommodify housing, arguing "social property, in other words, is a

political strategy for making homeownership a bulwark of community relations instead of

a mainstay of commodity relations – a source of solidarity within the residential

neighborhood, instead of a source of financial competition and political fragmentation"

(1991, p. 322). He further argues that this structure can offer stability in the face of a

changing neighborhood, making community organizing easier, supporting Jackson's

argument that community spaces are a necessary part of neighborhood organizing for or

against issues (2008).

In practice, community control by poor and minority residents, consistent with the Right

to the City advocated by Harvey, relies on radical and insurgent planners who work with

and listen to residents left out of the mainstream norms of economic development and

social interaction in order to ensure that community control of processes does not exclude

particular groups of residents. These planning practices are rooted in a tradition of social

mobilization and social theory (Castells, 1985). Unlike social reform planning, which "would ameliorate, through social welfare programs, urban design and land controls, the worst effects of unfettered economic growth" (Friedman, 1987, p. 297), as was typically seen in the Victorian and Urban Renewal eras, social mobilization seeks to change the basic political economic structures that produce marginalization. Its focus is on grassroots, community-based action, rather than state action. Social mobilization is based in a Marxist tradition that stresses dialectical relationships, class struggle and the relationships of workers to modes of production (Castells, 1979). It also has roots in social anarchism, which rejects state authority and focuses on communal organization from the ground up in a classless society (Friedman, 1987). This anti-state, ground-up focus has left considerable space for Marxists to engage beyond traditional working class group divisions and goals to encompass marginalized groups within the city (Merrifield, 2011).

Friedmann argues that radical planning is the "mediation of theory and practice in social transformation" and, more importantly requires that the way that planning has been done must fundamentally change toward a normative, theoretically-based goal devised by the community itself (1987, p. 391). Further, radical planning requires the mobilization of "citizen power" to operationalize the social transformation through particular projects within a given geography. This he contrasts with allocative or rational planning, which focuses on the technical elements of planning to ensure equitable access and distribution of resources; and innovative planning, which includes institutional changes, or within system evolution from the top down.

Gramscian theory plays a critical role in the development of insurgent theories. While Marx believed in the overwhelming coercive force of the ruling class, Gramsci argued that power that was only maintained through force was not sustainable. Instead, ruling elites used ideology crystallized into "common sense", or hegemony, to maintain power. He argues that "common sense creates the folklore of the future, a relatively rigidified phase of popular knowledge in a given time and place" (Gramsci, 1985, p. 421), suggesting that hegemony is contextually dependent, rather than a crystallized truth. Crehan (2002) asserts that Gramsci uses hegemony to identify "how the power relations underpinning various forms of inequality are produced and reproduced…What in any given context constitutes hegemony can only be discovered through careful empirical analysis" (p. 104).The creation of this hegemonic power means that, in a sense, the ruled consent to be ruled through the acritical acceptance of hegemony. The control of ideology becomes the most relevant piece of power. New rights can be given, and laws can be changed, but if the ideology still maintains the "common sense" of the ruling elites, there is no shift in power (Crehan, 2002).

Gramsci argued that a reconceptualization of power, or counter-hegemony, could overthrow the "common sense" power of the ruling elite. This could be done through organic intellectuals, produced out of the working classes who would develop counter-hegemonic knowledge. Organic intellectuals are those intellectuals with structural connections to a particular class "for themselves," or those who can then produce coherent knowledge to challenge hegemony (Crehan, 2002). Organic intellectuals, moreover, "create an ideological shape for a movement, not through abstract principles or an imposed tradition, but rather by sharing through stories and narratives their grounded

understanding of what in daily work has failed and what has succeeded" (Rubin, 2000,

pp. 38-9), suggesting a strong role for a community-controlled planning process. The

second way that hegemony could be overthrown, according to Gramsci, was through the

exploitation of fractures in the state's hegemony. Gramsci argued that hegemony was not

all encompassing, but had fissures, or areas of contradiction within it – such as gaps in

enforcement, differences of agenda, and neglect of governance (Crehan, 2002).

Though related to radical planning, insurgence, Holston argues, is "a counter-politics that

destabilizes the dominant regime of citizenship, renders it vulnerable, and defamiliarizes

the coherence with which it usually presents itself to us" (2009). Insurgence is typically

viewed in the context of "differentiated" or uneven citizenship, which privileges the

citizenship of some people over others (Roy, 2009). Miraftab (2004) goes further to argue

that to overthrow the dominant paradigm, communities must be anti-statist and

oppositional, rather than seeking inclusion into the existing system. Insurgence is used by

communities to exploit cracks in hegemony, such as in spaces where government does

not function, government agents disagree, or a group of people is not recognized, in order

to substantively take a right to the city (Bayat, 2000; Roy, 2009). Miraftab further

believes that these practices respond to "neoliberal specifics of dominance through

inclusion" (Miraftab, 2009, p. 32). Miraftab argues that insurgence disrupts the

hegemonic power that appropriates spaces, either invited (sanctioned/formal) or invented

(unsanctioned/informal) spaces. However, she maintains that neoliberal governance uses

the language of participation to create a false inclusionary structure and justify policies

that are ultimately exclusionary and contribute to greater marginalization of

underrepresented groups.

Friedmann suggests that while there is a place within traditional planning roles for radical planners, governmental planners often play a role of facilitation of community-controlled processes, rather than mobilization. He states that "radical planners, perforce, walk the thin line that divides licit from illicit action" (1987, p. 256). He argues, in fact, that "a traditional [planning] education may be more of a hindrance than a help" in efforts to work with radical groups (p. 403). Planners, further, are rarely able to remain radical because ultimately, they must make decisions based on multiple factors within the jurisdiction. Holston argues for a translation role of state planners in radical and insurgent planning paradigms. He suggests that methods of planning, particularly ethnographic observation and interviews would allow the planner to hear the voices of residents and understand the everyday experiences of spaces (Holston, 1995). However, Friedman argues that while radical city planners may know about the everyday experience of residents, hear the voices and personally support the self-determination of the community where they observed, there is an often-insurmountable difference between simply hearing the voices of marginalized groups and having the political will to support or enact change (Forester, 1989; Flyvberg, 2002). Moreover, when insurgent acts are supported by government, it is questionable as to whether these are insurgent acts anymore, or if they have become part of the hegemony, or, as Miraftab (2004) argues, represent dominance by cooptation. The challenge, therefore, may be to maintain mobilization and conflict between insurgent actors and government to move agendas forward and challenge hegemonic thought in cities.

Mitchell uses Lefebvre's triad of the social production of space to explain the way that social space is produced in People's Park in Berkeley. Within social space, Lefebvre

delineates three types of social space, which interact and produce and reproduce power relationships: Representations of Space, Spatial Practice, and Representational Space: the conceived, the perceived and the lived spaces. Representations of space are the spaces of planners and experts, or those who "identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived" (p. 38). This space is the space where ideology and knowledge combine to create the maps, plans and codes that dominate and change the lived experiences. Representational Space is the lived experiences "through its associated images and symbols" (p. 39). This space, "overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects. Thus representational spaces may be said…to tend toward more or less coherent systems of non-verbal symbols and signs" (p. 39). Representational space is the dominated space, but it is also the space for protest and social action. Finally, spatial practice, the way that spaces are deciphered and understood, is the perceived space. This is the ideological space that is often used to dominate or appropriate spaces.

Public spaces are often the theaters in which conflicts over the control of social spaces play out in changing communities. Jackson (2008) argues that physical spaces are necessary for organizing. Similarly Davis (1991) and Crenson (1983) suggest that control over neighborhood spaces allow for more direct power and recognition for low income residents, particularly renters. Cresswell expands this to suggest that control over neighborhood spaces has a social dimension that reinforces traditional power dynamics. Those with control over neighborhood spaces define what is appropriate and who is permitted within those communities (Cresswell, 1996). This determination of neighborhood norms is impacted by the *habitus* of conflicting communities within the same geographical neighborhood. *Habitus* is also the lens through which the lived

experience of spaces is deciphered and understood by residents with different backgrounds. Thus, particular cultural capital creates symbolic boundaries between individuals within neighborhoods, which can engender an "us versus them" dichotomy between new and old residents.

Harvey (1996), Cresswell (1996) and others, using a Lefebvrian- influenced analysis of redevelopment, argue that all spaces are socially produced. Making them is an inherently political activity that is intricately related to the social production of social space, or the spaces of interaction. Harvey makes this link through the explicit connection of social space and physical place because "materiality, representation, and imagination are not separate worlds…political mobilization through processes of place construction owes as much to the representational and symbolic realms as to material activities" (1996, p. 322). He extends this argument to also include the "way in which places, their inhabitants and their social functions get located, named and discursively represented" (1996, p. 265). He argues that siting and construction of places is "essential to social development, social control and empowerment in any social order" (1996, p. 323). This spatial construction, many argue, means that the creation of physical places is never apolitical or acontextual. Moreover, place making allows for the production and reproduction of ideologies and hegemonic dominance of capital and the State (Cresswell, 1996).

Finally, Harvey talks about the way conflicts occur in space, which then change the space, stating "as social relations, behaviors and "acts" change within space, so they may entrain radical shifts in the meaning and metric of space" (1996, p. 274). Here he identifies the dialectical relationship between conflicts and place creation – as physical spaces change, they change the way that new and long term residents; investors; and

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policy makers perceive the space. Conversely, he believes, the creation of places with homogeneous goals and population can be a powerful tool of oppression and violence in the accentuation of difference. He further argues that competition between places – neighborhoods and cities as a whole – has engendered a need to find ways to attract higher income consumers. This means that as neighborhoods are slated for redevelopment, the focus is on physical and social design that encourages feelings of safety and desirability for higher income households who read cities differently based on the historical boundaries between ethnic groups and classes.

As communities are slated for redevelopment, new residents, who may not understand the root of the challenges, nor the strengths of the community, set new expectations for social spaces (Freeman, 2006). The changes made to the built environment provide a visual reinforcement of changing power dynamics within the neighborhood. This is particularly relevant in infill redevelopment that changes the look and feel of existing communities, ignoring the existing history of the neighborhood institution and relationships that governed the neighborhood during times of neglect, violence and insolation. Further, the forces bringing redevelopment may run roughshod over the existing and potential community-based institutions as the neighborhood changes (Hyra, 2008).

Conclusion

Over the past century of American housing and redevelopment history, various interests, including planners, policy-makers, businesses, and residents have used their power to define community needs, determine the form redevelopment would take, and decide who would benefit from changes in communities. Historically, low income communities have been defined as blighted, with no social structure or organization, meaning that the best

option is either complete redevelopment with new residents or dispersal to high income neighborhoods.

This view of low income neighborhoods negates the potential importance of social fabric and collective agency in low income neighborhoods. Moreover, the socially disorganized characterization of low income community has solidified an "either-or" paradigm of housing and redevelopment interventions: either allow neighborhoods to remain disinvested, or redevelop them and accept displacement as a part of the inevitable collateral damage of urban progress. It also implicitly promotes mixed income neighborhoods as an antidote to the challenges of concentrated poverty. Further, seeing low income neighborhoods only in terms of the challenges from within and outside, rather than as a part of community life that existed, reifies the before and after narrative prominent in discussions of urban decline and gentrification.

However, the historical role of power and local interests in housing and redevelopment decisions make it necessary to critique the assumption redevelopment is an either-or proposition. Further, the inclusion of local interests in redevelopment problematizes the ways that neighborhood norms of behavior and participation are defined, and where the opportunities for organizing exist. Finally, the potential for exclusion of marginalized groups through minimal inclusion or consensus also suggests the need to reexamine existing agreements and negotiations for community development to understand who was represented in the negotiations and to what degree disagreement persists in changing neighborhoods. Normative arguments for a collective right to the city, or a right to be active in the history and future of the community, suggest that power from within the community may be a means of rethinking the "either-or" of redevelopment and poverty

deconcentration. While much has been written on the latter, to investigate the success of policies that move low income residents to higher income communities, little has been done to examine the impact of redevelopment or deconcentration on gentrifying communities.

Examining these issues may offer an opportunity to better understand and problematize the assumptions implied in mixed income housing strategies. Further, knowing more about the way in which living in a neighborhood as it changes affects the sense of community identity and belonging – as well as quality of life will help to better understand both the qualitative dimensions of neighborhood change and the ways in which they support or challenge the assumptions on which modern housing policy are based. Beyond the individual impacts, understanding these issues will help to know whether and how low income and long term residents are able to represent themselves in the new structure of neighborhood organization. Finally, knowing more about these issues will help reveal whether the current quest for mixed income redevelopment, in housing policy and in city planning efforts, will benefit low income residents or represent urban renewal in a new form, where displacement is social rather than physical.

Chapter 3: Case Selection, Research Questions, Research Design, and Positionality

To better understand the ways in which agency has been exercised, abridged, and

expanded through policy, planning and neighborhood interactions, I conducted

ethnographic research in a recently redeveloped neighborhood in Washington, DC that

has undergone dramatic demographic and physical changes. Through this study, I sought

to understand the implications of remaining in gentrifying neighborhoods for low income

residents. I interviewed policy makers, nonprofit practitioners, as well residents of

various tenures, ethnicities, ages, and incomes in the community and observed at public

hearings, informal meetings, day to day activities, and outreach activities. Through case

study research on the Columbia Heights neighborhood in Washington, DC, I focused on

three primary research questions derived from current literature regarding mixed income

redevelopment:

1. What is the relationship between place, sense of community and identity for long term residents in changing neighborhoods?
2. What does the ongoing presence of long term residents give them access to in their changing neighborhoods?
3. How are long term residents represented in the redeveloped community?

Together, these questions will allow me to reflect on the assumptions underlying current

efforts to promote a particular form of redevelopment through city planning and

affordable housing policies and practices. In this chapter I outline and justify the research

design for this project, focusing on the use of case study and ethnographic research and

explore the theoretical support and critique of this design. Then, I discuss the specific case and explain how it was selected, including the neighborhood and citywide contexts that make the case relevant. Further, I explain the specific methods used to answer my research questions. Finally, I explain my position in the research, including my personal and professional background, assumptions on entering the field, and challenges and opportunities that arose as a result.

Research Design

This study primarily relied on qualitative methods to understand the perspectives of multiple actors in the Columbia Heights neighborhood of Washington, DC. According to de Vaus (2001), researchers should attempt to select cases based on the extent to which a particular case can be an exemplar or a test of theory, rather than through statistical selection because case studies are not statistically generalizable. De Vaus (2001) and Stake (2005) argue that the number of cases can be determined by the researcher based on the potential for external validity. Further, researchers may use a single critical case, or a single case that meets all the requirements of a well-formulated and clear theory, to investigate a phenomenon (de Vaus, 2001). Using a single case allowed me to thoroughly explore a particular neighborhood and a particular phenomenon within that community. It also allowed me to test key assumptions attached to current theories regarding the benefits of mixed income development in a setting regarded as an exemplar of such development (as discussed further below).

Traditionally identified with a constructivist view that there are multiple truths and knowledges, qualitative research often seeks to uncover the varying truths from a multiplicity of actors, building rich descriptions of the social world (Denzin, 1998;

Newman & Benz, 1998). Duncan and Ley (1993) caution, however, that qualitative research can be post-positivistic as researchers seek to know all that is knowable and find an ultimate truth in a given research question. Hammersley, (1992) similarly argues that a "methodism" philosophy relies on a scientific method in qualitative research as a means to a single truth. While quantitative data in this case is an important element in the illustration of context, it does not explain why, and, more importantly, it cannot convey feelings of inclusion, cultural integration, or daily interactions within the community (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998; Forester, 1999) and can, in fact be problematic by limiting researchers to asking "questions that can only be answered through qualitative research strategies" (Gaber, 1993, p. 137).

Qualitative methods are critiqued for lack of rigor in analysis, case selection and data collection, leading researchers to argue, alternately for a highly structured and rule-bound methodology (Yin, 2002), for a more naturalistic inquiry allowing for gradual emergence of questions and data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and a hybrid acknowledging the need for flexibility in qualitative research, while still maintaining structure of internal and external validity. Validity broadly is "how accurately the account represents participants' realities of the social phenomena and is credible to them" (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Specifically, reliability or internal validity refers to the extent to which the researcher measured what she intended. Credibility or external validity is the truth value of the research or, how believable is it to the reader? (Creswell J. W., 1998; de Vaus, 2001). From a constructivist or critical paradigm perspective, validity refers to the interpretation, rather than the data itself (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Because this project was primarily exploratory research about social interactions of residents living in a changing community, it is best told through the experience of the residents themselves through an ethnographic research process. Ethnographic research allowed multiple narratives to emerge and thus avoid the creation of one single narrative (Lefebrvre, 1991; Harvey, 1996). Because planning has often been critiqued for only presenting the narrative of dominant cultures (Sandercock L. , 1998), it was important to unearth a variety of narratives about neighborhood change in Columbia Heights. Having the opportunity to observe and participate in the culture of residents, nonprofit organizations, and the City gave me the chance to better understand the ways in which the narratives about change are formed and how those have impacted how the community has changed.

Further, ethnography is used to get a deeper understanding of the context, patterns of daily life and perceptions of the neighborhood residents (Creswell J. W., 1998). The goal of the study was achieve "thick description" of a culture, or "a stratified hierarchy of meaningful structures in terms of [what] is produced, perceived and interpreted, and without which they would not, in fact, exist" (Geertz, 1973, p. 7). This thick description was key to explaining the way that different residents of Columbia Heights; City government staff and policy makers; and service providers and advocates understood the changes in the community. In addition, I was able to understand the conflicting norms between and within those groups.

Ethnography is characterized by exploration of particular social phenomena, the interpretation of the flow of social discourse, translation of the phenomena to make it accessible to others, and what Geertz (1973, pp. 20-21) calls "exceedingly extended

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acquaintances with extremely small matters" (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998; Geertz, 1973). In Columbia Heights, I explored what norms such as hanging out on street corners and public parks meant to those who hung out and how they were interpreted by those who were unfamiliar with the norms of an older time in Washington, DC. I also explored the activities of advocates and how those activities and interactions with residents and city government officials affected the outcomes for the budget and particular projects planned for preservation.

Ethnographic analysis has been critiqued as biased guesswork lacking objectivity (Geertz, 1973); for exerting control over subjects using illegitimate expertise; and for being more focused on contributions to language, rather than solution finding (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998). However, many researchers argue that there is no unbiased research because units of analysis, variables included and types of data used necessarily involve choices by the researcher (Flyvberg, 2002; Guba, 2005). Guba and Lincoln offer a strong criticism of the concept of objectivity, stating that it is "a mythological creature that never existed, save in the imaginations of those who believe that knowing can be separated from the knower" (2005, p. 208). Moreover, social science research necessarily involves interaction with the world "because we cannot study the world without being a part of it" (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998, p. 249). Sandercock argues that "what we see is shaped by the questions we ask, which in turn are shaped by the (sometimes implicit, sometimes explicit) theories that we bring to our subject" (1998, pp. 6-7).

While we cannot erase biases, the remedy for this is to build thick description from extensive experience in the field in order to both transcend biases (Bernard, 1995), have the adequate tools to translate social actions (Geertz, 1973), and make those biases

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explicit in the discussion of the research findings (Fetterman, 1998). Although the policy relevance of ethnography has been questioned, many ethnographic researchers have used their work to provide a vehicle for voice of marginalized groups in political and social action (Duneier, 1999; Sletto, 2002; Rodgers, 2007) or to explain complex relationships in policy issues at multiple scales (Hyra, 2008). Through this research I hoped to understand policy and planning interventions from the ground up using Sandercock's (1998) understanding of "planning from below" that encompasses perspectives from different and often marginalized voices to more broadly understand the challenges, opportunities and available solutions to policy and planning.

Case Selection

In 2008 the first Target store in the District of Columbia opened in the Columbia Heights Neighborhood. It had been built on land formerly owned by the City, and the development process was managed by the City through development agreements when it sold the land to the developers. The City was proud of the development and the results, which included approximately 250 units of affordable housing, significant retail development, and new residents moving in and renovating existing homes, all without the direct displacement through demolition that characterized the Urban Renewal developments of the previous century.

In the meantime, the DC Department of Housing and Community Development (DCDHCD) was funding the purchase of formerly market rate, Section 8 subsidized, and rent controlled building by their tenants to guarantee that they could remain, along with funding the preservation of these buildings as rentals. This was done through the District's unique Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA), which offers tenants the

right of first refusal when the building is sold. The District further supports that right

through funding for low income residents and through grants to tenant organizers to help

tenants understand and manage the complex process. These combined approaches to

affordable housing creation and preservation meant that more than 18 percent of the units

in Columbia Heights were income- restricted.

The trajectory of Columbia Heights seemed like a win-win for long term residents, in

stark contrast to the gentrification processes in the rest of the city where few if any long

term residents, who had lived through the decline and neglect of the late part of the 20th

century, could benefit from the new amenities in the community. Columbia Heights had

become a mixed income community that evolved, not through mobility that disrupts

social networks, places low income, primarily minority residents in unfamiliar often all-

white communities, and is skewed toward residents who may be willing to move or stay

in the neighborhood into which they moved. Rather, this intervention retained residents in

their communities and brought in a new type of neighbor: the affluent, mostly white new

residents who demanded and were granted different types of amenities, such as sit-down

restaurants, shopping, improved City services, and updated social spaces.

Moreover, the structure of community-based and community-serving organizations in

advocacy and lobbying offer a unique case for the potential of institutions to mobilize

around policy issues and communities. The District's nonprofit housing and community

developers are mobilized in several venues:

- The Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development (CNHED),
  which acts as an advocate for policy and budget issues related to affordable
  housing as well as a watchdog organization for city agencies administering
  affordable housing funding and programs; the

- Washington Interfaith Network (WIN), which has focused on neighborhood-level (specifically Columbia Heights and the surrounding area) housing interventions, as well as citywide housing advocacy goals;
- The Office of the Tenant Advocate (OTA), a quasi-governmental agency that advocates on behalf of tenants and tenant groups for policy issues; and
- The DC Preservation Network, a meeting of nonprofit and for-profit developers, government agencies, and tenant advocates and organizers, organized by the Urban Institute. This group meets monthly to discuss at-risk apartment buildings serving low income populations such as those with expiring affordability covenants, those with an offer of sale, or those with failing physical assessment scores from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

This level of coordination of efforts, along with the political traction gained through those efforts, offered a unique means of understanding the various ways that housing policy is part of the overall political process, the challenges advocacy organizations face who are not connected through these groups, and the relationship between different types of advocacy organizations, the city, and the residents of Columbia Heights. Finally, understanding the work and political power of these groups may help to better understand the way in which long term residents have remained in Columbia Heights, as well as the origins and potential solutions to the cultural and political conflicts in the neighborhood.

I selected the Columbia Heights neighborhood as both an intrinsic and instrumental case using Stake's framework for case selection. As such, this study worked within "a zone of combined purpose" (Stake, 2005, p. 88) by both illuminating this case specifically and the overall interest of understanding contested neighborhoods broadly. Columbia Heights has experienced change in many ways over the past century, including urban renewal, riots, and gentrification. More recently, Columbia Heights also won an Urban Land Institute award for successfully implementing New Urbanist principles. It is, in many ways, emblematic of the current best practices of planning and community development.

Further, my knowledge of the community from the standpoint of being a former employee of the city's Department of Housing and Community Development and resident of the District of Columbia offer the opportunity to draw on existing connections, local knowledge and comprehension of policy, informal rules, and history that enable thick description of multiple levels of a city with a pronounced history of racial division, decline, housing investment and rapid redevelopment.

Further, in the selection of Columbia Heights as a case for research, I was able to examine a formerly segregated neighborhood with a significant population of low income, minority residents that had changed into a mixed income community, after significant investment by the City, private developers, nonprofit developers, small business owners, and residents. Further, through this case of a neighborhood where a mix of low and high income residents was achieved and maintained, I could examine the underlying assumptions regarding the role of mixed income communities in the daily lives of low income residents.

In order to understand and describe the way in which long term residents experience the changed neighborhood, and to the discussion of planning in Columbia Heights, I employed a variety of primarily qualitative methods to this project. I conducted audio-recorded interviews with a wide range of individuals and representatives of organizations and agencies. Further, I analyzed historical documents, including maps, plans, reports, and newspaper articles. Finally, I observed and was a participant observer in public spaces, meetings, rallies, and private bars and restaurants; and analyzed data on housing development to determine what the dramatic changes in Columbia Heights have meant to long term, primarily low income residents. To do this, I have also investigated the way in

which the various actors in the neighborhood have interacted to create the change that has occurred.

Research Questions

I started my ethnographic fieldwork in January of 2012 in the northwest Washington, DC neighborhood of Columbia Heights. However, I also conducted initial observation and interviews in 2010 and 2011 in order to refine my questions, maintain connections, and gain a perspective on the more recent changes in the neighborhood. In 2012, I formally began a multi-sited ethnography, conducting more than a year of interviews, observation, and archival research. Instead of three geographic sites, this study examined three interacting scales: government institutions, nonprofit institutions, and the neighborhood itself. In order to address my three primary research questions, stated above, I identified more detailed research questions related to my case:

1. What is the relationship between place, sense of community and identity for long term residents?
   - How has "community" been defined by residents, advocates, and policy makers?
   - How have relationships among residents changed?
   - How have the patterns of daily life of long term residents changed? How do these relate to their sense of belonging in the community?
2. What does the on-going presence of long term residents give them access to in their changing community?
   - How has the landscape or network of local institutions changed? How do these changes affect residents' lives?
   - Are there particular services or needs that long term residents can no longer meet locally? How do residents cope with this gap?
   - What kinds of opportunities are provided in the transformed neighborhood and how do long term residents relate to them?
3. How are long term residents represented in the community?
   - How has participation in the TOPA process shaped residents' collective voice in the larger neighborhood or in city politics? How does that role compare to low income residents living in other types of subsidized housing?

- How are neighborhood narratives remembered, expressed, and politicized?

Research Methods

In 2012, I interviewed more than 55 residents who had been in Columbia Heights from under two years to more than 50 years, nonprofit leadership and frontline staff, City agency staff, council members, local police, advocates, and housing developers. Figure four illustrates the interviewees by various categories, including role in the research and ethnicity. These interviews were all digitally recorded and later transcribed and analyzed for common themes, language, and stories. Additionally, I informally interviewed other residents while hanging out in the 14th and Girard Park. To capture these informal interviews, I took field notes after leaving the field for the evening. This informality was primarily a logistical requirement due to the busy and dense nature of the park. Further, I did not want to lose the conversations that were had with residents who were uncomfortable with the formal interview process. My notes from the interviews were also transcribed. However, Duneier (1999) argues, "we are reminded that interviewing does not necessarily produce a clear understanding of…personal choices, even if we do get to hear the vocabulary through which they explain their conditions" (p. 168).

Relationship to Columbia Heights	
Residents	**32**
Homeowners:	20
Coops	4
Renters	11
Less than 2 years	5
2-10 Years	4
ten to twenty	7
Greater than 20	16
Advocates	**21**
Citywide	8
Neighborhood-focused	13
Developers	4
Government	**21**
Agency Staff	19
Elected official	2
Ethnicity of Interviewees	
Asian	2
African American	20
Latino	6
White Not Hispanic	25
Residents	**32**
Asian	1
African American	14
Latino	4
White Not Hispanic	13
Total Interviewees	**55**

To address this, as I began my field work, I built additional relationships with community

gatekeepers (Creswell J. W., 1998) through volunteer work in nonprofit organizations,

hanging out in public parks, and reconnecting with existing contacts in the District -- to

gain a broader understanding of the perspectives of residents and to gain access to groups

that do not currently work with city agencies. Gatekeepers played significant roles in

access for my research. Residents such as Ann, who introduced me to neighbors and City

officials with whom she had significant relationships; Ed and Mike, who could assure other park users that I was both legitimate and not to be harassed; and key City staff members also provided an insight into the groups with whom they interacted and represented, and also provided access to others.

Further, I observed numerous community meetings and events such as Area Neighborhood Commission meetings, friends of the park group meetings, the weekly farmers market, and ribbon cutting ceremonies. I also observed in public spaces in the community such as parks, bars and restaurants, retail establishments, and the sidewalks. I also was a participant observer at one particular park in the community. I spent the year building relationships through this type of participant observation and what Bernard (1995) refers to as "hanging out" and establishing a presence and allow access to groups and individuals that I might not have the opportunity to access through existing networks, specifically African American men and women who were unaffiliated with a tenant organizing group (Rodgers, 2007; Venkatesh, 2006). Bernard suggests that hanging out is a means of participant observation that allows researchers to get to know people and identify issues and opportunities in a community (Bernard, 1995). Rodgers (2007) argues that hanging out gives the opportunity for "events that might not initially be considered germane to a research project…to actively 'force' themselves onto the researcher" (p. 446). In this case, I was made aware of the diversity of long term residents, the importance of community and community history, and the way in which the public spaces reflect the diversity of the community that inhabits them.

Bernard suggests that participant observation allows the researcher to both build rapport with the community and have access to business as usual within groups and institutions

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(Bernard, 1995). Duneier used participant observation to observe and participate in activities to which he would have had difficult accessing in his research with homeless venders in New York (Duneier, 1999). Participant observation was one of the ways I gained access to low income renters, as well as data on affordable housing in DC. I actively participated in working group meetings on tenant purchase with the Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development (CNHED). Though I had been previously connected to this group through my work with DHCD, tenant organizers were cautious on making connections initially. Further, through the tenant organizers I knew previously, I observed at tenant board and cooperative meetings. I also observed at the annual Tenant Town Hall, rallies for support of affordable housing, the public meetings of the Comprehensive Housing Strategy Task Force, and membership meetings of the CNHED. During these direct and participant observation events, I had informal conversations with residents and advocates who were aware of my research, which were incorporated into my analysis. I took frequent field notes during or after these observations, wrote memos, and transcribed both for analysis of themes, my own bias, and my changing perspective.

I also conducted significant archival research in newspaper archives, blogs and list-servs; government and nonprofit reports; testimony of various commissions; legal decisions and briefs; and public plans at the Washington DC history section of the Washington, DC Public Library, the DC Archives, the National Archives, and the Washington, DC Historical Society Library. From these I was able to understand the origins of planning interventions and social conflict in Columbia Heights; broad public reaction to changes in

the community; and the evolution of policies influencing change in the neighborhood over the past 50 years.

In addition, I used my previous relationships through DC government to access not only the nonprofit sector, but also those in government. Often this meant using existing contacts to find the appropriate channels for institutional knowledge of the redevelopment in Columbia Heights and affordable housing policy in the District. Through them I was also able to access current data from the Office of Planning, as well as historic reports and photographs. I also used my experience working in District government as a source to enhance my understanding of the meanings and culture of government affordable housing agencies and decisions. Because of my previous employment, I entered the field with an understanding of housing and community development programs and actors in the District. Further, I had an understanding of the relationships within the City government and between the City and nonprofit organizations working on community development, community services and housing development citywide. This knowledge provided access through existing connections both in the City and with nonprofit organizations and the knowledge of where to find information and institutional knowledge.

Finally, Washington, DC is often characterized as a small southern town by those who have lived there for decades, meaning that informal conversations in one sector of the city result in making contacts in an area completely unrelated. For me, this was both through my waitressing job at the Tune Inn, a small local bar that has been serving the same Capitol Hill clientele for decades, and through friendships that had nothing to do with planning. At the Tune Inn and through friends, I met a planner who has been

working in the DC region (in Columbia Heights, among other locations) since the early 1960s, a homicide detective who was involved in anti-gang activity in the 1990s, residents who had grown up in and around Columbia Heights, and people who had been involved in the fights over historic preservation. These contacts provided both informal insights, feedback, formal interviews, photographs, and additional contacts for my research.

Question 1: What is the relationship between place, sense of community and identity for long term residents?
- How has "community" been defined by residents, advocates, and policy makers?
- How have relationships among residents changed?
- How have the patterns of daily life of long term residents changed? How do these relate to their sense of belonging in the community?

To answer the first question, I relied on in-depth interviews, observation, and content analysis to understand how various actors have defined "community" in Columbia Heights both historically and in the present day context. The interviewees were a combination of policy makers and planners from District government, community advocates who may or may not be based in the community, and residents, both new and long term. I accessed these groups through existing contacts in District government and relationships with advocates built and developed both in and out of my employment in DC. I also focused on residents both in two Limited Equity Cooperatives either purchased or in process of purchase through the right of first refusal and residents in traditional income-restricted affordable housing units to understand the role that housing plays for residents' sense of belonging and attachment to community. I accessed these residents through participant observation with nonprofit organizations in the neighborhood. In asked residents how they would describe their community, how it has changed, and the

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how they see it changing in the future. However, beyond that, I allowed residents to tell

me how they thought about their neighborhood, including feelings specifically about

safety, raising children in the neighborhood, and the new amenities and City services.

 I also analyzed the content of blogs such as "DCist", "Greater Greater Washington," and

"Prince of Petworth", newspaper articles from the Washington Post, and DC City Paper,

and maps and redevelopment documents focusing on Columbia Heights beginning from

the post riot rebuilding to the present to understand how the community has been

represented and defined in policy documents, by outside residents, and in popular media.

Question 2: What does the on-going presence of long term residents give them access to in their changing community?

- How has the landscape or network of local institutions changed? How do these changes affect residents' lives?
- Are there particular services or needs that long term residents can no longer meet locally? How do residents cope with this gap?
- What kinds of opportunities are provided in the transformed neighborhood and how do long term residents relate to them?

I used interviews, content analysis, and participant observation to answer these questions.

I interviewed leaders in organizations that are both community-based and community-

serving (though not necessarily based inside the neighborhood); residents who access

those services; and governmental and nongovernmental entities that fund and interact

with those organizations. Content analysis and observation of public hearings and

organizational meetings and websites were used to understand background and roles in

advocacy, public services, and redevelopment activities in Columbia Heights. Finally, I

used participant observation to understand who accesses particular services in the

community and how those services are accessed.

Question 3: How are long term residents represented in the community?

To answer this question, I conducted interviews and analyzed policy documents.

Interviews with residents, neighborhood leaders, and advocates were done to understand how they participate in decisions about how the neighborhood changes. The following questions guided the interviews:

- What (if any) public hearings or planning activities have you participated in for the neighborhood? In your building?
- How did you find out about the event?
- Were you part of a group? Or just yourself?
  - Which Group?
- How would you describe those interactions?
- How would you characterize your involvement in the event(s)?
- What did you expect from the event? What did you experience? What was any outcome?
- Were there additional activities to organize about this issue (support, opposition, policy development)?

I will interviewed policy makers, including current and former council members and city staff to understand how they perceived the participation of long term residents in Columbia Heights in decision making processes related to neighborhood's future. The following questions guided the discussion:

- Discuss redevelopment/policy changes you have been part of in Columbia Heights.
- What, if any stakeholder meetings, charrettes, or public hearings were held?
- Who was invited (if stakeholder meeting or charrette)?
- Who participated?
- What was the role of residents in the event?

- How did you use resident responses, feedback and/or participation for the final outcome?
- Was there any opposition? What channels were used? (Rallies? Testimony? Letters? Councilmembers?)

How has participation in the TOPA process shaped residents' collective voice in the larger neighborhood or in city politics? How does that role compare to low income residents living in other types of subsidized housing?

To answer this question, I conducted interviews with leaders of cooperative boards that have purchased their building through the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act; tenant group leaders living in other types of assisted housing; housing advocates through the Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development (CNHED); tenant organizers through the DC Tenants' Advocacy Coalition (TENAC) and CNHED; policy makers in housing and economic development; new residents in Columbia Heights. My goal will be to understand the ways in which residents of TOPA buildings perceive their roles in the community; how they are perceived in the neighborhood and across the city; and the role that umbrella organizations play in their representation citywide.

How are neighborhood narratives remembered, expressed, and politicized?

This question was answered using a combination of interviews, direct observation, and content analysis. For this question and question 1b, I conducted oral history interviews with long term residents and local activists to understand the history of events, places and relationships that continue to impact the means, significance, and results of redevelopment and representation of Columbia Heights. I used direct observation in public hearings, tenant meetings, housing rallies, and other community meetings to

understand how those events play a role in current events related to the community. Finally, I analyzed transcripts and reports of meetings and planning charrettes over the past several decades of redevelopment; news articles from the post-riot rebuilding through the present redevelopment to understand the way that events have been portrayed and understood by outside actors.

Positionality

Ethnography is necessary to critically examine existing power structures, hegemonic thought and social norms. Understanding my own position as a white middle class woman, a former DC Government employee and an educated woman from the suburbs became important to challenging those issues in Columbia Heights and across the city. Moreover, considering my position helped me to better problematize the dominant narrative of urbanization and change in Washington, DC. Problematizing the positionality of the researcher has the potential to "deconstruct practices of racism" (hooks, 2009, p. 105) by making the researcher aware that her lens changes the way she may interpret particular findings (Spivak, 1990). Ethnographic researchers often acknowledge these issues upon entering the field due to issues around race, class and education (Duneier, 1999; Freeman, 2006; Brown-Saracino, 2009; Hyra, 2008; Stack, 1974). The perspective I brought influenced the questions I asked, and the groups with which I interacted. In *Belonging,* bell hooks argues that "observing the world from the standpoint of "whiteness" may indeed distort perception, impede understanding of the way racism works both in the larger world as well as the world of our intimate interactions" (2009, p. 105). Researchers have found that this same positionality in a racially charged situation can be a benefit in encouraging honesty from those who identify with the position of the researcher. Freeman, for instance, found that his position as a black man may have

expedited trust among low income black residents in his study area, while his position as an educated researcher played a similar role among middle class residents (Freeman, 2006). Similarly, Hyra found that his position as a white male, while challenging with many long term residents in the short term, may have engendered greater honesty among white residents and policy makers who assumed, based on his race and education that he was "one of them" (Hyra, 2008).

One of the public spaces where I spent a significant amount of time during fieldwork was a small park on 14th Street. The first few weeks I hung out in the park, I was careful about when I was there and how late I stayed. I was uncomfortable with the public drinking en masse that happened in the afternoon (in contrast to the quiet more individual drinking in the morning) and the music and dancing that often came with an afternoon, along with unknown people in the park and increased marijuana use, tended to move me out of the park. But as I grew more comfortable, I began hanging out later in the day as personal radios came out and park users danced together and alone to the music.

My understandings of safety were largely shaped by my background as a white middle class woman from rural and suburban areas. Activities that happened daily in parks in this community in DC were, in my experience, limited to sanctioned festivals, bars, house parties, or other events that were managed and held an air of legality. They were not in public parks fully in view of police and passers-by. I felt nervous and unsafe in spite of the visibility and wrote in my fieldnotes that my research would not be helped by an arrest or compromise of safety. This was also why I chose not to participate in the drinking that happened on a daily basis. Although it may have more quickly allayed the fears that I was a police officer or otherwise not to be trusted (which came up frequently

with a handful of park users), I did not believe that drinking in the park would help me or my research. I would still be an outsider who was trying to act in a particular way simply to be an insider. However, as I began to better understand the landscape in terms of safety, who I could trust, and the significant management of behavior in the park, I was able to gauge what was *actually* safe rather than what I perceived as safe.

Race played an intermittent role in my day-to-day activities in my research. Although I imagined it would be a barrier with residents, it rarely presented itself overtly, with the exception of a handful of park users who felt that I was an opportunistic white woman there to "get hers" and go. One or two older men went as far as to suggest that I put the park users at risk for arrest and harassment through my presence because if anything happened to me in the park, the police would shut it down and be "on us in a second." However, more generally my position as an outsider was layered. I was neither from DC, nor African American. I was also comparatively young, single and had no children. All of these things played a role in the way I was viewed. I was also not from Columbia Heights specifically and could not talk about experiences from high school, the relationships my parents had with others in the park and in the neighborhood, or the buildings that used to exist before the riots or the rebuilding in the neighborhood. While race was always in the background, for the residents it was not the sole factor that set me apart.

Conversely, what often provided an entrée into discussions with some long term residents is that I grew up in the South, where the overwhelming majority of the older residents who hung out in the park grew up. In spite of the racial baggage that comes from being from the South, southern football, food and weather were frequent starts to conversations with the men who grew up in North Carolina, Virginia, Florida and Alabama, moving

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north for work, family or social opportunity in the 1950s and 1960s. There is also a particular type of cultural similarity in terms of speaking to strangers, greeting others on the street and politeness that may have played a role.

The racial impact was different for casual passersby. Younger residents, particularly men under 35 tended to stare as they passed the park. It occasionally became awkward. I did not always notice, but the men with whom I hung out noticed. Given that these types of looks were not common in any other context in the city, I assumed that this was due to the fact that I was the only white woman in a park full of African Americans, particularly men. The park also had a questionable reputation among neighborhood residents that may have caused the passersby to look askance. Typically, I took the position of Ed, one of my primary contacts in the park who argued that if you stare at him, he'll say hello to you. Often both of us greeted those who stared.

The experience of working for District government gave me a contrasting perspective on the way in which policies originated. In many ways these experiences provided another element of the narrative, contrasting the ways in which gentrification, housing development and affordable housing advocacy in DC is understood and talked about. It also shaped my perspective about who the actors are in DC's physical and demographic change. I understood the role of District government to loom large in the decisions about redevelopment, as well as that of the housing advocates, with individual residents finding representation through those groups. As a result, I had to look for groups and individuals who had played parts in the redevelopment outside of the affordable housing and government arenas.

Two of the most important ways that I examined my position in the field were field notes and memos and through daily interaction with friends and acquaintances outside of the formal research process. Frequent writing and reading of that written work helped me to better understand and problematize my own position – as well as to view its evolution as I began to better understand what happened in the neighborhood and the various perspectives on why things happened. However, as important were the informal interactions with unconnected people in bars, at parties, and in other social spaces both in and out of Columbia Heights. Because the change in DC generally is a hot topic in blogs and other media, neighborhood meetings, and the speeches of public officials, I was made acutely aware of my position in the research. I found myself hearing conflicting world views as my friends, vaguely aware of my research candidly shared their views on neighborhood change in DC that ranged from being booster-for-growth to apologetic and guilty for their roles in gentrification. However, through those conflicting conversations, I was more easily able to explore and critique my own position as a researcher.

Chapter 4: Neighborhood Transformation in Chocolate City

Introduction

My first assignment at the Washington, DC Department of Housing and Community Development was the revision of the Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) for Low Income Housing Tax Credits. The 65 year old African American program manager was less than impressed with the 28 year old white woman who walked into his office to talk to him about the QAP. After a few visits to his office, the program manager began to open up, not about the program, but about how he sees Washington, DC. He said there are "three

DCs." First there is the international DC, folks who don't bother with District government (if they're even aware of it). If they have an issue, they go to their consulate or to the federal government. Then there's the federal DC. In this group, are the federal workers who moved to the District for their careers. They may be aware of DC government, they may not. But they are short timers, not committed to the city. Then there's black DC--"the rest of us." He started to revise to say maybe there are more DCs – but his initial thoughts about the three DCs resonates with much of the city. And while his description fell along racial lines, I think his point was that DC residents differ in terms of their commitment to or attachment to the city as residents. Later, while interviewing a long term resident and community activist, I heard a similar argument – she argued that there are those who are in the "City in the Clouds" and the "City on the Hill" – they come and go and use the District as a stepping stone for other things. Then there are the people on the ground – those who are "largely invisible," living, working, and "making their lives here."

When I stepped into my colleague's office, I was, like all newcomers to the District – brilliant (at least I knew it). I had a Masters degree in Public Policy from a private University in the area, two years of experience, and a fabulously fresh perspective. He was a long term resident – he remembered the city before home rule when, as he told me, the District was used as a slush fund by Congress, and African Americans did not work for the City government. He remembered the riots in 1968, as well as the cadre of Civil Rights leaders who arrived in the District determined to make meaningful change. And he remembered the growth of the African American middle class as a result of government hiring practices and minority contracting rules. I was part of the newest wave of

newcomers, a Mayor Fenty[2] hire. He was a Mayor Barry[3]hire. He belonged, in my mind, to the narrative of corruption, ineptitude and crime of that generation. Over time, my black and white view was challenged and I moved between the group of transient young white residents and those that have committed to the City.

Race is certainly the most visible divider the city might offer; it's definitely the easiest to identify. But the meaning of the changes in the District--physical, social, economic, and cultural--cannot be encapsulated by such a narrow definition of the divide in perspectives. When the District was granted home rule by Congress in 1974, the power void, once filled by a presidentially appointed commission and Congress, was filled by a group of Civil Rights leaders who had moved to DC fresh from voter registration drives, freedom rides, and nonviolent protests in the Deep South. These newly-elected officials introduced redistributive policies and equity-focused protections that had long lasting effects on the way the City viewed neighborhoods and the residents living in them. There are elected officials, residents, government workers, activists and advocates who remember the city's formation as a quasi-independent entity in 1975. They remember the intentions of the progressive legislation passed in the '70s and '80s that guaranteed rent control, tenant "rights of first refusal" offering them the chance to purchase their

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[2] Adrian Fenty was an African American mayor in Washington, DC from 2007 to 2011 and remains a divisive figure in the recent history of the city – seen as a reformer by new residents and a symbol of the larger gentrification and "negro removal" of new, white DC by many African-American residents.
[3] Marion Barry was the mayor in Washington, DC from 1979 to 1991, and went briefly to prison after being caught smoking crack cocaine during an FBI sting operation in January 1990. He returned as mayor from 1995 to 1999. He has been the council member for Ward 8 since 1999.

buildings when they go up for sale[4], minority contracting, and protections for renters

prohibiting discrimination by source of income, race, sex, and sexual orientation.

But the city is changing. New generations of residents have moved in over the past 40

years. Although the District's population hemorrhaged over that time, an increasing

number of residents who moved in and bought homes have stayed and become aware of

and involved in District government. Over time, there has been a shift in the perception

of the role of the Civil Rights veterans who took power when DC gained Home Rule

authority; while long term residents associate this period and these leaders positively with

civil rights and a more progressive approach to governance, for newer, higher income

residents the narrative about this group is dominated by the theme of corruption. Tensions

around the role of this group in local perceptions are emblematic of the conflicting

understandings of neighborhood change. Those who moved in during the drug wars and

"murder capital of the US" years of the 1980s and 1990s appreciate the District's

progressive laws, but also remember finding needles in the parks and on the sidewalks,

gang violence and drive-by shootings in their neighborhoods, and a government that

often failed to send police officers, pick up trash or plow snow. The newest residents who

have moved in as the city became a desirable place to live for upper middle class and

white college graduates – with new amenities, restaurants and apartments – often don't

remember or aren't aware of the District's history as a progressive city. They hold the

corruption, blight, and rebirth narrative that has been told and repeated as a cautionary

tale against supporting older ideas or candidates. They moved into a snapshot of a city

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[4] In 1980, the District passed the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA), which gives tenants the
right of first refusal when their buildings are for sale. In addition, low income buildings are eligible to
receive funding for acquisition or rehabilitation of the buildings. The City also funds tenant organizers to
help tenant associations through the process.

that has moved beyond the struggle of decline and expect something different and congruent with their experiences in other places. Still, many new residents will say DC is transient – perhaps the most common way white and educated residents describe the city. They appear not to perceive—or to credit—the experience or presence of long-time residents: the 7th generation Washingtonians – or even those who moved from the segregated south in the 1960s in search of opportunity –those that made up the Chocolate City of the 1970s and 1980s. These long-time Washingtonians are renters who have lived in their units since their buildings were constructed 30 years ago, and homeowners who were the first African American on their block in the 1950s, or who bought as the only white person on their block in the 1980s.

Columbia Heights, which has in many ways anticipated the District's overall trajectory, is in a similar process of transition. Created as a suburb in the early 1900s for the white elite of the federal government workforce, including judges, lawyers and agency managers, Columbia Heights made the transition to a black majority by 1960. The end of enforceable restrictive covenants, the desegregation of schools and the opening of the suburbs to the African American middle class led to the disinvestment and abandonment that made Columbia Heights a low income, isolated neighborhood. The riots after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. destroyed the built environment in an era of massive urban disinvestment and decline nationwide. The community struggled through the last quarter of the 20th century with gangs, drugs, vacancy, poor housing conditions, and poverty. Yet in the first decade of the new century, after 40 years of city acquisition and ownership of land at the heart of the neighborhood, redevelopment has brought new urban designed retail stores such as Marshalls, Target, and Payless to the area; along with

small local businesses; and dense residential construction. Nonetheless, the ongoing effects of decline can still be felt in the education and income inequality and joblessness of those long term residents who remain in the neighborhood.

Yet despite the many challenges facing this neighborhood over the past 40 years, it has remained a place of community and organization. The narrative of decline, misery and rebirth that is told to justify the on-going neighborhood change, though compelling, misses the contribution and efforts of neighbors who became burned out after protesting code violations, calling the police, and trying to change their community from the inside. Further, the narrative fails to acknowledge the life and sense of community described by long term residents of Columbia Heights.

In this chapter I describe the unique history and political context of the District of Columbia and Columbia Heights. Specifically, I will discuss the evolution of political structures, physical development, and demographic changes that have reshaped the city and this neighborhood. I will also introduce the tensions and conflicting narratives that have emerged as the young city experiences increases in density, shifts in demographics and power changes in tandem. This chapter documents the norms, institutions and legislative structures, adopted after Home Rule, that have been drawn upon to address equity concerns in the redevelopment of Columbia Heights. In particular, I describe negotiations within the neighborhood, between community members and institutions, and among institutions in the city over the goals and form of neighborhood redevelopment, and the related conflicts and alliances that have emerged.

Columbia Heights and Washington, DC, a brief history

Located two miles north of the White House, the neighborhood of Columbia Heights was originally a street-car suburb of the City of Washington, within the District of Columbia. In L'Enfant's original plan Columbia Heights was outside the Federal City limit which ended at Florida Avenue, or Boundary Street. However, with the expansion of the streetcar line up 14th Street NW, the suburbs expanded to Columbia Heights (Cultural Tourism DC, 2008). Originally developed for wealthy whites working as upper management for the Federal government, the neighborhood was proud of its amenities, including its freedom from "objectionable classes" (Columbia Heights Citizens' Association, 1904). As the city expanded beyond its original boundaries, the road infrastructure deviated from the L'Enfant plan. However, in 1888, Congress passed the Highway Act, requiring all development to conform to the plan ((NPS) National Park Service, n.d.). The most tangible result of this planning effort for the area was the creation of small pocket parks, in some cases intended to be spaces for monuments and gardens. But ultimately, these leftover spaces became occupied spaces for animal grazing, garbage dumping and socialization among neighbors.

From the turn of the century until the 1940s the neighborhood gradually evolved, as the spaces between U Street and Columbia Heights urbanized. As the surrounding neighborhoods changed, the dividing line between white and black in Washington, DC, began to shift toward the neighborhood. In 1947, the all-white neighborhood association argued in the *Washington Star* that restrictive covenants requiring white-only buyers should be maintained. However, the organization's president said, "we feel a program of housing should be established which will provide colored persons with new, adequate

housing in locations where they can provide a home environment" (1947). In 1948, those covenants were deemed "unenforceable" by the *Supreme Court in Shelley vs Kraemer*. In 1949, the group also opposed the change of the all-white, state-of-the-art, yet under-enrolled Central High School to all-black Cardozo High School (1949). Donald, a native DC resident and planner in the region since the early 1960s recalls being in the last segregated class at the all-white Wilson Teacher's College formerly located in Columbia Heights. It became Washington Teachers College in the fall of 1954 before eventually being absorbed into the University of the District of Columbia. During his time at teachers' college, he recalls going out in the neighborhood from where he lived west of Rock Creek Park in the northwestern corner of the city:

> We used to go up there – they had kind of like a country music place. The kids I grew up with were country music types you know. And it was on Irving Street. And there was this post office facility that was close to the corner, but then they had this – it was a nightclub...And the thing is it was full of telephone operators because they had the facility right across the street. So they were always there. Boy meet girl, type situation. And at the time, of course, I was single, and…But uh…I think I mentioned they had a bowling alley across from the Tivoli theater upstairs…duckpins. I was there a couple times.

Donald further recalled that by the time he graduated in the spring of 1954, the neighborhood had "lots of blacks," but was not overwhelmingly black. According to census data, whites still held a majority across the neighborhood. However, compared to its early days as an all-white enclave, Columbia Heights was dramatically different. By 1955, the neighborhood had changed such that the *Evening Star* reported "The Columbia Heights Civic Association has grown, bloomed, and diminished with its neighborhood" (1955), and "now with few homeowners left, the association's membership has dwindled

from more than 1,000 in its heyday to some 300 persons, many unactive or living in other

parts of the city."

Figure 5: Columbia Heights Percentage of African American Residents, 1940-2010

1940

1960

1970

1990

2000

2010

0.0% to 10.0%

10.1% to 25.0%

25.1% to 50.0%

50.1% to 75.0%

75.1% to 100%
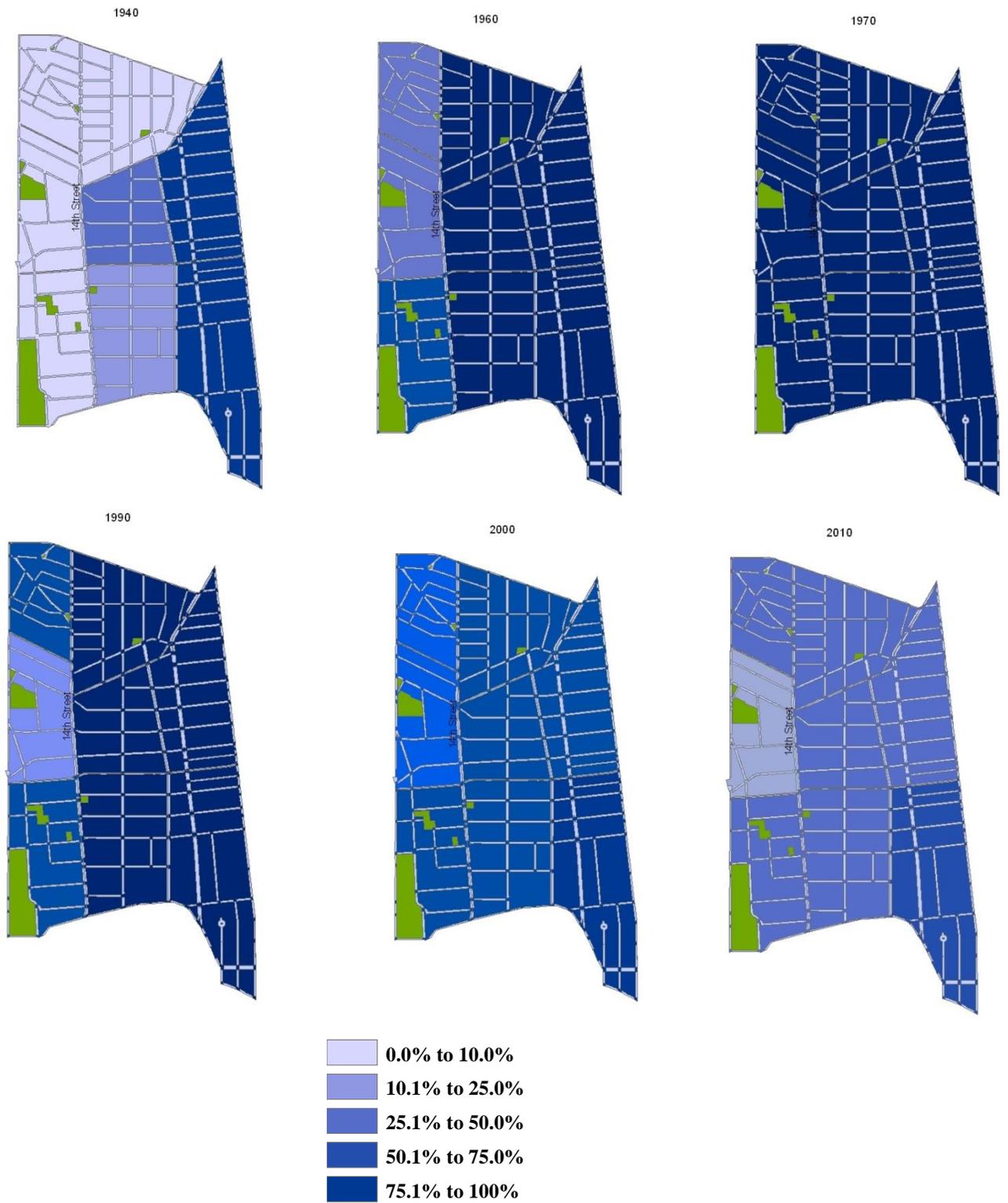
When schools in the District were desegregated by presidential mandate in 1953, neighborhoods like Columbia Heights that were adjacent to black neighborhoods changed quickly. Figure 5 illustrates the way the demographics of the neighborhood changed. The boundaries of Columbia Heights which fronts Howard University to the east and U Street to the south began to change as white residents, feeling the direct impact of the desegregation of housing and schools, continued their exodus to the suburbs. By 1950, the white and black population in Columbia Heights had shifted dramatically, with whites representing 56 percent of the population, and blacks representing 44 percent. The city as a whole remained overwhelmingly white until 1960. By then, the population of Columbia Heights had upended, with African Americans holding an overwhelming majority of the population in the neighborhood. Figure 6 illustrates the changes in race and ethnicity in Columbia Heights and the city. Though the District did not become majority black until 1970, Columbia Heights had become more than 75 percent black by 1960, after a major wave of white flight. At its height, between 1970 and 2000, the population of African Americans in Columbia Heights crested at near 100 percent, while the white population remained below ten percent. Meanwhile citywide, the African American and White populations hovered around 70 and 30 percent, respectively during the same time period.
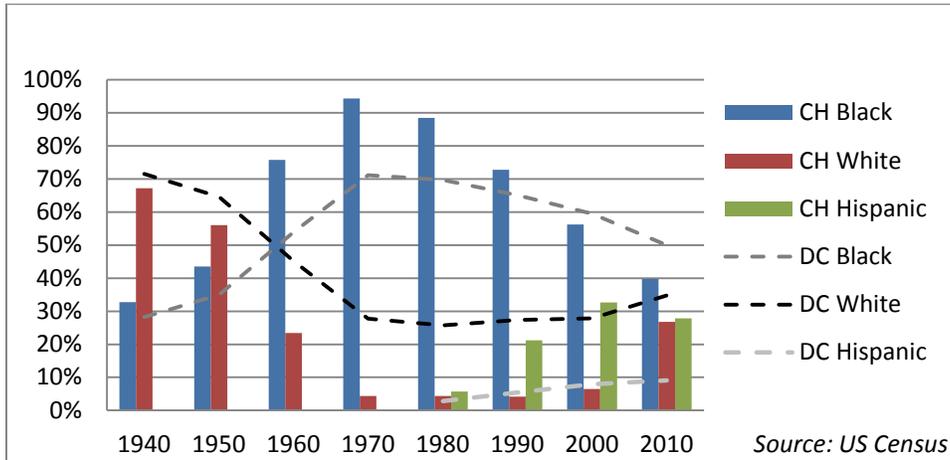
1968 Riots

Many longtime residents of Columbia Heights remember the liveliness of the 14th Street corridor in the 1960s. They speak about not having to go downtown to shop because everything they needed was right there in Columbia Heights. The Tivoli Theater located at the heart of the neighborhood had desegregated, and residents could go to movies and shop for groceries and clothing. Some remember going downtown at Christmas to look at the windows at Hechts department store, but found all their needs met in the neighborhood. These memories of residents echo the stories told in the newspapers at the time and have been repeated in brochures and common discourse trumpeting the neighborhood's evolution and return to viability.

Throughout the 1960s, Washington, DC was a location for African Americans moving up from rural parts of southern states such as North Carolina, Virginia, and South Carolina to find work and escape the segregated south. Additionally, Civil Rights workers organizing voter registration drives and other events in the South moved to DC to continue their work with organizations such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating

Committee (SNCC) and the NAACP. Many of these new residents became active in their communities and in city government as the Civil Rights Movement gained mainstream political traction.

By 1968, U Street at the southern boundary of the neighborhood had become the center of African American culture and activism. Organizations such as the Poor People's Campaign, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and the Black United Front were located around 14th and U Streets NW (White, et al., 2008). Stokely Carmichael worked with SNCC, along with Marion Barry, the former and longest serving Mayor of DC, who also worked with Pride, Inc, a youth empowerment organization (Jaffe, 1994). In addition 14th Street and 7th Street NW were two of the largest economic centers for shopping in the District, with a mix of African American and white-owned businesses primarily frequented by African Americans (White, et al., 2008). There were also increasing tensions between whites and African Americans in the District due to ongoing racial segregation in neighborhoods, high levels of poverty in the African American community, police treatment of African Americans and the white flight that followed desegregation of the school system (Clement, 2004/2005; Cherkasky, 1996/1997). Furthermore, the climaxing tension in the unsuccessful fight over home rule in the District of Columbia left many residents feeling powerless as the federal government retained the power to appoint the city's leaders, pass legislation, and make policy for the District (Cherkasky, 1996/1997).

Figure 7: 14th Street NW and Euclid Street NW, April, 1968

On the evening of April 4, 1968, when the news spread to 14th Street that Martin Luther

King, Jr had been assassinated, African Americans, led by Stokely Carmichael, marched

throughout the city's business district to request that business owners close their stores

out of respect for King. But it was not long before the crowd was out of hand and rioting

and looting began (White, et al., 2008). Over the next twelve days, 14,000 Federal troops

were called in to restore order and prevent additional rioting near Federal buildings, and

to avoid the violence from police that was defining the riots elsewhere (Jaffe, 1994). A

nearly finished plan was being developed to prevent the riots that had plagued Detroit and

Watts the previous summer. This plan was meant to protect the downtown and Federal

buildings, including the White House. Unlike many other cities where National

Guardsmen and police tried to maintain or restore order, the District's plan involved

Army troops, many of whom recently returned from Vietnam. Accordingly, when the

Army arrived, tanks were placed around the city to maintain order in the central city and Capitol building.

One of those Army soldiers was Mike, who told me that he had recently returned from Vietnam and was at Fort Bragg when they learned of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. They were sent to DC to maintain order and enforce martial law in the District where looting and fires were widespread and visible throughout the city. Elizabeth, an African American woman who moved to DC in 1955 said she could see the flames and burning from her house 7 blocks away from 14th Street before she knew what was happening and why. Ed, an African American man who was a young police officer in 1968 explained:

> As a matter of fact, in 68 when Dr. King was assassinated, I was right here [on Georgia Avenue], and there was a police call box on that corner there where the [store across the street] is because we didn't have radios at the time – you could call in every hour on the half hour – like 10:30, 11:30. And I called in about – I forget what time it was… and my sergeant said "Come in, man – Dr. King was assassinated, and we don't know what's going to go off." And we didn't have no gun – I was still an officer cadet – I wasn't but about 19 – or 20 years old. I caught a bus – the 7th Street bus. Went down to headquarters, stayed down there during the whole so-called "68 riots" I was down there at police headquarters. We just gambled mostly – played cards because we couldn't go out on the street – we could just write parking tickets.

Business owners criticized the city's nonviolent approach, believing that officials did not act while looters stole from their stores. However, the city countered that acting peacefully kept the rioters from becoming more violent (Rowan, 1968). Armed federal troops were stationed in the neighborhoods keeping order. Some residents still remember looting at the Safeway and other stores in the neighborhood. For one man in particular, his story about looting with his father was told in a matter-of-fact manner. Others spoke

about how martial law was enforced to reduce looting and additional rioting. However, in

the end, half of the property on 14th Street NW was destroyed and 5,000 permanent jobs

were lost, most of which were low-wage, low skilled jobs. The rioters were selective in

the burning of businesses, avoiding black owned businesses and business owners that

were friendly to the black community (Weil, 1968; Franklin, 1968). But Jaffe and

Sherwood stated, "Patterns of Commerce that had developed over decades and sustained

black neighborhoods were destroyed in three days" (Jaffe, 1994).

Figure 8: Tivoli Theater Building on which owners wrote "soul" on the windows to signify support.

After the riots Columbia Heights went through several efforts to rebuild with limited

success. In the first few years, the federal National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC)

through the Redevelopment Land Authority (RLA) was charged with developing Urban

Renewal Area plans. They worked in the three riot corridors: H Street NE, 7th Street NW,

and upper 14th Street NW to create new plans. However, the RLA was fraught with

complaints of slow and poor management of previous processes, including the notorious southwest waterfront redevelopment, which resulted in significant displacement of low income residents and turned RLA into a long term slumlord of properties awaiting demolition. The NCPC has been critiqued for being too federally focused. A report from the University of the District of Columbia in 1983 argued, "from the 1940s through the 1970s, neighborhood groups…had attempted to plan their neighborhoods within a city-wide planning vacuum. NCPC's professional planners were helpful when called upon, but their planning was concerned with the city as a national capital, not with the economic and social development of its neighborhoods." Organizations planning at the neighborhood level felt that "their plans…seemed to have been treated as wish-lists by District and federal officials, to be gratified for a time, then dropped" (Paige, 1983, p. 63).

In the case of 14th Street, significant planning efforts were initially made. The riots, ultimately an expression of frustration by African-Americans about the state of continued segregation and inequality in the immediate context of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., sparked a movement in the neighborhood for community control of redevelopment, businesses, and housing (Harvey, 1996). Jason, a young planner in 1968 who was responsible for developing the plan, explained that this was the beginning of black activism in Columbia Heights and recalls RLA's approach: "The community organization…really drove the process that resulted in writing of the Urban Renewal Plan controls as they ultimately were approved and all that was built. Thinking back at the time in terms of the bureaucratic response, there was a lot of concession – acquiescence if you will – to the community preferences…our political leanings at the time were to be

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accommodating to neighborhood preferences to the extent that that was possible."

Newspapers and Jason's own experience illustrated a publicly contentious relationship

between the community organizations and RLA as the neighborhood mobilized

opposition to the effort by RLA to impose an urban renewal plan on the neighborhood.

Unfortunately, many of the African Americans in Columbia Heights, as elsewhere in riot-

torn corridors, did not have access to capital that would have allowed for community

ownership and control of businesses in the neighborhood. Further, delays in funding and

a freeze on public housing development slowed the development significantly. As a result

a Washington Post article reported, "So, five years after the riots, sections of

Washington's inner city look like early postwar Europe: the rubble has been cleared, but

few new buildings have gone up. Old stores have not reopened, and little new

commercial development occurred. Inner-city shoppers have taken their business

downtown" (Mayer, 1973). Further, by 1973, a plan for the 14th Street Urban Renewal

Area stated that the neighborhood, " has the typical characteristics of a depressed decayed

area – widespread poverty, high rates of transiency and dependency, unemployment and

underemployment, vacant and substandard dwelling units, high crime levels particularly

narcotics trade, and a burned out half abandoned commercial strip. In general the

Northern section above is in better condition – physically and socially – than the other

parts of the project area. The urban renewal development slated for 14th Street will not be

visible until 1975 at the earliest" (1973, p. 2). In the end, because of the lack of

investment from the private market, the only investment that was made in housing

redevelopment was through federal programs for low income housing. This resulted in

significant long term affordability along 14th Street from the southern boundary of the

neighborhood to Irving Street, the current site of the Metro stop. Jason explained,

> Keep in mind that the market was not chomping at the bit to acquire sites in Columbia Heights. It had not a reputation that would be attractive to investors and certainly not to lenders - even though there might be a developer - developers being optimists by nature - who might be able to see around the corner, lenders didn't have that kind of optimism. So there was a period of time where things were fairly stagnant. And except for the fact that there were some sponsors of housing - federally assisted housing - because that only depended on HUD being able to come to the table with the financing. The commercial stuff - there was no way to finance that without commercial banking involved. And so in the early 70s, the first development had to do with federally assisted housing - which included some senior housing. And that's what sort of defined the character of the neighborhood from a redevelopment standpoint for a long time.

Complicating the redevelopment was home rule, which was granted to the District in

1974, going into effect in 1975. After two centuries of rule by the federal government,

including presidentially appointed commissioners, the District finally could elect its own

city council and Mayor. This meant that District residents could vote in their own council

members, organize governmental functions, and spend Federal and local revenues.

Although local ordinances, including the budget[5], still have to be approved by Congress,

and the District does not have a voting Representative in Congress, this sudden change

upended the power structure of the District. Further, the RLA was absorbed by the new

omnibus housing agency, while the NCPC remained under federal control. The NCPC

also retained the power to approve urban renewal plans, but the newly formed city

government now had representation on the NCPC.

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[5] In 2012, Washington, DC residents approved a referendum that would give the city budget autonomy. It is still pending Congressional review.

In other cities, political regimes or political machines directed the function and spending within local government and in the neighborhoods. Conversely, the District had been ruled by Federal intervention, the loss of which opened a vacuum as Congress left the District to its own devices in this early phase of home rule. Jaffe and Sherwood (1994) argue, "If it [the District] had not been under the thumb of racists in Congress for 100 years, it might have developed politics such as those in Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, and other cities" (p. 329). Meanwhile, the Civil Rights Acts had increased scrutiny on local spending while new programs provided direct federal support to community groups for organizing, service provision, and mobilization. As these programs and funding streams waned in other cities due to Federal funding declines, the District's unique political landscape helped maintain the momentum toward community self-determination.

Developing a Progressive Policy Agenda

When the Federal government's role diminished in the District, DC residents elected a mayor and city council comprised of officials who had been active in the Civil Rights Movement or other areas of social and racial justice. They were, moreover, overwhelmingly democratic. The legislation passed and the policies implemented, particularly in the decade after home rule, created a policy infrastructure that provided long term protection for low-income residents in the District. Two of these laws were the Human Rights Act of 1977 and the Rental Housing Conversion and Sale Act of 1980. The former protects DC residents from discrimination based on many factors, including source of income, effectively prohibiting landlords from refusing housing vouchers.

The latter, meanwhile, included rent control, condo conversion laws, and the Tenant Right of First Refusal, which gives tenants the right to purchase their building when there

is an offer of sale. The District also began funding tenant organizing through DHCD in

1980 to complement the funding of the purchase of buildings by their tenants through the

Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA). The legislation was intended to address the

rapidly changing area of Dupont Circle. Tenants were being forced out through

condominium conversions and rent increases, and the council hoped to keep residents in

place. TOPA passed in 1980, in spite of a veto threat from Congress due to concerns that

intervention in the housing market would result in further economic deterioration (96th

Congress Testimony of Marion Barry, 1980). Developers and landlords continue to argue

that TOPA prevents greater investment in neighborhoods, while organizers, tenants and

affordable housing advocates believe it is a powerful tool for keeping residents in place,

preserving affordability and diversity in changing neighborhoods, and improving the

bargaining position of tenants in these neighborhoods.

District government also made minority hiring and contracting a priority. The former

councilmember from Ward One explained that former Mayor Marion Barry used the

power of DC investment – bond markets, retirement accounts, and construction - to help

minority firms gain experience. He said,

> These all are areas where African Americans – we didn't know those things
> existed. We were out of the system. You get elected mayor, and you say to
> yourself we've never been able to do this – we don't have anybody who's
> certified to do this because we've been barred from this in the past. Well, and this
> is something that 3rd World Countries like South Africa had to face when they
> took over. So what are you going to do? I can't claim any credit for this – Barry
> and his people did this…Barry said, "OK, the top five investment bankers in
> America are all in the blue book, they've all been vetted, they can all do virtually
> the same thing so let's go to the next thing – how many African American
> employees do you have? Do you have any professional lawyers and accountants?
> So no – well, let me get some qualified black firms out there to work with you."

So these guys go out to find a minority firm that you can partner with. You can give them less than 5 percent of the company, OK – or 2 percent. Make them do some real work for it, but now they have some real experience. Now these firms don't like to do this because they know somebody is getting ready to get in, but the people at the top say, "if I look at this one, this one, and this one – they're all equal. If I see one of you has some minority participation in this so you're helping us to overcome this historical pattern of discrimination, which is unfair and has to be made equal somehow or other."

The District's continued commitment to community-based empowerment and redistribution meant that communities could retain the momentum of the CDC movement. Eventually, the organizers and housing and community advocates formed constituencies around these laws that made them major players in city politics. Combined with liberal public officials who were also organizers, legal aid workers or otherwise involved in advocacy for social and economic justice, the City built a powerful base for progressive and redistributive policy.

In addition to those laws, the Redevelopment Land Agency (RLA), which had been absorbed in the District's Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), began selling city-owned land, including some individual parcels with deed restrictions that required permanent affordability in structures built on that land, including those in the area downtown that would eventually be Gallery Place. In 1981, the RLA sold two large parcels in Columbia Heights through a disposition agreement, for the development of a community service center, grocery store, commercial space, and a parking lot. However, mismanagement by RLA and the developer – as well as protest from neighborhood groups and outside groups interested in the preservation of the historic Tivoli Theater in the mid 1980s-- delayed the process, and those parcels

remained largely vacant through the 1980s, with the exception of the renovation of a building for senior housing.

The majority African American population in the District continued to elect Civil Rights era officials (most notably, Marion Barry, the city's longest term mayor), retaining a stable power structure in council and in city agencies that focused on civil rights and neighborhood empowerment without the intervention of an entrenched upper class white power structure. Although downtown development was largely controlled by development interests, the relative lack of growth in the neighborhoods meant that the interests of developers and of the community did not often come into conflict until the late 1990s. Because the demographics did not dramatically shift until more than 25 years after home rule, the laws supporting tenant rights and civil rights had time to crystallize and develop a strong constituency of advocates, organizers and residents who purchased their buildings over the years. In addition, the city's African American population largely supported these laws. TOPA, for example, is supported by an advocacy infrastructure of tenant organizations, cooperative boards, agencies supported at least partially through District government for more than 30 years, and an umbrella organization of housing and community development advocates who show up to city council when changes to funding or legislation are proposed. These groups actively promote changes meant to close loopholes in the law and recommend strategies for implementation and funding.

However, since 1970 the District has undergone a dramatic demographic change, shifting from a 78 percent African American majority to only a bare majority in 2010 (50.1 percent), as the population of higher educated, higher income white households has risen. Further, the mission-driven civil rights leadership of the 1970s has retired from council

and agency leadership, leaving power to a younger generation of DC residents, including new residents, children of former city leaders, and others interested in political power in the District. As one advocate argued, "the City is less oriented to the old Civil Rights days – I mean it started out that way in '75. The people who started out on council were very liberal and open-minded, and we're getting more people – I mean the council just passed legislation ending support for TANF after five years, and that's a change." This has meant increased demand for different types of spending, less support for affordable housing, and a focus on neighborhoods as opportunities for redevelopment.

"19 years ago, you could lay down on 14th street, and nobody would run you over"
Residents who have lived in Washington, DC for 20 or 30 years describe Columbia Heights in many different ways. For many outside the neighborhood, it was known as a place to buy drugs, to make them feel edgy, to avoid, to get a car fixed, or as a complete nonentity. Several long term DC residents told me that Columbia Heights "didn't register" with them until the past decade. However, within the neighborhood, Columbia Heights was seen in conflicting ways. Many acknowledged that it faced many challenges like drug-related violence, deteriorating housing and neglect but also talked about the sense of community and freedom that they felt. Those who moved to Columbia Heights during that time and stayed in the neighborhood talked about the outdoor culture in which residents sat on front porches and parks, and where it was rude not to speak to your neighbors when they were outside. They also told me about the way that people interacted in spite of the violence. Few talked about fear on their blocks or buildings because residents knew each other. However, women were more likely to point out issues and frustration with violence and lack of services than men.

After the riots, most of the property on 14th Street around what would become the Metro stop was City-owned and vacant. In the early 1980s, the City sold two central parcels to a private developer, the Gala Theater and the Samuel Kelsey Apartments at 14th Street and Park Road. However, even those parcels remained largely undeveloped. There was a grocery store and a handful of shops along the main thoroughfare of the neighborhood. There were car repair shops, an impound lot, and fenced empty lots.

The evolution of the drug trade in Washington, DC had a significant impact in Columbia Heights. In the 1970s, PCP and Heroin were widely used drugs, but several men I interviewed felt that it did not lead to the violence and theft that would come in the 1980s with the growth of gang-related drug trade in the city. Columbia Heights found itself at one of the centers of violence and murder in the middle of the murder capital of the United States. In talking about the way the neighborhood changed in the 1980s, Ed said,

> When crack hit – you want to talk about change? That changed the community. Crack came in – man it's like – first it was easy to get – relatively expensive, but you got addicted. Really addicted. And now what you're seeing is that a lot of people are going away from it. I'm seeing girls who used to be real skinny get big – it's not as good as it used to be. Whatever make you quit it, make you quit it. I don't care. They just got tired of it. It takes a toll on the body after awhile. Something that you have to have every day. It was more harsh on the women than the men. You don't see them now, but they would do anything for it. I mean, they would do anything...But that changed this neighborhood – especially where you are at 14th and Girard. In the 80s, man – and I guess heroin changed it in the 50s. Crack decimated. It came in and just took over this city. It was cheaper at first – it kind of lures you in. I did it for about a year – and oh no…I don't like to spend a lot of money on shit – I don't like something that controls me. Something I have to get up and do in the morning…But man, the crack was deep – 85, 88, 89, 90 – that was different.

Some residents of the neighborhood talked about the atmosphere in the 1980s and 1990 when they first arrived. Bryan, a white father who moved to the area and began working

in Columbia Heights in 1984 told a story about how his landlady insisted on giving him a ride to the nearby post office because she felt it was unsafe. Another time, he said "I was at the corner of 14th and Irving, and someone pulled over – like a group of African American folks – I don't remember – not terribly young, not terribly old – and just said – "Do you know where you are? This might not be safe. Can we help you get to where you're trying to go?" Because they assumed I was a tourist – which in a sense I was. And it wasn't safe. I mean, that's how the neighborhood was viewed." Another resident recalled that different gangs staked out territory on either side of 14th Street, and that they would shoot across the street at one another. Ann, a white woman living in the neighborhood for 22 years, like others I spoke with, talked about the rampant prostitution, "There were brothels up and down the block right up here – the guy on the corner was running Dominican girls in from New York. It was pretty lively. When I first moved here, I heard gunshots every night – it was really kinda wild west."

In addition to the violence, residents talked about the issues of neglect from the City. Dorothy, an older African American woman who moved into the neighborhood in the late 1980s:

> For me, it's been really wonderful to see the changes because when I came here, there was a drug dealer that lived four houses away in his parents' home. 24/7. Drugs, cars, loud noises – I mean, the street has so totally changed because he's no longer here. And it took me probably 12 years to get rid of him because the police (sighs) - it's difficult to explain. We were, when I first moved here, we were in the 4th District police area. Around the time that I finally started to get help with the drug dealer, we changed from 4D to 3D, and the 3D is down at 16th and V NW – and they were largely – that district was largely responsible for just cleaning up Dupont and Logan, and when I heard we were going to be in 3D, it was like – Oh, Thank you, Jesus. And they – I did start getting some help which was wonderful. And we got rid of him, and it continued.

Ann and others also told me about decade-long crusades to address issues of illegal dumping in the alleys, code violations, and prostitution rings in the area. She organized an orange hat patrol[6] on her block and walked the alley behind her house and frequently called in housing code violations as she walked. She also sent emails about unsecured abandoned houses to police, Area Neighborhood Commission Commissioners, agency staff, and her councilmember. One of the houses she emailed about had people squatting in the basement. She explained, "every day they [agency staff] would say the house has been secured – and I would go by and open the door then write at midnight – "no, actually I opened the door and so…" and "No, we secured the house" And so one night at midnight I wrote "Send me $20 and I'll do it for you." The next day it was secured." The experience of these women and the groups of neighborhood residents over the past several decades suggests that living in Columbia Heights required activism to have a basic response from the City.

However, in the midst of the violence of Columbia Heights, many long term residents still have positive memories and a sense of ownership of the old neighborhood. As Melissa, a veteran tenant organizer and executive director of a nonprofit explained,

> But there were other neighborhood associations that were really groups of homeowners talking to each other. There'd be some really interesting stuff going on in those…" how do we keep hold here? Should we flee too? More than anything, should we go too, but where else can we go – we can't afford anything else. This is all we can afford." We had lots of meetings with neighborhood associations like that. But then this strong sense of "but this is where my people are from. I don't want to leave, and I'm going to stand my ground." So I think that kind of community of new young folks don't realize how bad it really was. But

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[6] Orange Hat Patrols are groups of citizens that walk the streets in their communities in orange hats to discourage drug dealing and other crime. Typically they provide a community link to policy by calling to report what they see, rather than acting as a vigilante police force.

how much of a sense of "this is ours. We need to protect it." And so the tenant purchase stuff grew out of that. So when the tenants had an opportunity, we didn't have to say much to rah them up to get them to do bake sales and everything else they needed to do because they too had lived there for generations or years and felt this was theirs even though they didn't own it and may have been living in poor conditions.

Other residents, while acknowledging the violence, also spoke about picnics and barbeques in vacant lots in the neighborhood, sleeping out in Meridian Hill/Malcolm X Park[7], or having parties in the parks throughout the neighborhood. Some talked about how they felt safer during the 80s and 90s because they knew their neighbors and had people who checked up on them in the community. The open spaces, though also a space for criminal activity and seen as a sign of the neighborhood's decline, were also adapted as community social spaces. One space at the heart of the neighborhood, now a grocery store, was a large community garden. Pearl explained,

From this building all the way to 14th Street, we had all that. It was a big basketball court. And then had benches out there the kids could sit. And then, right in back of us where there's a senior citizen buildin' was a huge field – went all the way to 14th Street. People planted gardens out there. Yea. It was…you know – and it was a beautiful sight to see then too.

During the redevelopment discussions in the late 1990s, one resident reported being offended when the garden was referred to as a vacant lot by her council member.

Those who lived in the neighborhood viewed it with a mixture of pragmatism and nostalgia, acknowledging the challenges that existed in their chosen community. Unfortunately, the story that is told is one of violence, self-destruction, and decline – the Wild West narrative. The narrative continues to be tied up in a city government that was

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[7] The official name for the National Park Service-owned park is Meridian Hill. However, many long term African American residents call it Malcolm X Park. In one discussion with residents many explained, "that's what *we* call it."

only known for its corruption story, rather than the complex picture of progressive

politics and mismanagement in the midst of the challenging context of a changing city.

From Wild West to Managed Space

In 1996, after 15 years of neglect and inaction, the RLA board voted to take back the

property because the purchaser did not meet the term of the disposition agreement for the

property. However, the owner contended that the inaction was not his fault, and that the

development had been held up due to conflicting rulings by agencies in District

government, as well as court challenges regarding the Tivoli Theater's historic status.

Neighborhood and historic preservation advocates countered that he refused to follow the

neighborhood's guidance for the historic theater and had only succeeded in renovating

senior housing across the street, in spite of owning the property for 15 years.

After the board vote, a move to begin planning for the vacant lots came from several

directions. One RLA board member, in a note wrote: "Comments made on November 7th

'96 – re termination action on Herb Haft Group ERA (exclusive rights agreement) – and

need for relook at plan. Need for land use and circulation plans, amendments seems

apparent. Comprehensive small area plan with text and map amendments for the Urban

Renewal Plan must be prepared for adoption by RLA board, and of course, [National

Capital Planning Commission] NCPC." He explained that the area was still subject to an

Urban Renewal plan and subject to approval by the NCPC. Meanwhile, the nonprofit

CDC, the Development Corporation of Columbia Heights (DCCH) had also begun to

think about what the community might look like in the future, with a new Metro station

under construction in the neighborhood.

The DCCH was formed in 1984 by a group of neighborhood activists with a focus on diversifying the redevelopment that had previously occurred in the neighborhood from primarily low income residential to a combination of residential and commercial buildings. Many of the people who eventually became board members had been actively trying to implement the community-developed and contentious Urban Renewal plan approved in 1972. Specifically, they hoped to instill greater economic development in the neighborhood, rather than just the subsidized housing that had been built immediately after the riots. The organization's activities have a divided reputation in the community. Though they were involved in some housing development in the neighborhood, their primary accomplishment to date was the development of a small shopping strip near the southern edge of the neighborhood that included a cooperatively owned Laundromat. Although often criticized by the new neighbors now, it was one of the few commercial strips in the neighborhood at the time. The executive director, who had been jailed for stealing from the Camden, NJ Housing Authority and who had resigned as DC Department of Housing and Community Development (DCDHCD) director after a failed project, is criticized for not doing enough in the neighborhood despite receiving significant City funding through his connections to the Barry administration. However, others counter that DCCH worked in Columbia Heights when others had neither the capacity nor the interest in development.

In 1997, the DCCH, in partnership with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and the Washington Architectural Foundation (WAF) convened a two day charrette for neighborhood residents and City government officials to discuss the neighborhood's vision for the future of Columbia Heights. Between 250 and 300

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residents attended. Organizers highlighted four issues that were unique to the

neighborhood and would influence the changes in the community: the opening of a new

Metro stop at 14th and Irving Street NW in 1999; the significant acreage of city-owned

land in the four blocks surrounding the Metro entrance; the interest in the parcels already

expressed by developers; and the increases in population and income in the community.

The charrette included small group sessions to establish broad goals, desired types of

development, and the physical design. The planning process continued beyond the

charrette and included community meetings to get feedback on the work done by a

smaller group of residents, city planners, and architects between meetings.

Figure 9 Small Area Map from "A Community-Based Plan for the Columbia Heights Metro Station Area"
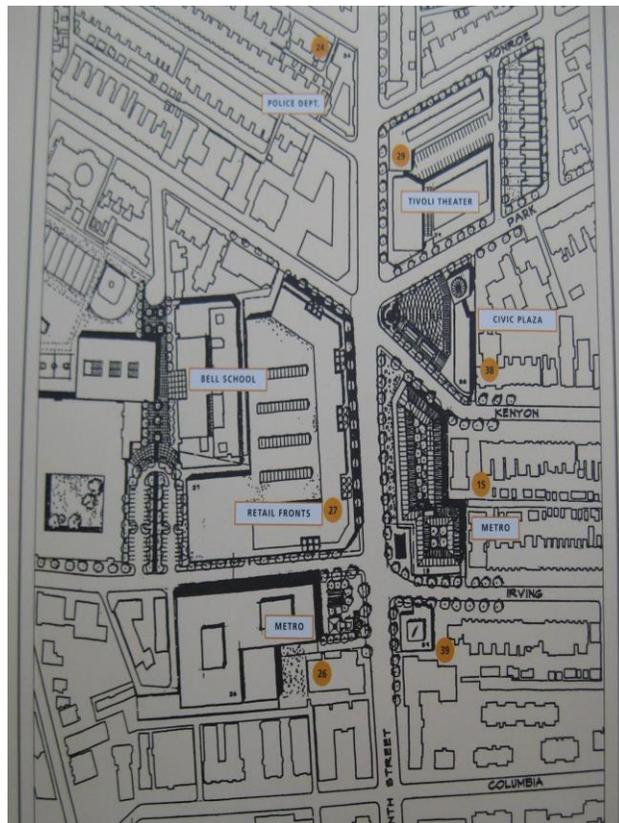
The process was described by many, particularly organizers and educated white residents, as "very representative" of the neighborhood population except for the underrepresentation of Latinos. However, ethnicity appears also to have been a proxy for socioeconomic diversity: In interviews with a variety of neighborhood residents, there seemed to be a differential in participation based on income and housing tenure in which low income renters, both Hispanic and African American, were not present. Very few of the low income renters knew about the meetings – and even fewer participated. At the same time, low income homeowners, African-American and white, were more likely to have heard of the meetings. This may represent a bias against renters in planning processes, available time, frustration with city interactions, or the distance from home. In many interviews with planners and homeowners, renters were viewed as transient, not full community citizens. However, the majority of the people I met while hanging out in the neighborhood were long term renters in Columbia Heights. Some had occupied the same apartment for more than two decades.

Though for many the inclusiveness of the process was questionable in practice, the level of focus on inclusion in the planning process was exceptional. This was due to the players involved. DCCH was primarily responsible for the outreach for the planning meeting with support from the City and the Washington Architectural Foundation. In spite of the outreach, Saturday-Sunday schedule, and translation services, the executive director of a nonprofit said, "it would always be like, 'where are the Latinos?' Well, the Latinos were at work." According to another participant, low income Latinos, while not present, were represented by community organizations, who advocated for their social service and housing needs.

Ann, an older white woman living in Columbia Heights for 22 years, who attended some

of the meetings about the redevelopment, talked about the participation of some of her

neighbors in the planning meetings: "Usually the long term residents don't go to the

meetings. If they're real close – we used to go to meetings around the corner that were

excellent. They had an organizer that would bring together multiple agencies – and he

would run the meetings well. We had pretty good representation. But one that is a little

bit more distant – it's "well, it's all the way up at the metro stop – I can't park my car up

there."… I think it may be that they don't feel like putting out the effort, but I think there

is this sense of no they're not doing anything – and it's understandable when the same

properties are in the same shape for years, and despite all the efforts there's no response –

so yea I think there's a sense that it's not working for them."

During the charrette, residents outlined the underlying principles they felt were important

for the redevelopment, including having community-focused development, community-

oriented retail, street level commercial space, open sidewalks, green space, focus on

maintaining racial and economic diversity, and prioritizing the preservation and

rehabilitation of existing structures over new construction. According to the participants I

interviewed, residents came to a consensus and did not disagree greatly on the principles

for the physical and social elements of community. Tom, a white resident of the

neighborhood since the early 1980s and a participant in the charrette described the

process:

> Most of the planning that I've been involved with in the District is fairly flawed
> from a number of respects. Just without going into a whole thing, the thing that
> bothers me most is the folks running the show will say "what do you want the
> neighborhood to look like?" as if somehow if the people just said what they

wanted, the planners would just make it happen. And there's usually – in our society and our economy the way it's structured at the present time – the government simply doesn't have the power to do that. We can bend, shape, somewhat redirect private development desires and activities, but that's pretty much it. So often times we go into these exercises and give people unrealistic expectations about what we can accomplish, and then people end up being disappointed. But I thought that the charrette was much – was done better than most exercises. I think people were given a more realistic sense of what the government could and couldn't accomplish. And in particular what was surprising about the outcome to me was the fact that the neighborhood accepted – and again, from other cities it wouldn't seem this way – but for DC what would be considered high density development around the Metro station.

As Tom suggests, although residents were able to comment on the types of development, how much community focus existed, the preservation of particular buildings and the overall goals, what was not in doubt was the fact that the neighborhood would become intensively developed. Residents were not given the option of limited or low rise development. What emerged was "A Community-Based Plan for the Columbia Heights Metro Station Area," which was used as "mandatory guidance" in the Request for Proposals that was released in 1998. The plan addressed the social and physical form of parks and sidewalks in the heart of the neighborhood and guided the political process of redevelopment. Though not adopted as part of the comprehensive plan, this plan was used in 2002 when community members again came together to create a plan for the public spaces at the heart of the neighborhood.

Unfortunately, from the outset the implementation of the plan created significant conflict in the neighborhood. The RLA released the Request for Proposals for the main parcels in 1998. After presenting their plans to the community and receiving comments, RLA selected two developers for the parcels in 1999. Horning Brothers won the old Tivoli Theater site that would become a grocery store, retail and housing; and Grid Properties

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won the DCUSA site. This created significant conflict in the community. The primary

Figure 10: Flier in Support of Forest City Development

The Truth about the Developments for Columbia Heights.

Forrest City		DC-USA / Horning Brothers
✓	Restore the Tivoli in to a community art center and community-training center.	✓ Restore only the lobby and use the rest as retail space.
✓	A 70,000 sqft grocery store, the larges in DC.	✓ Small Giant. Very similar to the Safeway on Columbia Rd. Long lines and empty shelves.
✓	460,000 sqft of total retail space. The shops would be geared to day to day need of community.	✓ Small "Up-scale shops" and specialty stores like a Sports Authority. Or Old Navy.
✓	Work with City for "Affordable housing" for everyone.	✓ Houses behind the Giant in the 170,000 – 180,000 price range
✓	12 screen Movie Theater.	✓ A movie theater and ice rink.
✓	1,967 parking spaces, All churches in the area will have access.	✓ Limited amount of parking. Only one church was promised access.
✓	Community park called "Metro Plaza"	✓ Empty undeveloped land for bums and dealers to use.
✓	Office space to bring life to the area during daytime	✓ Because DC-USA is geared to kids, nothing for adults from 9-5
✓	Space for a Police Sub-station given	✓ Nothing for Police
✓	Space for a Post Office	✓ Nothing for the Post Office
✓	Work with schools to provide needed space	✓ Nothing for the Schools

Forest City gave us what the community asked for. It is a superior development and was shutout by the RLA. No one knows why the RLA did not choose it. They are not saying.

The DC-USA plan is an "Indoor Amusement Area". New York City is having a serious problem with this type of plan. It is a magnet for youth crime, and gang activity. It has nothing for the adults. We do not need an ice rink; we need retail that we can all use. We do not need an Old Navy, we need a drug store.

Come out and join the protest at New Columbia Heights Station at 11:30 and ride the train or 12:30pm at the Georgia Ave. Station. The protest will be at Georgia Ave. Station, the main opening ceremonies for both stations.

We want you to be informed. Visit http://innercity.org/columbiaheights/economic for more information. It has the information for all of the proposals.

This is not about Race. It's about community. Don't let anyone tear Columbia Heights along those lines. Diversity is what makes us great.

competition, Forest City, a large scale and experienced developer from Cleveland who

has also developed some of the premier properties throughout the District in the past

decade, presented a plan to be a master developer of all the parcels. Newer and higher

income residents, as well as residents from outside the neighborhood, supported Forest

City, while older and low income residents supported the developers selected by RLA.

New residents contend that the reason for the selection was that Horning Brothers gave

money to DCCH and its executive director Robert Moore, a director of DHCD during the

Barry administration who went to jail at one time for financial crimes. As Tom described,

"the result was that it polarized the neighborhood: certain groups were picked for certain

development teams, and so you'd have one group say "we're the true neighborhood," and those other people are pretenders or gentrifiers or newcomers and don't have your best interests at heart. So once these development proposals came in, things really – the community became very divided."

Newspaper articles and interviews suggest that this divide fell broadly based on length of time in the neighborhood, income, and race. However, as the majority of people who were long term residents of the neighborhood were also low income minorities, income and race have been used as proxies for the more complex divides in much of the discourse around redevelopment. Many of those who had been in the neighborhood for a long time supported the winning bidders who had given greater support to DCCH and were perceived to have greater minority participation. Newer residents felt that Forest City followed the community plan more closely, particularly around the preservation of the long-neglected and dilapidated Tivoli theater and public space. Newer residents felt that the theater, built in 1923 as an all-white establishment, should be preserved due to its architectural importance. Catharine, who worked with DCCH on the project and has lived in the neighborhood since high school explained, "they had this group of brand new homeowners saying, "We have to save the Tivoli – it's a treasure. All these wonderful things happened there." And then you had this other group that said "Did you know that we weren't allowed to go to the Tivoli because Washington, DC was segregated?" My mom was like number one on the list. "I never went to the Tivoli!" So you know there's this whole interplay of history that becomes a battleground too. Which is another thing that adds to the tension."

Protests were organized through the Columbia Heights listserv in the Fall of 1999 and residents exchanged information gained from contacting RLA. Many were dissatisfied with the lack of transparency in the decision-making process, charging that race politics and backroom dealing played a role in the unanimous decision by the board. As one reporter wrote, "on the street level, Horning-Grid proponents have tagged protesters as newcomers who care not a whit about the neighborhood's poor minorities; Forest City-ites, in turn, blame their adversaries for practicing divisive racial politics to mask old-school cronyism. And the casualty has been a community's never very robust appetite for conciliation" (Loose Lips, 1999).

Adam, a former RLA staff member during the process said that there were three primary factors influencing the decision making process. One was the riots, which he argued were always "sitting in the room in a corner someplace," suggesting that the riots were always implicitly part of the decision making from the City's perspective. The second was the idea of "carpetbaggers" from out of town in a city and neighborhood that focused on development from within. While Grid was not a local firm either, they had redeveloped in Harlem when it was in a similar state to Columbia Heights, although that project, Harlem USA was as yet untested. Finally, the project brought to the fore questions of race and identity in Washington, DC. Until the last meeting of the RLA board when the vote was held, residents and those in RLA felt that Forest City, the competing developer, would win the bid. One of the early threshold requirements for the RFP was local minority participation. Staff reviewing the responses to the RFP argued that while all the applicants responded to the threshold requirement by the letter of it, the spirit of it was missed by Forest City, and it would be unlikely to come to fruition. In

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hindsight, staffers are still unsure whether they made the right recommendation to the board due to the debate between substantive minority participation and the potential for a more qualified developer. Adam argues that the neighborhood would have perhaps looked more like some of the dense close-in suburbs like Bethesda, Maryland, rather than how it looks today.

The last minute change of decision by the board fueled the belief that the choice was made through back-room dealing to benefit the old guard of DC politics or a growth machine. On the listserv later in the year, some residents began to suggest that, instead of fighting the decision, they should work with the RLA to guarantee that the plan for the neighborhood would be respected. As one resident who had lived in Columbia Heights for ten years said, "In my opinion, any compromise would have to include performance space inside the Tivoli, a big box discount retailer and other offerings geared to the average resident as well as development of all parcels. I doubt they can do that." In spite of doubts, those hopes were fulfilled. With the land disposition, the city required a "first source" hiring agreement, requiring that Columbia Heights residents were preferred for employment in the construction and retail jobs at Target, Best Buy, and Giant (DCCH, 2007). In addition, the District required that 15,000 square feet be reserved for small businesses; allocated $2 million in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for façade improvement of existing small businesses; and mandated a 20 percent set-aside of units for affordable housing (DCCH, 2008). By 2006, an estimated $390 million in projects were started in the community (Mid-Atlantic Construction, 2006; Wilgoren, 2002). In 2009, Columbia Heights was given an award by the Congress for the New

Urbanism for being a well-planned transit-oriented development (Congress for the New Urbanism, 2009).

After the conclusion of the RFP process, the RLA was transferred to a new transactional organization: The National Capital Redevelopment Corporation (NCRC). The RLA had been criticized for not moving quickly enough on land deals and allowing projects to languish in process. NCRC, however, was focused on transactions and moving projects off of the city's rolls. NCRC was absorbed in the Deputy Mayor's Office for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) in 2006. The RLA was the agency in charge of writing the RFP and working with the community to create a plan that would guide the process. The NCRC negotiated the development agreements and disposed of the properties, and the DMPED has been responsible for monitoring completion for the projects.

While this rapid change in the agencies charged with implementing the plan created continuity challenges for the intent and implementation of the project, the planning process and plan itself gave the residents a significant hammer, as in the case of the preservation of the Tivoli Theater. While the City did not change the decision by which developers would be selected in response to blacklash from one segment of the community, they did require the selected developers to follow the community plan closely, including the preservation of the façade and performance space in the interior of the Tivoli Theater (now occupied by the Gala Hispanic Theater). The plan itself gave power to the neighborhood and empowered elected officials to keep the developers and NCRC on track. Further, although the plan was implemented and development teams selected during the Barry administration, the contracts were negotiated during the

Anthony Williams administration. The Williams administration publicly focused on attracting new residents and development to Washington, and on being more transparent to its residents. As a result, his administration and the Council Member Jim Graham used the plans to improve negotiation on the part of the residents. However, the divergence in goals for the neighborhood as new residents moved in made long term implementation increasingly challenging and divisive.

"I used to pray all the time for God to bless our neighborhood and multiply our neighborhood. Now look at it. Sometimes I want to send it back!"

Everyone I spoke to in the neighborhood was surprised by the speed and intensity of the changes in Columbia Heights. Businesses, planners, and neighborhood residents were initially doubtful that the neighborhood could support new retail. The same groups also doubted that the new focus on transit-oriented development would work. And no one imagined that the influx of new residents would come as quickly as it did. The current Ward One Councilmember explained that the development team had trouble selling the project to businesses before development. McDonald's and others turned them down. He said, "Today it would be very different. McDonald's would be coming to us." The head of the DCCH spent a significant amount of time trying to sell the potential of the neighborhood to businesses and planners who were skeptical that a Target could be successful. In hindsight, all have been happy to be proven wrong, but it took significant effort to illustrate that there was a market of nearby residents who could pay to shop there. However, the Columbia Heights Target has become one of the highest grossing stores in the country, and more than 22,000 people exit the Metro daily in Columbia Heights. The retail development on the formerly vacant, city-owned parcels has spurred

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moves to continue development north on 14th Street, raised rents and attracted workers and shoppers from across the city.

In addition to the economics of the development, neither planners, nor retail owners imagined that the urban planning interventions would work. The new model of a Target in the midst of a pedestrian-oriented neighborhood was one of the first the company had developed. Some planners did not feel that, even with the proximity of Metro and six bus lines, shoppers would buy a bookshelf or toilet paper and get on transit to take it home. The City and Target, moreover, had parking regulations for the new stores that anticipated significant driving. As one planner involved in the development said, "But there was – at least the developers said – that there was no way that Target would come in without an area that was dedicated for their parking with no shared parking, and that meant having to have more parking since supposedly so much was reserved for Target." As a result, the City created a Tax Increment Finance district (TIF) to pay the $43 million cost of 1,000 underground parking spots at the DCUSA building. The decision was highly controversial and initially rejected by the City when it was first proposed. The City now owns the parking deck in the building and charges $1 per hour for parking, compared to significantly higher rates for the performance based meters nearby. While Target does not have dedicated parking, per se, the parking is shared between the shops at DCUSA. The structure is now "underparked." The City rents out some spaces for long term parking and is in negotiations with local churches and ANC commissioners to provide reduced cost parking to church-goers to prevent them from parking on the

neighborhood streets[8]. The DCUSA Parking Garage Pilot Program is still in the negotiation process. However, in 2013, the DC Chief Financial Officer reported that the property had raised $41.5 million from sales and property taxes, nearly paying for the TIF.

The changes in Columbia Heights have been dramatic. Residents who were cut off from rail transit in the midst of a segregated and underdeveloped community now have a Metro stop, and high demand for housing and retail have changed the area from a quiet neighborhood to what city officials proudly refer to as "a destination" for city residents. The area of 14th Street NW around the Metro was referred to as "Main Street Columbia Heights" by some City officials. The neighborhood planner argued that this dramatic change has created some of the tensions. Further, he explained that the speed of change was also surprising. "I've never in my planning experience – and I've been doing it for a while now. We do plans – everybody talks about master plans are 10, 15 years out. That whole thing happened in 5 years. You know, it's a very rare occasion that you go soup to nuts in 5 years…By 2007, these things were already up. 2008, they were opening. So you're talking 5 years from the time that developers were awarded those parcels to those things actually opening? That's an amazing time table." This rapidity of dramatic change has meant that as new retail locations open and planning decisions are made, there is still a vocal and participatory cadre of residents, elected officials and planners who were involved in the charrette. These groups can articulate the intent of the plan, the process that got them there and the long term goals that are now coming to fruition.

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[8] Church parking in DC is a politically divisive issue due to the face that many of the churches, which formerly served the neighborhood have seen their congregations move to Maryland as a part of middle class flight through the middle part of the century and gentrification in more recent years. Congregants now drive in and park on the neighborhood streets.

A challenge that emerged as a result of the redevelopment was the declining supply of affordable housing in the neighborhood. Anticipating affordability challenges, the City argued for greater density on 14th Street to absorb some of the increased demand and subsequent increase in housing cost. Although NCRC required affordable housing as a part of the negotiated development agreements, these set-asides only produced 250 units of affordable housing in a neighborhood that had been almost entirely market affordable, meaning that rents had been low enough to be affordable to low income residents without subsidy. Neither increased density nor set-asides could have addressed the rapid demand for affordable housing.

In addition to work done through planning interventions such as affordable housing set-asides, public resources were also applied in the surrounding community through the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA). Between 1999 and 2009, 2,174 affordable units were created or preserved in Columbia Heights with District funds (Department of Housing and Community Development, 2009). In talking about the affordable housing development in Columbia Heights, a DHCD staff member involved in the redevelopment said, "some number of the new units that were developed out of the RLA RFPs that were issued as part of the master plan – there were affordable units as part of the master plan. The affordable housing our agency has developed has proceeded parallel but outside the RLA's solicitations. We have saved on a case by case basis whole buildings from conversion, and our tenant First Right Purchase program has been instrumental in it. What affordable buildings remain today are almost 100% due to the fact that the District's law TOPA – tenant first right purchase – has saved whole blocks of buildings that would have otherwise converted to condos – so it's been a life-saver for saving what

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affordable housing does remain." However, housing in this case was a reactive policy.

DHCD could only respond to requests that emerged through the competitive RFP process

for local and federal funds or through notice of sale, as was the case for TOPA projects.

Projects were not geographically targeted, and there was no city mechanism for

proactively addressing questions of affordable housing preservation.

The Columbia Heights Civic Plaza

The centerpiece to the 1997 plan from the neighborhood perspective was the civic plaza

located at the intersection of 14th Street, NW; Park Road, NW; and Kenyon Street, NW. It

was envisioned to be a space where residents could informally interact, play, rest, and eat.

It also was intended to be fully public with no permanent fencing that might privatize the

public space, including sidewalk cafes surrounding the plaza. This intent was crystallized

in the Columbia Heights Public Realm Framework Plan. This second community-based

planning process, initiated in 2003, set the following goals for development: 1.

Strengthen Community Identity; 2. Celebrate Diversity; 3. Create a Lively Urban

Experience; 4. Make it Easy to Walk; 5. Make Public Transit Convenient; 6. Make it

Safe. This plan was adopted by City Council as part of the city's overall comprehensive

plan in 2004.

The Civic Plaza appears to be the most consistently utilized and diverse space, public or

private, in the neighborhood. During the day in the summer, parents and nannies bring

children, mostly under ten years old, to play in the splash park that has become a central

element of the plaza. The languages, ethnicities, and outward appearance of the users

illustrate the diversity of the neighborhood. Young children in $250 strollers and swim

shirts bring toys, while others play in diapers or play clothes with old disposable water

bottles as toys; white, black and Latino parents, grandparents and nannies bring children and chat sometimes in Spanish, English, or Amharic while they sit on the low wall on one side of the splash pad. Meanwhile professionals and laborers eat lunch alone or in small groups while sitting on the wall or the terraced grass across the plaza. Seniors with canes or motorized chairs come to watch the children in the park or rest after going to the Giant grocery store across the street. Both in the plaza and across the street on the sidewalk in front of the Tivoli Theater, older African American and Latino men hang out to socialize, rest and sometimes drink. In addition, occasionally, a few homeless individuals hang out with their shopping carts full of their belongings on either side of the street.

Later in the day, these groups are joined by students in khaki pants and polo shirts coming home from school or work to hang out, eat frozen yogurt or drink coffee from Starbucks. Professionals who have been working in other parts of the city stop from the Metro to meet friends or bring their children to the park. As the evening progresses, more Latino families come to the plaza; while young white and black adults and teens fill the Frozen Yogurt shop on one side of the plaza. The tables and chairs of the FroZenYo shop are unfenced, and there is little to distinguish the seating of the shop from the rest of the plaza except a sign that stands 3 feet tall by 2 feet wide next to the tables.

On Saturday mornings in the summer and fall, the plaza is filled with a lively farmers market. With heavy involvement of the DC Central Kitchen and the DC Department of Human Services, the market has a mechanism for accepting food stamps and WIC, as well as a matching program on the first $10 spent by residents each week. The result is that the market is used by African American Section 8 residents; Latinos living in the north part of the neighborhood in rent controlled apartments, young white singles in

group houses, and white and black families living in $750,000 row houses. It is a point of pride and excitement among residents in the community that it is neighborhood-organized, and that it is used by such a cross-section of the community.

Challenges to the Public Realm

In the summer of 2011, Z Burger, an informal burger chain restaurant, applied for a sidewalk café permit in order to open a store at the Tivoli theater space at the corner of 14th Street NW, and Park Road, NW. The section fronting Park Road facing the Civic Plaza is within the bounds of the Public Realm Plan. In order to receive approval from the DC Department of Transportation's (DDOT) Public Space Committee, the business needed approval through the Area Neighborhood Commission (ANC).

At the July 2011 ANC meeting, eight of the nine commissioners voted to approve the plan, "provided that the establishment continues to work with the community on the relocation of the granite bench by the sidewalk café." The bench was, according to the restaurant developers, in the way of their proposed plan, but in the public realm. However, as the community (through four community meetings between July and April) worked with the establishment, issues of fencing and adherence to the public realm plan emerged. Because the plan rejects any efforts to privatize the space facing the civic plaza, long term residents – as well as newer residents who had been involved in the plan – felt that Z Burger was not acting in good faith because they refused to acknowledge the plan's requirements. One community member argued, "the burden is actually on Z Burger to find creative ways to conform to the plaza's public design, not the other way around. The public is not requesting to use Z Burger's private space – it's the other way around."

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Meanwhile new residents felt that the process of approval was keeping a needed service out of the neighborhood. Many did not understand why something as small as fencing was holding up the opening of a new business at a premier location. A newer resident incredulously asked over the list-serv, "One bench is what's stopping you from approving this??" Others were equally horrified and suggested that the onerous process keeps good businesses from opening in the District, often invoking the corruption narrative to suggest that these types of processes kept DC from developing in the past. At the May 2012 ANC meeting, someone argued that Z Burger was being "singled out" because restaurants around the corner on 14th Street were permitted to have fencing. However, those who had been part of the public realm planning process insisted that privatizing the public space around the plaza contradicted the goals for the plan and further, because it was part of the comprehensive plan, they were legally prohibited from violating those goals.

One resident on reviewing the alternative plan suggested by the community said, "I like the Z Burger design. I think the fencing around the sitting area is necessary and helps give folks a more comfortable feeling as outdoor diners…The alt [alternative] plan doesn't really consider the business aspect of the seating space." Other neighbors were more specific about the "comfort" of the seating area and the right to exclude "drunks," "homeless," or others just passing through the area through privatization. Many new residents either were unaware of or did not understand the Public Realm Plan. At one point late in 2011, one resident, unaware of the Public Realm Plan, suggested that there be a "wide-ranging neighborhood plan" to address issues such as these. However, since then there has been education about the creation and intent of the plan from those involved, including the city planner (now a Columbia Heights resident) who managed the

community process, the consultant who wrote the plan, and other residents who were part of the proceedings. While this has changed the conversation in the middle, those on the edges still feel that "some of us are making it [the public realm plan] untouchable" and that plans are changeable. This has been expressed both on the list-serv and in ANC meetings over the past year. Some middle term residents argued, "it's important to get this right, but let's also allow the business to open."

After almost a year of debate, a revised plan was sent from the community and Z Burger to DC Department of Transportation (DDOT) for approval on May 24, 2012. The plan requires that the fencing remain open on the ends of the café, but retains movable fencing parallel to Park Road (facing the plaza), the retention of a public granite bench, and the selection of sidewalk furniture "consistent with the furniture of other restaurants in the Columbia Heights Public Realm."

In an interview with the city planner for Columbia Heights, he argued that the Z Burger debate illustrated the way that tensions in the neighborhood tend to fall. With some nuance, he argued that there are three primary groups: Long time residents and "pioneers" (greater than 10 years); middle term people (5-9 years); and newcomers (5 years or less). Consistent with other interviews I have conducted, residents said that when they were the first white people on their blocks or in their buildings, they weren't "gentrifiers" they were just neighbors – maybe a little odd, but not part of a problem. They moved to the neighborhood for many reasons – affordability and access to the rest of the city have been the most consistent. These residents tend to know their neighbors, be involved in community events, and some are now raising children in the

neighborhood. However, many also tell stories about the violence, being part of Orange Hat Patrols, drug dealers on their stoops, or needles on the streets.

The middle term residents moved to the neighborhood just as Metro completed the station in Columbia Heights, the DCUSA complex and surrounding buildings were under construction, and nearby neighborhoods such as Adams Morgan and U Street/Shaw were growing more expensive. These residents moved into a neighborhood that was clearly in transition but on the way up. They bought knowing their homes would increase in value and that the neighborhood would serve them better over time. Some who have been interviewed are frustrated and angry over the fact that the neighborhood has not improved fast enough – either in home appreciation or in feelings of safety or comfort because petty crime, public drinking, hanging out on street corners, and trash are still common.

The new residents are a mix of homeowners and renters who are largely unfamiliar with the history of the neighborhood. Most have come from other cities or suburbs and bring their perspective on how things are meant to work. They moved into a neighborhood that was fully serviced by multiple modes of public transportation, bike lanes, safe sidewalks, parks, high end bars and restaurants, shopping, and a full range of city services. The neighborhood has the look and feel of safety, security and middle class norms of behavior. As a result, though most appreciate diversity as a tableau, they are often frustrated and feel threatened by different norms such as hanging out in parks, public drinking, and homelessness.

The way these groups interact comes into play in planning decisions such as the Z Burger debate. Newer residents feel that while they like the neighborhood they moved into, more

services and businesses are better at all costs. Longer term residents remember what they wanted from the community design and what they envisioned for the community in terms of social spaces. A lot of the longer term residents are not bothered by those who hang out in public spaces because, in many cases, they know them and feel that they are part of the community and street level safety net. The middle term residents are split. They feel that the right to exclude is helpful in their own comfort, but that only goes to a point. They often realize the implications of the changes that privatization might engender in terms of fundamentally changing the diversity they like about the public spaces in Columbia Heights.

This issue continues to be debated in ANC meetings and on the Columbia Heights list-serv. When Z Burger had its "soft opening" at the end of the summer, and the outdoor furnishings still had not been approved, one resident questioned how that would impact the opening, and another responded, "The government is not requiring Z Burger to have an outdoor café. The link was made between the outdoor café and opening as a tactic to pressure the ANC and community into giving Z Burger a free pass. They could have opened months ago if they wanted." The patio finally opened in the summer of 2013 as approved with movable fencing open at both ends.

Discussion

Just as Columbia Heights embodied national trends in the mid-twentieth century such as the great migration of blacks to northern cities, the end of legal segregation, and suburban expansion, the neighborhood reflects current tensions common to similar neighborhoods in rapidly growing cities. While Richard Florida's work was convincing local governments to attract a "creative class" to rejuvenate cities, a call that then DC Mayor

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Anthony Williams heeded in his goal to attract 100,000 new residents, the housing market exploded. In the midst of this boom, the District of Columbia government recaptured a set of properties atop a new transit stop and released an RFP for their redevelopment. Meanwhile, the demand for urban amenities among young, educated and affluent workers increased dramatically.

The neighboring communities of U Street to the South and Adams Morgan to the west had already experienced waves of commercial and residential development that raised rents and home prices, converted affordable rental into high-end condominiums, and created trendy shopping and dining districts that attracted residents from across the region. Echoing comments by several people working in planning and real estate, the neighborhood planner explained, "with Columbia Heights…it's unfortunately a lot of people who couldn't afford to live around U Street. They wanted to live around U Street, they couldn't afford it so they kept moving up – there's an old saying in DC: if you like a neighborhood, keep walking east till you can afford it. So that's pretty much what it is."

This perfect storm of elements meant that the pace of development was unprecedented in the District. Though the speed of change surprised nearly everyone, the intensity of the community-based planning effort for Columbia Heights that took place during the boom fundamentally shaped the way in which the neighborhood would change. Further, in spite of the participation challenges, the cohesiveness and scale of the original plan that emerged from the community gave power to the various groups participating – and the community as a whole – when decisions were made about the shape of the neighborhood.

Columbia Heights before the redevelopment of the neighborhood was associated by many with violence, vacancy, and poverty. For many, any change that occurred was positive, regardless of the effects on the existing community. Unfortunately, this perspective ignored the disinvestment and neglect that led to the vacancy and violence, allowing the history of the neighborhood to be tied up in the narrative of incompetence, violence and city corruption presumed to exist before DC became an attractive place to stay for upper middle class young people. In many senses, the way that the neighborhood was perceived by newcomers justified the rapid change and allows the City, developers and new residents to take credit for improvements in safety in the neighborhood. As a result, the production of affordable units through development agreements was viewed as a trade-off and a social service, rather than enabling long term residents to exercise their right to stay in the neighborhood.

For some new residents, community control and community planning – as well as community benefit – were understood as unified and unproblematic. But the history of Columbia Heights specifically and urban America more generally illustrates a sharp divide in what those things mean to different groups in the community. Before the height of the market, residents had come together to create a community-based plan for Columbia Heights. That initial planning process was successful – a range of residents were represented and public spaces, retail, and housing was envisioned. However, part of that plan was ensuring a community benefit and community control, similar to what was demanded in the original Urban Renewal plan. At the time of Urban Renewal, African Americans had no access to capital or real estate. Thirty years later, when the neighborhood was planned again, that thread had not been lost for the low-income

African Americans who remembered the neighborhood or for the DCCH executive director who had been involved in community development in the District since shortly after home rule.

While newer residents, who were primarily white and upper income were focused on design and historic preservation, many long term residents and elected officials felt that the history of the neighborhood and the role that race played was as important – possibly more so – than the physical design. They did not want to give up control of the entire site to one developer that had no ties to the District or historically black communities. In perhaps one of the more telling moments, residents on the Columbia Heights list-serv who were clearly exasperated claimed not to know anyone who did not support the bid from Forest City, particularly no other homeowners. Further, the only reason that was imagined for selecting the team of developers that was selected was corruption that circumvented the democratic process. However, while their proposal was the most thorough and professional in appearance, it did not address the demand for community control that one group of Columbia Heights residents clung to from the planning process after the riots. The power of the plan held imperfectly for both the ideals and physical design of the neighborhood, suggesting that perhaps no group was perfectly happy with the result. Further, given the faults in the public process, the City had to play a role in decision-making outside the traditional democratic process of public participation to ensure greater community control and equity on one side and adherence to the design aspects of the community-based plan on another side. This suggests a radical planning practice of listening to the neighborhood goals, combined with a pragmatic, Just City

practice of making decisions outside of the obvious representational structure to represent long term residents interested in community control.

As the effect of the public realm plan is felt on a new generation of neighborhood residents, attempts by older residents to insert the history as a context for understanding current discussions pose ongoing challenges to implementation. Those who remember the goals of the plan are often at odds with newer residents who represent a mix of ethnicities and incomes and have little understanding of the process and goals that brought the neighborhood residents to protect the public space through planning. Like the city more broadly, the critiques and memories of the past are constantly in the room when addressing the challenges of the future.

These two perspectives represent the clash between the community development activism of the 1960s and 1970s and the neoliberal development philosophy of the late 20th Century. Community leaders, elected officials, and City staff found a way in which developers could benefit while the City and the neighborhood also benefitted. However, they held on to the long term goal of community control, dating back to the late 1960s. Yet with the neoliberal shift in planning for urban development, and the tendency for affluent residents to remain and buy homes in the city, there is also a change in the power structure of the City. Developer power now reaches into neighborhoods outside of traditional downtown growth areas, further undermining efforts to exercise community control.

The development and redevelopment of Columbia Heights has followed the trajectory of planning and urban history over the past century. Following the riots, a late urban

renewal process and long term neglect, Columbia Heights found itself with a concentrated affordable housing infrastructure and significant acreage of city-owned, mostly vacant property in the heart of the neighborhood, and a neglected but intact single family housing stock throughout the remainder of the neighborhood. Finally, the "planning from below" methodology that was used by neighborhood leaders and planners, supported by City agencies, and enforced by City elected officials kept the focus on the needs and visions of community members. These planning methods included both formal planning exercises and also listening to the long term residents and those who represented them. The challenge moving forward is how to support the visions that emerged from this past planning process as the population continues to change. Many newer residents are not aware of the past planning and accept the before and after narratives that ignore the community that existed in the neighborhood before they arrived.

Political representation and historical narrative continue to be important to the changes in Columbia Heights. Like low income neighborhoods more broadly, the neighborhood history of Columbia Heights and, by extension, those long term residents who made lives and communities within that neighborhood, have been defined by newcomers primarily in terms of violence, blight, and poverty. As the power to define the narratives of the neighborhood's past is increasingly concentrated in the hands of new residents, the voice of long term and low income residents is diminished. Although the 1997 and 2002 planning processes incorporated the voice and concerns of long-time residents through respect for historic preservation, social services, affordable housing, and minority participation and control, the demographic shift has created cracks in the plan and

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diminished the importance of equity in favor of the amenity interests of new residents.

The diminution in attention to these concerns has been fought largely by mission-driven

institutions who have advocated on behalf of low income residents, creatively preserved

affordable housing in the community and provided on-going support for the right of these

resident to remain and participate in the community.

Chapter 5 Scales of Power: Organizing for citywide and neighborhood action

"I firmly believe the $100 million would not have been allocated had it not been for the
advocacy over a long time." – David Bowers, MidAtlantic VP and Market Leader,
Enterprise Community Partners

In March of 2012, Mayor Grey released the budget for fiscal year 2013. Advocates were

speechless. Not only did the mayor fail to increase the budget for housing, he cut the

human services budget, which provided wrap-around services for supportive housing. He

also did not restore the funding that had been taken from the Housing Production Trust

Fund (HPTF) to pay for local rent supplement vouchers. To combat this, the Coalition for

Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development (CNHED) and its member organizations

got the word out to tenants, services providers, home owners who had benefitted from

District programs, and council members to storm the castle and show up to budget

hearings…wearing yellow shirts that said "Housing For All" in red on the front. They

created a bright picture. Ward 8 council member Marion Barry wore his Housing for All

tee shirt with his suit pants when he addressed the rally and told the attendees to "Step up

the fight – we've got to go a bit further this year…to change the mayor's philosophy."

Over the years, Barry has worn his yellow shirt on the dais during oversight and budget

hearings to show his support for housing. The other council members who attended the

rally seemed to be desperate to show support for the Housing for All campaign. Jim

Graham, council member for Ward one stated emphatically, "this is going to be a different budget than what's been presented to us," suggesting not only that council members supported the campaign, but that they were willing to push the Mayor on his budget. They were successful in increasing the budget for affordable housing.

The following February, the yellow shirts came out for the official State of the District speech. To a packed house at the historic 6th and I Synagogue, the Mayor announced that, instead of saving all $400 million of the budget surplus as he originally planned, he would allocate $100 million for housing. From the moment the surplus was announced in January, housing advocates had been arguing for an allocation above the existing budgeted amount from the Housing Production Trust Fund. And after the Mayor's Office announced that it would all go to the city's rainy day fund, there was a palpable sense of disappointment and frustration as report after report argued that the city was in the midst of an affordable housing crisis. The Comprehensive Housing Strategy Task Force was set to release a report that argued for increased production of 10,000 units over current levels by 2020. However, when the mayor expressed his intention not to allocate the funds, it reignited the momentum for housing advocacy that had been building across the District for decades. Housing groups mobilized and gained support from council members and tenant groups across the city.

The groups that have supported residents of affordable housing in Washington, DC have had a mixed relationship with the City. These organizations, originating from needs at the community level, have created and sustained what Gramsci refers to as a "counter hegemonic force" in Washington, DC. They have filled in gaps in spaces where the City either could not or would not tread. They have identified problems at the neighborhood or

building level and built networks within the nonprofit community and into the private and

governmental sectors to address them. However, their effectiveness has been largely

dependent on the levels of political access they have achieved. Although DC's political

system has been categorized as machine politics, a growth regime and a black political

machine (Hyra, 2013), from an urban governance perspective, it is unclear that it is truly

any of those things. A relatively young city, Washington, DC's self-governance was

based on ideals of Civil Rights governance and black governance in 1975. Jaffe and

Sherwood (1994) argue, power for downtown development remained in the hands of

white elites through the Federal City Council, a group of business elites in Washington

which "works without seeking publicity to help both local and federal government

agencies meet community needs. It offers the knowledge, experience, and skills of its

members; prompt research capacity; and the ability to act expeditiously. Further, the

Council makes commitments for the long-term, recognizing that the fundamental

structural improvements in the City's economic, physical and social welfare system will

require years of dedicated, relentless effort" (Council, 2011). Because most development

was focused downtown until the late 1990s, community concerns and downtown

development concerns were largely separated politically. Therefore, groups focused on

housing and neighborhood services were outside the focus of these discussions. Yet they

received considerable funding to provide services and, in some cases, to organize

residents. Conversely, neighborhood-based groups are often staffed by volunteers or a

small staff of service providers who have no time or resources to devote to the larger

political or policy process. They may have access to a council member, but there is little

or no meaningful access to City staff and Districtwide decision-making. While the

housing advocates continue to receive city funds to build capacity and organize tenants, neighborhood organizations in DC, when they receive local funds, are contracted to provide services only. This has meant that as development moves into DC neighborhoods, neighborhoods or issues that are not tied to citywide advocacy issues such as housing and community development are often at a loss to amass the power needed to make an impact on the process.

In this chapter, I explore two divergent forms of organizing and representation in Columbia Heights to better understand the role that both citywide and neighborhood organizations have played in enabling residents to assert their rights to the city. These rights have been actualized in the creation and implementation of policy, enforcement of regulations, and by negotiating with those in power. I argue that it was the work of housing organizers, affordable housing developers, and policy advocates, not City agencies or neighborhood activist groups that made the investments in affordable housing preservation possible in Columbia Heights. Without these groups, the opportunities for residents to assert their rights would have had little impact. These housing organizations, through their access to the agencies and lenders, connection to and mobilization of tenants, and their coordination from the grassroots to policy advocacy, have been able to represent the needs of low income residents – as well as help them connect meaningfully in speaking for themselves - in the face of dramatic political change and expansive growth politics.

Community Development Organizations in Columbia Heights

Columbia Heights has been where the line between east and west, black and white, and urban and suburban have met over the past century. The black activism that grew into a

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demand for community control in the 1960s has been blended with white church activism

by the Sojourners, Catholics, and the Unitarian Universalists that have worked in the

community since the 1950s. Two churches still active are All Souls Unitarian Church and

St. Stephens Catholic Church, which have provided significant leadership both locally

and citywide with the Washington Interfaith Network (WIN). Further, 18th and Columbia

Road was considered the entry point for Latinos arriving from El Salvador and other

countries during civil wars, which has added the influence of Liberation Theology to the

community's religious mobilization culture. Over time, these organizations, developed to

address the challenges faced by immigrants and low income African Americans in the

neighborhood, formed networks and began working more broadly across the city.

According to data compiled by the Columbia Heights Shaw Family Support

Collaborative, until 2009 there were more than 74 service organizations working in Ward

1, where Columbia Heights is located. Since then, many of these organizations have

closed or moved to other wards, declining by roughly one third as the populations they

serve have left the neighborhood with rising rents.

Many of the faith-based organizations became part of the Washington Interfaith Network

(WIN). WIN is a broad based network of local congregations associated with the

Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF). It does not endorse candidates and or accept funding

from government agencies for its work. It is funded entirely out of dues from its 48

member congregations that represent a mix of ethnicities and faiths across the District.

WIN advocates on behalf of low-income city residents on social justice issues such as

housing, environmental justice and employment. Notably, during the administration of

former Mayor Adrian Fenty, WIN advocated for targets for affordable housing

production in the District, and mobilized their membership around code enforcement in Columbia Heights. The administration sent City staff to attend and speak at services of member congregations throughout the year in order to garner and retain the group's support.

Another organization that plays a role in housing advocacy and organizing in the city is the Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development (CNHED). CNHED is comprised of affordable housing developers, service providers, training organizations, and tenant organizers throughout DC. Unlike WIN, its members often receive City funds to develop affordable housing, administer programs such as the Home Purchase Assistance Program (HPAP), organize tenants, provide wrap-around services to extremely low income households, and provide training for low income residents seeking jobs, buying homes, or experiencing foreclosure. In addition to acting as a professional organization by providing trainings on budgeting, grant writing, and green building, CNHED also organizes its members around particular policy areas, such as homeownership, tenant purchase, supportive services, and employment, through working groups, rallies and public testimony. However, they do not participate in local planning efforts such as the redevelopment of Columbia Heights.

In addition to these groups, there are citywide groups that mobilize tenants and low income residents on a variety of issues they face. These groups do not receive money from the City and rarely work with the more mainstream CNHED. Groups such as The DC Tenants Advocacy Coalition (TENAC) and Empower DC are more directly adversarial than either CNHED or WIN and typically rally around a particular issue in the moment, rather than around broad proactive policy issues or funding mechanisms.

14th Street NW

Columbia Road

11th Street NW

Florida Avenue NW

Cooperatives

Affordable Dwelling Units

Subsidized Buildings

Parks and Recreational Facilities
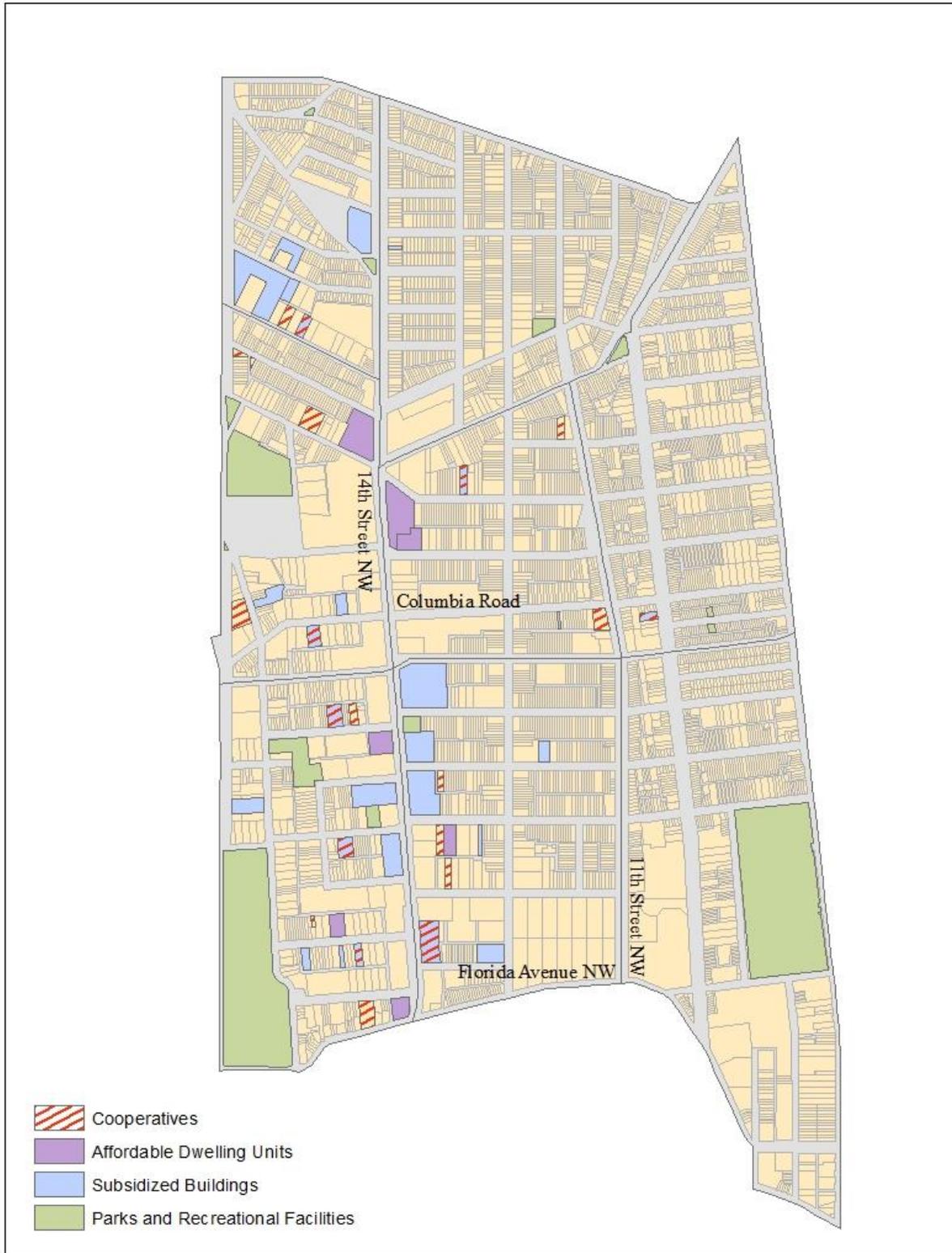
Over the past thirty years, these diverse advocacy groups have worked both with and against the City as they have successfully advocated for a housing production trust fund, legislative and regulatory changes to laws and programs, and the creation of new programs and agencies that provide support to low income tenants and homeowners in the District. More recently, these organizers and advocates have made the preservation of affordable housing a priority as the city went from a declining urban center to a gentrifying hot market seemingly overnight, and affordable housing began to disappear. In the focus on preservation, they have implicitly argued that it is community – the strong and weak ties and sense of place – and not merely a unit of housing that makes a neighborhood. Further, they argue, that residents have the right to be part of those communities, regardless of how they change physically or demographically.

In Columbia Heights the efforts of housing advocacy groups have resulted in the bulk of the preservation and creation of income-restricted housing throughout the neighborhood, including the preservation of project-based Section 8 subsidies and the support of cooperatives through TOPA. Affordable housing has been created or preserved through three primary mechanisms: preservation of an existing rental subsidy; preservation or creation of new subsidized building through a cooperative structure; or through negotiated land development agreements when the City sold the large parcels of land in the heart of the neighborhood. Although the development agreements produced more than 200 units, the bulk of affordable housing in the neighborhood was preserved or created through TOPA and other preservation and subsidy strategies.

Technical assistance and tenant organizing

One of the important pieces of infrastructure in Columbia Heights was its stock of

subsidized affordable housing built in the heart of the neighborhood after the 1968 riots.

The units were built by private developers, most of whom were not mission-driven, using

a wide variety of sources of funds including project-based Section 8, insured mortgages,

Sections 202 and 236, and multi-cultural contracts from HUD. These buildings were

primarily located in the heart of the neighborhood on 14th Street. Although many of these

properties were preserved as affordable housing, it was not part of an intentional housing

and community development policy in coordination with the city's own redevelopment

planning. As I heard from the executive director of an education-based nonprofit in the

neighborhood, "where we really were screwed was there was no vision for affordable

housing – and the developers [of the formerly city-owned parcels] really don't give a shit.

You know the developers take a lot. But they don't give a lot." This sentiment about the

disconnect between planning and housing was echoed by City staff, housing advocates,

and tenant organizers. As a result of the City's lack of strategy for affordable housing in

the neighborhood, a significant amount of this preservation was done through the use

Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) by residents and tenant organizers, as well

as the commitment of mission-focused developers who took on problem properties in the

neighborhood. However, the City's primary focus was about building or preserving

affordable housing units, rather than the community who lived in those units. Figure one

illustrates the geographic distribution of affordable housing in the neighborhood, where

the majority of housing is concentrated within a block of 14th Street.

Organizing for housing has grown out of years of activism and crystallized and

professionalized through the funding created around the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase

Act (TOPA). TOPA emerged in response to the rapid gentrification that was moving through the Dupont Circle and Shaw neighborhoods of the City. Jason, who worked on the development of the First Right Purchase Program, which funded building acquisition and rehabilitation projects under TOPA, argued that the law "in part was a legacy of the displacement that was such an infamous issue in the early stages of Urban Renewal...the memories of that were still pretty fresh." The program funding is intentionally not competitive (though it is subject to funding constraints), nor is it on a traditional RFP schedule. This was done so that the funds could be used to respond quickly in order to be used to act in the legal timeframe of TOPA when owners decided to sell, rather than through an annual allocation process which could allow building owners to manipulate the system by selling buildings after applications for funding are due.

In addition, due to its complexity, the City quickly realized that tenants would need more than the legal right to act. They would need technical assistance to incorporate, organize, and apply for funding. Further, once their buildings are purchased, they need assistance with the mechanics of running a business. Within a year of passing TOPA, the Department of Housing and Community Development began funding nonprofit tenant organizers. Because of the mobilization of organizers involved in this law, TOPA has withstood significant pressure from landlords and builders who believe it hinders construction and creates an unfair burden on building owners by giving tenants a stronger position in negotiation and slowing down the time frame for sales. Many owners feel that this is unfair because tenants have a one year window in which to buy, or as one newspaper article from 2006 paraphrased from an attorney representing building owners,

"they use their opportunity to purchase as a way to "extort" landlords into offering cash payments in exchange for their right" (Grim, 2006).

Knight Gardens Apartments was a well-known problem property from the perspective of residents in the building, neighbors in Columbia Heights, and the City. It had all the hallmarks of a distressed project-based Section 8 property, including significant code violations, failing REAC[9] scores, significant drug activity, assault in the hallways, and general neglect by the previous owners. The building was constructed in 1920 and is on the National Register of Historic Places. It was also home to several prominent neighborhood and Civil Rights activists in the 1960s and is located about four blocks from the DC USA complex on 14th Street. But in the decades of neighborhood neglect and white flight, Knight Gardens became one of several very troubled properties in the neighborhood. The criminal activity of the building often spilled out into a small park nearby, which became notorious for illegal activity. In 2007, Somerset Development purchased the building and began a massive renovation. The mission-driven for-profit developer explained, "it had been completely taken over…It was a completely uncontrolled environment…people in and out. The real estate broker who went in who was hired by the seller to put it on the market got mugged walking through the building." One resident of the neighborhood discussed crossing the street, rather than walking by the building due to safety concerns. According to the developer, the previous owner tried to get the Section 8 contract canceled in order to cash in on the market changes in the

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[9] REAC scores are given by HUD's Real Estate Assessment Center from physical inspections of HUD assisted properties. A failing REAC score can signal management issues and can lead to the loss of subsidy on the building if there are subsequent failed inspections.

neighborhood by letting the building fall into disrepair. However, the developer convinced the owners to sell.

Because the building was subject to TOPA, the residents, in addition to buying it, had the option of assigning their rights to a developer who supported their vision for the building. Both Somerset and tenant organizers worked intensely with the residents for 2-3 years on the plans for physical renovations, security, and relocation during renovation. In addition, they worked with the Housing Authority to offer vouchers to extremely large families that were overcrowded so that they could find adequate housing while their former units were renovated for disabled residents on the Housing Authority's waiting list. After the renovations, the developer, who also owns the building, offered services such as afterschool and summer programs for youth, computer training, health and wellness classes, and social service referrals for residents. Further, because they own four properties in the neighborhood, they share resources such as the community garden located at another property to focus on intergenerational exchange between youth and seniors.

Like its other buildings, the developers of Knight Gardens retained its Section 8 subsidy and used a mix of Low Income Housing Tax Credits, tax-exempt bonds, private financing, and historic tax credits to redevelop the property. To fund the supportive services, they contributed half of the developer fee on the tax credits into an endowment. In some buildings, they also recycled part of the cash flow that would typically go back to the District to repay loans into the endowment. They were also able to make the services part of the financing package for the funds from the City so that a larger loan could be underwritten. This type of leverage, which would not have been possible

without TOPA – but more importantly without the on-going support of tenant organizers and mission-driven developers - supported the rights of tenants to stay and take an active role in the future of their community.

In addition to the role of mission-driven developers like Somerset, an example of the role tenant organizers played in preservation is Cardozo Apartments, located in the heart of the neighborhood. From the front steps, residents can see the Civic Plaza and DCUSA complex half a block away. The building's immediate neighbors are expensive renovated row houses and brand new luxury apartments. However, this 18 unit building is subsidized through project-based Section 8 funding. In 1982, the owner entered into a transfer lease and option agreement with the city in order to obtain funding for renovations to the building. This process gave tenants a small share in the building and the opportunity to purchase the building after 20 years. When the time had expired, the owner tried to evict the residents. As Pearl told me,

> "he sent us a little letter tellin' us everybody had to be out in like 90 days…and – uh – not one person moved. We had a little meeting…then we got to diggin' in things and findin' out stuff…we found some pro bono lawyers who's very good, and they got to diggin in the situation and found out that we were already 1.5 (percent) owners. *We* didn't even know that. He never told us, you know, that like – at first we was a tenants' association. We might have a meeting once a year, twice a year. We weren't rooted and everybody was lazy, nobody wanted to work so we didn't find out what was goin' on with the building, and he didn't do his part as a manager to make sure we knew things."

Although only two of the current tenants lived in the building before it was renovated in 1983, the majority have lived there for between 10 and 30 years. When the tenants tried to buy the building for a previously agreed-upon amount, the offer was rejected by the investors who were trying to sell the building at market value. Ellen, one of the attorneys

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who assisted the tenants said, "this was an attempt…to pretend the tenants had no rights…to assume that nobody knew what they were doing, this low-income group of people who are just ignorant of their rights – and take the building back without ever telling anybody. This happened to be a very savvy group of people – um – and the long term nature of the population there was very important to the stability of that building."

The tenants sued for breach of contract and won, purchasing the building. Pearl said, "He wanted the millions from the building he could get because of what's goin' on right now. It's a very valuable piece of property, and he was hangin' onto it for dear life." The tenants paid less than $600,000 for the building using a loan from an intermediary lender. According to the DC Tax Assessor's Database, the Cardozo Cooperative has been assessed at $1.8 million for 2014 and is exempt from property tax due to its status as a building for low income residents.

This apartment building was not unique in Columbia Heights or Washington, DC. Cardozo Apartments was preserved not merely because of the legal protections offered by the District and the contract that was created in 1983. Those rights have often been ignored or hidden by owners of low income buildings. However, this building, like many in Columbia Heights, benefitted from a network of organizers, advocates, pro bono attorneys, and elected officials who intervened and provided support to the residents who lived there. Jim Graham, their council member, described the owner on his blog shortly after the building was purchased on June 18, 2010 as "An absolutely unscrupulous landlord, who through some subterfuge and shenanigans took over a building that he truly should never have owned. Then he mistreated the residents, refusing to fix code violations before attempting to sell the building right out from under them. Although the

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landlord was offered $2.5 million for the building he refused, and instead was forced the

sell the tenants the building for $586,000 and had to pony up his own money to pay off

the remainder of the mortgage." The residents told me that Jim Graham helped them

purchase their building. I met the residents of Cardozo Cooperative through one of the

tenant organizers who had been working with them for many years. She was providing

the board with assistance regarding the long term sustainability of the cooperative from a

leadership and financial standpoint, as well as assisting them with the selection and

management of the contract with the management company. They also continue to have

legal support from pro bono attorneys in the private sector and at the University of the

District of Columbia to form their limited equity cooperative (District of Columbia Court

of Appeals, 2006).

Another building I visited with a tenant organizer working with the residents was located

near Howard University. This project was more straight-forward from the resident

perspective. Unlike the residents at Cardozo, these tenants were in the early stages of

forming a tenant association and incorporating as a nonprofit with the City's Department

of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA). Tenant organizers became involved when

the residents received a notice of sale from their landlord. An organization located in the

neighborhood sent bilingual organizers to the building to attend a meeting of the tenants

and explain the options they had: they could stay and let the building be sold; assign their

rights to a developer and remain a rental; or buy and become a limited equity cooperative,

affordable condominium or cooperative, or become a market coop or condominium.

Though the building was unsubsidized, all the residents earned less than 80 percent of the

Area Median Income, qualifying them for City support. Some residents had Housing

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Choice Vouchers; some were Howard University students; some paid the current market rent and represented a mix of ages, ethnicities and family types. The tenants also represented a range of number of years in the neighborhood from Rhonda, who grew up on the block in the 1950s and 1960s to Howard students who had arrived less than a year before the tenant board decided to purchase the building.

At a meeting of the board, the tenant organizer worked with the residents on fundraising. They planned a bake sale and raffle of items from local stores such as the Target or Best Buy. Additionally, they collected money from each household to cover a deposit. Meanwhile, Elisha the tenant organizer brought architects and property managers to be interviewed by the tenant association. She assisted them on brainstorming what questions to ask them and what services they wanted for the building. In addition, an attorney (one of the few willing to take on tenant purchases pro bono) assisted them with bylaws and incorporation so they could apply for funds from the DC DHCD.

Throughout the early meetings, residents who had not been involved from the outset asked what the purpose of becoming a co-op is, given the mix of renters. The board president explained, "people like us normally wouldn't be able to stay in northwest DC – we'd have to go out to Hyattsville (Maryland) – this just lets us keep the rents down in a place that's hot." The acquisition of the building was eventually funded by DHCD, preserving the affordability for 40 years through a covenant on the deed.

Translation

Holston (1995) and others argue that advocates can play a translation role between the residents they serve and government or the private sector, meaning that they can often bridge the divide in language and experience between the government and residents. In

addition to the direct assistance provided by nonprofit groups, they also translate the voices and experiences of low income residents in the city to policy makers and agency staff. Melissa explained that at a pair of buildings on a block at the southern edge of the neighborhood, she remained involved with the buildings and the new neighbors living in the single family row houses across the street. New neighbors complained any time there was crime, residents hanging out on the front stoop, or residents smoking marijuana. The crime was most often not attributable to the residents of the two buildings, but there were email exchanges between the new neighbors, the Council member, the police, and Melissa any time there was a complaint. She explained, "They would be complaining – "look at all those kids hangin' out outside." I said, "I see – there's 2 kids riding their bicycle, one's about 9, one's about 11 – their mother's sitting on a step smoking a cigarette. Yes, she's talking to a man," and described what I was seeing and was saying, "if this was in Arlington (Virginia) with all white families, we'd say this was a lovely community scene." I would say that publicly, and they would kind of get ashamed."

She further explained that the residents of the two cooperatives organized an Orange Hat Patrol[10], but the new residents would not join. The buildings also barred people from the building who posed a security risk and evicted others who were causing trouble within the building. Melissa and her organization had to play a translation role because the City went to her when there was a problem. She would then speak with the boards to find out what was happening before responding. When I first visited the block as a new employee for the City in 2007, the board president at Washington Street Co-op explained that they

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[10] Orange Hat Patrols are groups of citizens that walk the streets in their communities in orange hats to discourage drug dealing and other crime. Typically they provide a community link to policy by calling to report what they see, rather than acting as a vigilante police force.

had been working to build relationships with the new neighbors. Five years later when I interviewed Melissa, it was astounding to hear that the challenges between new and old residents still persisted, and years after her organization first became involved in helping the residents buy their buildings, they remained involved in helping neighbors understand each other. This was a theme that was repeated by mission-driven developer-owners, tenant organizers, and residents themselves who butted heads with the new residents.

These challenges often stemmed from conflicting perceptions of safety and norms among new and old residents; narratives created by residents about the buildings themselves that attributed crime to the low income residents living in the buildings themselves; and the narrative that has been created and shared of how the neighborhood and those buildings themselves may have been in previous decades when they were poorly managed as was the case at Knight Gardens and at Columbia Terrace Apartments, a nearby building. Columbia Terrace was owned by the DC Housing Authority for months before they realized it was part of the portfolio. Like many others, the previous owner had failed to provide management, security or building maintenance and in fact the management company was part of the criminal activity in the building. Eventually the owner abandoned the building which became the property of a nonprofit subsidiary of the Housing Authority. In the meantime, crime continued, and many neighbors hoped to have the building closed, blaming the residents for the building crime. Further, HUD was prepared to foreclose on the building due to failed inspections. With the help of organizers as advocates and funding from all three housing agencies in the City, the building was preserved and 14 families chose to continue living there. However, the building has a long term Section 8 contract and is managed by a mission-driven

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developer. Tenant organizers continued to be involved while new and long term residents of the area around Knight Gardens and Columbia Terrace fought about how to ensure safety.

Another way in which advocates shared the experiences of long term residents is through the DC Preservation Network (DCPN). Developed in 2007 by the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) as a pilot for preservation networks nationwide, DCPN used a newly developed preservation catalog created by NLIHC in a monthly meeting of City government staff, tenant organizers, pro bono attorneys, nonprofit housing developers, policy advocates, and staff from the HUD field office in Washington, DC. The meeting was an opportunity to share data from HUD database, City pipeline data, and information from tenant organizers and attorneys working with the tenants. The original catalog format, now nationally available, categorized Project-Based Section 8 buildings into five groups: at-risk, expiring subsidy, failing REAC scores, needs more information, and lost. Initially, the DCPN catalog focused on only HUD funding, but over time, City sources were added, particularly as buildings were preserved using those funds. At each meeting, attendees discussed the properties with conditions complaints, risk of subsidy loss and those in need of additional information about subsidies – such as the status of local funding. The notes from the meetings were incorporated into the database of properties, and maintained in a document for each meeting to keep track of the information that was shared on each property. The group fosters communication about the status of projects, the perception of tenants, the conditions of the building, and the future plans for funding. In 2010, NLIHC transferred the group to the local Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and

Economic Development (CNHED) who manages the process with assistance from the Urban Institute.

In addition to the data in the database of subsidized properties, tenant organizers brought up issues of tenant groups that had called them for assistance about building conditions, rent control violations, and notices of sale. In 2008, the members of the preservation network shared information that Magnolia Apartments, a 152 unit building located in the busy downtown neighborhood of Gallery Place-Chinatown was offered for sale as a building with market-rate potential. Organizers met with tenants to discuss their rights and tried to determine whether there was a subsidy attached to the building. The apartments primarily housed Asian seniors who had been in the building for decades. District agency staff investigated the issue and discovered that the building had a 75 year covenant on the building that began in the late 1970s after discussing the building with a senior City attorney who had been involved when the building was constructed on City-owned property. The deed was found by City staff, and City attorneys communicated with the owners to ensure that the covenants were respected. The sale eventually failed, and the building remains affordable.

Negotiation Power

One of the biggest successes of the coordination of housing organizations has been in giving tenants a more pronounced position of power. Since its inception, the group has facilitated the conversation between City, federal and nonprofit staff, focused attention on particular buildings, helped coordinate legal, financial, and advocacy resources, and given the City an opportunity to intervene to save buildings that might otherwise disappear from the affordable stock. In early 2013, the owner of Cleveland Place

Apartments in the rapidly changing NOMA (North of Massachusetts Avenue) neighborhood received federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits to significantly renovate the aging 284 unit building. Tenants began receiving notifications to recertify their incomes, some received notifications of eviction due to items that had been on their background checks for many years, and still others felt they were being intimidated to leave the building by the management company. The active tenant association tried to get meetings with the owner. When that failed, they contacted the HUD field office. The tenant board president, tenant organizer, and legal advocate all attended DCPN meetings to discuss the issue with HUD staff.

Although they ultimately determined they had no responsibility in the building because the rehabilitation was underway using Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), HUD's involvement facilitated the start of significant dialog between the owner and the tenants. In addition, the DC Housing Finance Agency (DCHFA), who provided the tax credits, asked for a relocation plan and a renovation plan from the owner. It is unclear whether the owner was intentionally violating the rights of the tenants or if there was a lack of communication which, when added to the fear of displacement in such a changing neighborhood, created more issues. However, what was clear was that the owner did not feel that he needed to consult the tenants about the building. The tenants and the owner are currently negotiating a plan for four month relocations for tenants while their units are renovated. The tenants will then return to the building once renovations are complete.

During the boom of Columbia Heights, tenant organizers and City staff frequently exchanged information about buildings in the neighborhood that had conditions complaints, management issues, and notices of sale. The sharing of information about

buildings that had applied for funding through DC Government, subsidized buildings that were trying to opt out of their subsidies, and buildings that may be subject to rent control helped tenant organizers and City staff act quickly to ensure building owners complied with laws, tenants had the information they needed, and many buildings were preserved.

Organizers of DCPN, both from CNHED and from NLIHC argue that this group works because the focus is on the data and information sharing, rather than on being a stakeholder meeting where policy issues or particular problems are discussed or negotiated. In a draft report on the DCPN, NLIHC wrote that the executive director of one organization who had been a critic of the idea, realized that having the opportunity to share data in an open forum also reduced the number of meetings she and her staff would have to have with City staff, HUD staff, and other nonprofit organizations. Discussing the relationship between the participants in the preservation network, one advocate said, "it's a balancing act – we definitely don't want to get into an adversarial relationship otherwise everything falls apart." In spite of sometimes rising frustration about particular properties on the part of the advocates working with tenants, the discussions at the meetings are typically focused on information exchange. For instance, when the Maplewood Terrace building was foreclosed upon by the DC Housing Finance Agency (DCHFA), which canceled TOPA rights and put the tenants at risk for displacement, attorneys for the tenants pressed agency staff for information, but were careful not to directly critique the agency's decision not to preserve the building. Instead, they were able to push for meetings with the new owners and are carefully monitoring building conditions, rents, and the relationship between the tenant association and the owners.

However, because of the sometimes conflicting goals of the housing agencies, advocates, and HUD, meetings can be contentious. After several challenging meetings with advocacy groups about Maplewood Terrace and Cleveland Place outside of DCPN, as well as some expressions of frustration by advocates toward DCHFA, Housing Finance Authority staff no longer attend meetings, suggesting that the balance between information sharing and problem solving may have been upended. Both in and outside of the meetings, DCHFA staff members complain that the advocates are unreasonable and feel they have no reason to participate.

Organizing for City Housing Policy

Nonprofits have also been integral in mobilizing residents, organizations, and funders to testify at hearings, speak at rallies, and lobby elected officials. Every spring, CNHED organizes an advocacy day at city hall in which residents of and advocates for affordable are organized into groups to visit their council members and tell their stories. Further, council hearings on housing bring out residents and advocates in large numbers to both testify and just be present and visible in the council chamber. CNHED and other advocacy organizations also provide training on outreach, story-telling, and advocacy for residents who want to become active citywide in policy advocacy.

In 2000, CNHED wrote a research paper about housing trust funds for the DHCD director and strongly advocated for the development of a local dedicated fund for affordable housing, rather than annual allocations that were dependent on council support. Then-Mayor Anthony Williams introduced legislation the following year for a fund tied to the real estate transfer tax, meaning that as the real estate market heated up, there would be greater resources for affordable housing. The legislation passed and in

2007, at the height of the market, the trust fund received $68 million in revenue (15% of the transfer tax annually). Nearly 2,000 units were produced the following year when the money was committed (DC Fiscal Policy Institute, 2012). The organization has also worked to preserve the fund and restore money that has been siphoned off of the fund to pay for other housing expenditures. Further, housing advocates have successfully lobbied to gain greater power and representation on the Housing Production Trust Fund board, resulting in new board membership appointed in the spring and 2013.

In 2005, tenant organizers successfully advocated for an important change in the law that triggered TOPA rights at any transfer of ownership to block owners from selling 95% of the property in one year and 5% in a subsequent year to prevent compliance with TOPA. Further, organizers exposed the effort by landlords to escape TOPA and rent control by emptying their buildings of tenants before conversion to prevent the tenants from voting against conversion. Often this was done through pay-outs to renters, intimidation, significant code violation, and illegal evictions. Ricardo, a City staff member whose family lived in the neighborhood recalled that his aunt "sold her apartment for like $20,000 so she could put a down payment on a house." While this meant losing her place in Columbia Heights, she, like many others moved out to the suburbs. One legal advocate argued that although it ultimately was a loss for affordable housing, it was the right of the tenants to sell their right to the neighborhood, or their right to remain as renters in the community, similar to homeowners who chose to sell when the market for housing improved.

The role of intimidation and code violations in emptying buildings was epitomized by a fire that destroyed an 85 unit building in the Mt. Pleasant a neighborhood bordering

Columbia Heights. About 200 residents were displaced from a building that had more than 7,000 housing code violations in the years leading up to the fire (Dvorak, 2008). A report from the Washington Post the following month found that more than 200 buildings were emptied through code violation and intimidation between 2004 and 2008 across the city, most of which were rent controlled (Cenziper, 2008). The result was the closing of the loop hole for vacancy and the enforcement of the requirement that vacancy exemptions are only permitted for buildings continuously empty since 1985. These changes came about as housing advocates of all groups joined to protest the permitted behavior of building owners in the District.

Code Violations and Hot Properties

Since starting my preliminary research in 2011, one topic has been discussed by nearly every advocate and City government official that I've interviewed: The Hot Properties Initiative. Launched in 2000, the Hot Properties Initiative was an aggressive attempt by the City to address egregious code violations in Columbia Heights. The neighborhood had a history of such code violations back to the 1950s when the Housing Division of the City government launched an intensive pilot project in both Columbia Heights and another neighborhood. In 1958, the Department of Licenses and Inspections released a plan for housing code enforcement. The report stated, "It is interesting to note that one complaint in four received concerns apartment houses. As these licensed premises are brought into compliance, a major source of complaints will have been eliminated" (1958, p. 16).

However, in the 1960s and 1970s, conditions continued to deteriorate in Columbia Heights. Tenants in several buildings in the neighborhood went on rent strikes to protest

the horrible conditions in the neighborhood. The first rent strike in the city was at 1414 Girard Street in 1964, supported by SNCC and the All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church in the neighborhood. Tenants at Clifton Terrace, a few blocks away, decided to strike due to the 1200 code violations on the property. As Paige and Reuss explain, "by the late 1960s, rent strikes had become a widely used weapon to force landlords to maintain their properties. Tenants became increasingly militant, striking at the landlord where damage could be more severe – the cash flow of the building" (1983, p. 42). The Columbia, located at 14th and Girard Street NW, was one of the most notorious buildings in the neighborhood. After the riots, code violations and a subsequent rent strike, the management company abandoned the building, leaving it with no security, and a rat infestation. It subsequently suffered repeated arson attempts. The City's efforts to evict the tenants and condemn the building were thwarted by a lawsuit brought by Neighborhood Legal Services Program on behalf of the tenants. The building was put in receivership under City control and the City was required to pay utility costs until they could relocate the residents to units with similar rents.

Unfortunately, in spite the efforts by tenants, judges, and nonprofit organizations, the neighborhood remained a center for vacant and abandoned properties and large apartment buildings with significant code violations. Many of these houses and buildings were acquired by the City due to nonpayment of taxes over time. They were held and secured by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). To remedy the code violations, as well as to support tenant groups and low and moderate income home buyers, the City passed the Homestead Housing Preservation Act of 1987. The program reclaimed properties through tax foreclosure and sold them to individuals (in the case of

single family homes) or to nonprofit developers to create housing cooperatives for first time home buyers. Units were sold for $250 per unit, and the City, through DHCD, loaned the buyers $10,000 for rehabilitation, required homebuyer education and partnered with the School of Architecture at the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) to provide architectural services for the buyers. Although it was a citywide program, the program director at the time remembers they did about 200 homes in Columbia Heights.

However, code violations remained, and neighbors grew increasingly frustrated with the buildings that lagged the rapid changes occurring in the neighborhood. To address this, the City's Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) identified properties across the city under the Hot Properties Initiative that would be targeted for intensive code enforcement. Housing inspectors were asked to identify multi-family properties with significant housing code violations. The result was a list of 75 properties that was then pared down to 27 buildings that would be condemned and closed by City agents due to the poor conditions. All were located in neighborhoods where the share Latino population was at least 4.1 times that of the city as a whole. Five of these buildings were located in Columbia Heights, where the share Latino was 4.4 times that of the city as a whole. Melissa, a veteran tenant organizer in the area explained that the owners of the properties in the neighborhood saw the economic boom coming after Metro opened in the neighborhood, "so owners were holding onto their properties – no point to vacate them when they had Latinos willing to pay even though they had no heat at all – so you might as well keep getting the rent, but they were just holding them because they saw the writing on the wall." Emily, who represented some of the tenants in a condemned building explained, "we estimated that he was taking in $30,000 a month with renting to

immigrants who do not question – they simply pay their rent. They were not savvy – until they got representation."

After notices were posted on two buildings in Columbia Heights, the tenants filed a motion for a temporary restraining order. However, for residents of another building in the neighborhood there was no such restraining order, and the tenants were evicted with no relocation assistance. Moreover, the violations were not new. After citing the owner for significant violations, the City failed to act until more than a year later. Further, the City's policy was typically to use a special fund to abate the violations, putting a lien on the property that has to be paid by the owner, but this was not used in any of these cases. In a lawsuit, three tenant associations claimed disparate treatment and impact under the Fair Housing Act and the District of Columbia Human Rights Act (DCHRA). There is debate as to the intentionality of the effort to clear tenants from the buildings on the City's part. Some tenant advocates argue that closing the buildings was intentional, paving the way for developers who wanted to convert the buildings to high end condominiums in rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods. The court found that although the tenants did not demonstrate disparate impact on Latinos, the Hot Properties Initiative "(1) intentionally discriminated against them on the basis of national origin in violation of the FHA and (2) discriminated against them on the basis of place of residence in violation of the DCHRA" (District of Columbia Court of Appeals, 2006, p. 23).

Advocacy organizations and pro bono lawyers pushed for more involvement opportunities for the nonprofit sector, as well as relocation assistance for tenants. The result was that when a building was to be closed for poor conditions, organizers would be

notified, and tenants would be put up in hotels in emergency cases and assisted in their relocation. Melissa explained,

> So we at least got them to say that we could go in a few days in advance and tell the tenants "it's looking like the city might condemn your building. We've tried to get the landlord to turn the heat on. He hasn't. We believe that this is too dangerous for you." So we would be supporting the city and saying "yea – this building is horrendous." If you can't get the landlord to make these repairs immediately, someone will die in this building. And then we could go in and say "hey – we're concerned, here's what we can do. We want you to know – we want you to prepare." And so we got a system going, but Columbia Heights had the majority of these buildings.

Tenant organizers also wrote form letters to the owners for the tenants to sign stating that they were moving out against their will and would retain their TOPA rights, rather than allowing the landlord to benefit from a vacancy exemption.

In addition, in the midst of the legal proceedings, the Office of the Tenant Advocate (OTA) was created within the DCRA as a part of the backlash from advocates. The Chief Tenant Advocate explained, "as a result of that…the questions surrounding the incompetence of public service delivery on the part of DCRA on inspections brought us into…properties within the Columbia Heights area where the tenants were crying foul with respect to landlords' ability to maintain the properties as safe and sanitary." DCRA was critiqued in news articles of time for being managed by outside interests including developers and law firms representing developers. The OTA has since become an independent agency, which has allowed the office to both critique the City and act as a liaison between City agencies and the tenants.

Unfortunately, as the new Mayoral administration of Adrian Fenty was drawn into social services through the fire in Mt. Pleasant and other crises, the role of nonprofits declined

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in importance briefly. One housing advocate discussed the way in which they were shut out from discussions of crisis management when the fire in Mt Pleasant occurred. Because of their experiences with the Hot Properties Initiative, she and other organizations had become part of a public-private partnership to communicate with residents, find temporary housing, help them understand their rights and access needed services. After the fire, nonprofits had been invited to participate in conference calls as they were in the previous administration. However, when the new administration staff realized this advocate was not a City staff member, she was no longer notified of meetings. As a new City staffer, I, along with other agency staff, was charged with searching for units that would be available to these residents. I remember the tense relationship with organizations that we called. I did not understand at the time that these groups were used to being on the front line and in constant contact with the City and residents. This feeling of being shut-out was expressed frequently in conversations about policy changes, crisis management, and funding releases. The frequent lack of communication between new and old staff members exacerbated this tension within City government, as well as with nonprofit organizations.

Housing organizations, though only nominally based in Columbia Heights, have played significant roles in assisting residents who want to stay in the neighborhood. Specifically, they have provided direct organizing and technical assistance to tenants who want to stay in the neighborhood and speak for themselves; played a translation role between the City and residents; and advocated for funding and legal protections for low income residents. Their success has been largely driven by the professionalism, organization, and

relationships of the individual organizations as well as CNHED who have been able to mobilize both residents and advocates to influence the policy and funding process.

Neighborhood-Based Organizations

Although seemingly disparate in terms of scale, method, and focus area, the community organizations fundamentally shaped the impacts of the City-led redevelopment of Columbia Heights. In spite of the arguments in literature and in the popular discussion about Columbia Heights, the neighborhood has had a wealth of neighborhood-based and neighborhood-serving organizations that have played important parts that have both responded to and shaped the neighborhood's history. More than just a loose set of informal networks, these organizations have been advocates for their communities. The shape of these interventions were formed through decades of activism built by immigration and migration to the neighborhood; laws that supported the rights of residents and helped nonprofits build a constituency; and the long term gaps in government support or neglect by City agencies in the neighborhood.

Funding Coordination

In 2009, the Columbia Heights-Shaw Family Support Collaborative (CHSFSC) brought together the directors of the neighborhood nonprofits to discuss better ways to serve the neighborhood and reduce competition for limited funding during the recession in which City and Federal funding sources were cut. However, the fight over resources among directors made this method less successful than when CHSFSC pulled together 120 front line staff members from nonprofit organizations in the neighborhood a few months later to talk about the work they were doing, what the neighborhood needs were, and the resources that were needed to do that. They formed a group called Strengthening Ward One Together (SWOT) and created subgroups for education, workforce development and

data. The group worked together to pull in people from all levels of the organizations in the neighborhood and advocate for policy changes. They drafted legislation around truancy prevention and advocated for budget changes for neighborhood service provision by nonprofit organizations.

Further, they worked with a local educational campus (high school and middle school) to provide services. The nonprofit organizations in the neighborhood would go to the campus before and after school to provide educational and family services in order try to build it as a community school under the Harlem Children's Zone model. As the school gained its own resources, they were able to provide afterschool programs and tutoring for their students, as well as social workers, college prep, and teen parent day care such that now the school funds programs through book sales and other neighborhood-based fundraisers.

In addition to filling the gaps through inter-organizational coordination, many of these service organizations coordinated with the City to address more high profile issues. Columbia Heights faced challenges with gangs and violence throughout the 1980s and 1990s. However, beginning in 1999 just as Metro opened, and the City prepared to negotiate the land at the heart of the neighborhood for development, the neighborhood was hit with a string of youth homicides, primarily due to Latino gangs operating in the neighborhood. The most high profile involved a non-fatal shooting in front of the Latin American Youth Center (LAYC), a prominent youth service center in the neighborhood. This was followed up with nine gang-related homicides between the fall of 1999 and spring of 2000. Over the next few years there were several more homicides, drive by shootings and other forms of gang violence in the community.

As youth and gang violence increased the neighborhood, the FBI assigned someone to investigate Latino gangs in DC, the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) had stepped up enforcement around the neighborhood, and neighborhood-based nonprofits had begun to coordinate their activities to address youth violence. However, these were fairly uncoordinated efforts between the three groups. Further, there was not significant focus on the social factors influencing gang membership and gang violence. Finally, in 2003, community service organizations partnered with the MPD and the City's Office of Latino Affairs to create the Gang Intervention Partnership (GIP).

Rather than just using police to address the challenges, nonprofits in the neighborhood used a mix of methods to address the issues of youth violence in the neighborhood. Direct youth service organizations received grants to provide outreach workers during the day and at night to be out on the street to intervene. In addition, they had leaders who took the youth out of the city on the weekend for what were called "cool down sessions;" neighborhood groups mediated between gang members; and outreach workers made home visits and educated parents about gangs and truancy. The organizations were also funded to build capacity within their own staffs for longer term intervention. Meanwhile, police began tracking gang members in the neighborhood. The GIP met weekly to confidentially discuss the intersection of the work being done in the various sectors. Outreach teams from various organizations also met frequently to coordinate strategy and outreach areas.

As a result of the work done through this group, there has not been a youth homicide since 2004. Unfortunately in spite of great success, funding to this group was cut by Mayor Fenty in 2007 after the emergency seemed to have passed. As one former

participant who still works in the community stated, "part of the argument is that…you were successful because you were consistent. And if you're not consistent, it's like weeds. Stop weeding, you get 'em back. You get crabgrass. End of story…We're seeing it again, you know – not as prevalent – it's happening again, and we're all beginning to talk about it." However, because it is no longer perceived as a crisis by neighborhood residents and the City, the efforts of nonprofits to address this problem have been thwarted by a lack of funding or support from City agencies.

Organizing for community development and preservation

In addition to the focus on community services, one neighborhood group has focused on being an active part of the redevelopment of Georgia Avenue, the eastern edge of Columbia Heights. The Georgia Avenue Community Development Task Force organized in 2009 when residents began to notice changes happening rapidly on Georgia Avenue, the eastern boundary of Columbia Heights, without community input. Initially, they surveyed more than 600 residents to make sure that the City understood the needs and vision of the community. The survey included demographics, community preferences about employment opportunities, streetscaping, and businesses on Georgia Avenue. The results were also divided by the part of the neighborhood were surveyed residents lived. Armed with this community-level data, the group soon became more active to get ahead of the work being done by the City and developers. The group remains informal – there are no officers or official board in order to avoid cooptation by outside interests, and they do not allow online discussion because not all residents have access to technology. They also hoped to avoid the vitriolic dialog that ensues on anonymous list-servs.

The organizer of the group was surprised at the level of interest in the GACDTF among

neighborhood residents. She explained that 25-30 people showed up to meetings, but the

mailing list has grown to almost 300 residents, business owners, property owners, City

staff, and service providers. Active participants quickly determined that they needed to

meet more than once a month in order to achieve their goals. They have had some

success in being involved in processes such as organizing to get a park built on the site of

a demolished school in the neighborhood, as well as working to get shade and bathrooms

built and management to make sure the large park remains safe for users. They have also

worked to be involved in commenting on plans, fighting liquor stores, and focusing on

small local businesses on Georgia Avenue, rather than the big box development.

However, she argues that in spite of building partnerships with the Development

Corporation of Columbia Heights, Howard University, and the small businesses on

Georgia Avenue, as well as the participation by City staff, keeping up with changes in

City policy and funding has been challenging. They do not have a full time person to staff

the task force. She said,

> "with the daytime hearings – that's a challenge – just being represented. And also,
> understanding the processes you have your formal City process like an RFP
> (Request for Proposals) process for public land and all of the mandatory public
> meetings that are supposed to happen and the windows in the meantime that you
> can get the community organized. And then on top of that is all of the underhand
> processes; the deals that get made – like launching the budget process and you
> know, the council deals that get – the horse trading that goes on…You can go
> through a community process and think "hey! This is what should happen…" and
> you go away for awhile and next thing you know it doesn't happen, but you didn't
> know when it got side tracked."

To overcome these challenges when promised funding for a Great Streets Program was

moved to another project in the City in 2011, the GACDTF mobilized the community and

wrote letters to their council members who stalled the move long enough to organize

petitions and mobilize further to save the funding. Residents and business owners

expressed frustration, but the Mayor argued that in a challenging fiscal environment,

funding for the other project had to come from somewhere. Ultimately the task force was

successful, collecting more than 300 signatures, but they are now finding it difficult to

help small businesses access the funding, which was intended for business development,

rather than infrastructure.

Neighborhood Groups and Change

Although neighborhood-based organizations have played integral roles in the

stabilization and support of long term residents, they find it increasingly hard to remain in

the neighborhood, serve the diversity of residents that now live there, and serve the

residents who have moved away from Columbia Heights in search of more affordable

housing. However, in spite of that, many who had been served by the organizations in

Columbia Heights still return to the health centers, daycares, charter schools, and

afterschool programs that were once their local service provider. Anne, the executive

director at a local children's services organization said, "our constituency – in the early

days, kids could walk or ride their bikes. Now I'd say they take a couple of buses and

walk and ride their bike." She continued to say that now the organization serves people

from all wards and even the surrounding Maryland jurisdictions. Several service

providers argued that this was because those who had moved to places like Ward 8, a

heavily majority African American, neighborhood could not find bilingual service

providers. They were comfortable with the organizations they had been visiting for years,

or they were just more comfortable in Columbia Heights. Ricardo explained that they had

to turn people away from the organization he previously worked for because they were

not from the service area. For some organizations, this has meant that they have moved

to different parts of the city where their constituents have moved such as neighboring

Ward 4 or across the Anacostia River in Ward 8. Anne's organization, among many also

has locations in Maryland to address the growing needs in the suburbs.

In addition to the challenge of serving residents who come from so far, some nonprofits

also face a challenge of a changing demographic within the community. The schools

experience it in terms of the demands parents make on the type of curriculum and the

social opportunities for parents. As Eileen, a long time activist and community organizer

said about the program she works for, where the majority of the children served are

Latinos and African Americans,

> For us – there's tremendous pressure for us as a city-based organization to now serve the people who are moving into the neighborhood. There's a lot of pressure on "why can't you be more like – you know – Rock Creek School – and be like a charter school" because Rock Creek School actually started out as a bilingual public school that was run between parents and teachers. It's now one of the more elite white schools in the city… But you know – we as an institution, centrally located in this community – get tremendous pressure from young families about "we want to send our children here, but we want them to be blah, blah, blah." You know –
> *Q: What are they looking for?*
> They're looking for play groups and "parents that they can talk to," meaning parents that actually speak English; parents that look like them.

This challenge also plays out in the community facilities in the neighborhood. At one of

the neighborhood community centers, the director sees divides in the demands and uses

of the building based on ethnicity. She sees primarily African American families, rather

than the mix of Latino, white and African Americans that live in the neighborhood. She

explained that while white families use the space, it has thus far only been for a

cooperative pre-school that is financially out of reach for most of the longer term

residents in the neighborhood. She and others in the neighborhood also explained that

many divides among long term residents based on ethnicity, block, school attended or

street crew or gang in which they are members have been entrenched, challenging the

ability of neighborhood organizations to serve those residents, much less the new

members of the community.

Conversely, cultural organizations in the neighborhood have worked to create dialog

through art. These groups host exhibits about divisions based on race, ethnicity, gender,

and other challenges such as gentrification and disability or HIV status. These groups

such as the Dance Institute of Washington, Bloom Bars, and the Emergence Community

Arts Collective offer classes in dance, music and visual arts on a sliding scale for the

community, provide open-mic nights, and standing exhibits in their spaces that represent

the diversity in the neighborhood. However, arguably, this type of diversity supports the

visual diversity that newer residents are most comfortable with – art exhibits, poetry, and

music. However, with a focus on community-building, these organizations focus on

providing opportunities to address community challenges and build on strengths of the

diverse community.

Discussion
Realizing Rights

The world of housing finance, housing development, and property management is

complex and often operated through significant expert experience through attorneys, tax

professionals, developers, loan officers, and planners. However, low income residents are

frequently ill-equipped, due to lack of experience, lack of time, and lack of financial

support to do this. While TOPA remains a unique right for all residents in Washington,

DC, it would have likely been either lost or underutilized without the long term support of mission-driven developers, tenant organizers, and City funding to make it real. The law was made usable for low income residents through both the funding of tenant organizers and attorneys funded through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and low-cost, 40 year loans for acquisition and rehabilitation through funding sources such as HOME, CDBG and the Housing Production Trust Fund.

In stark contrast to the national trend away from funding community and tenant organizing that began in the 1970s with the move toward local control of funds, the District continued to fund these groups. Although it still remains difficult to find funding sources outside of the District for these activities, this funding ensured, particularly that low income residents of the City had a voice in the local political process and could exercise their right to stay in their neighborhoods. Arguably a part of the Civil Rights Leadership and the void of entrenched power when the City was granted home rule, the decision to fund organizing provided direct support for counter hegemonic voices in decision-making.

The continued support to these groups through the years has also allowed a constituency to form around tenant purchase of rental buildings, organizing, and affordable housing preservation. Although affordable housing programs nationally have a constituency of developers and attorneys who specialize in construction of units through sources such as the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, the local constituency of insurgent groups has helped to build and retain a progressive focus, as was the case at Cleveland Place where organizers and advocates and tenants worked together to ensure that the residents would not be displaced and would be treated fairly in the renovation process. Even as the

housing developers formed professional organizations, some of the organizations developing buildings also provided tenant organizing services, and therefore were part of the professional organizations, much like those that provided supportive services with affordable housing.

In many ways, the funding of these groups helped to institutionalize and legitimize what might be insurgent groups. It is unclear whether the presence of the funding for organizing results in silencing potential critique of City actions. One executive director no longer critiques the City or allows her staff to participate in advocacy, even with the umbrella organization of which they are members, because she felt her organization was denied grant funding as a result of previous advocacy. However, others that are funded by the City are outspoken advocates for various programs and budget items.

The greatest protest of District and developer action, however, still comes from organizations that do not receive City funds and do not directly interact with the City such as the Washington Interfaith Network and Empower DC. They work to protest and harshly criticize the City's relationship with developers and the City's focus on new residents over long term and low income residents as the city changes. While they show up to hearings to testify, rallies to speak on their own behalves, and to their council members' offices to share grievances, their goal is to influence the lives of their constituents through grass roots action, rather than political process. However, although the funding by government may suggest, as Miraftab does, that those that are City-funded have been co-opted, and that their inclusion is merely a form of exclusion, their support for tenant rights over developer interests has crystallized into a counter-hegemonic force against the power of neo-liberal ideology in the City. In spite of being funded by a City

government that has changed dramatically from its early roots in Civil Rights activism, they have retained funding because of the power they have amassed in politics and the mobilization of tenants as well as professionalization of the umbrella organization. I argue that they would not have been funded in the present day, TOPA would not have passed, and the affordable housing along 14th Street would not have been preserved in the present political landscape of the city without the historic roots of the nonprofit housing sector in DC. City funding of organizers at key moments helped to build the foundation for effective citywide advocacy.

Although housing does not always win, they are considered a force enough in politics that mayors and council members (as well as hopefuls) court their votes, attend housing rallies and advocate for large set-asides for affordable housing. But smaller groups with less access must contend with the layers of government agency staff before they can access the mayor's office. Alternatively, they have to go through their council member with enough signatures to cause a stir. This suggests that, rather than a strict regime structure of developers in Washington, DC, the city may be in the midst of competing regimes, each having significant access to elected officials and agency staff that most small, less professional organizations do not have. While they occasionally rise in importance through protest action or community crisis – as in the case of gang violence or the petitions of Georgia Avenue, they are rarely sustained and are often placated and ignored.

Data, translation, and depoliticization

Holsten argues that planners can play a translation role between decision-makers and those affected by those decisions. If we expand planning, as Sandercock does, to include

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planning from the grassroots level, housing and neighborhood advocates play a fundamental planning role in the District. By listening, advocates have been able to better understand and make decisions about the needs of those who may not typically have access to government. As the experience of the Georgia Avenue task force suggests, that lack of access can be challenging. Conversely, the DCPN acts as a space of translation where tenant organizers and pro bono attorneys can share the concerns of the residents of buildings with expiring subsidies, and government agency staff can share information about opt-out notices, foreclosure actions, and other issues that challenge the affordability status of the building. In a draft report by NLIHC, they argued that DCPN works partially because data is not political. They felt that they were able to depoliticize information sharing by keeping the meetings focused on data, rather than broader policy issues. The meetings are also not specific stakeholder meetings, and there is no agenda but to share information. It also works because, although often inconsistent in attendance, agency staff participate in the meetings and are open to answering questions about specific properties. As a result, the notoriously opaque housing data in DC government agencies has been made available to the network staff to supplement the national database information provided through HUD. However, as the example with the DCHFA suggests, the balance between data sharing and conflict can be difficult to manage.

Because of the citywide focus and mass mobilization of the housing organizations, they are able to access City staff with less challenge. They show up and are a visible part of the city's political landscape. In 2012, the Housing For All campaign, an effort by CNHED to advocate for funding and support for affordable housing across the spectrum, was a runner up for best campaign in the Washington City Paper's annual "best of" poll,

suggesting, at the very least that they were mainstream enough to compete with the statehood campaign and those of elected officials in the city in mainstream popularity. This citywide power and access also enables housing advocates to have access to play the powerful roles of translation. They would not be effective if they did not already have relationships built with City staff, elected officials, and developers. Conversely, neighborhood groups are granted less access to agency staff at a high level. Typically, they go through their council member or neighborhood planner, rather than speaking to directors of agencies. In the case of the GIP, after the immediate and visible crisis was over, the City disbanded the group, and the organizations have had trouble getting funding to continue the work.

However, in spite of the challenge of accessing citywide power, all nonprofit organizations in Columbia Heights found themselves filling gaps and continue to provide services that the City cannot or will not provide directly. In the case of the service organizations and housing developers, these groups filled gaps where government did not necessarily function well or at all. Moreover, the fact that nonprofits, mission-driven developers and community organizations were able to preserve enough housing that more than 18 percent of the units in Columbia Heights are rent-restricted when only 250 units were planned through new construction, speaks volumes of the way in which these organizations have shaped Columbia Heights specifically. However, although they have made the neighborhood a place where many long term residents can still live and find services, the challenge of community as they interact with their new neighbors still remains.

Chapter 6: Parks, Porches, and People

The Civic Plaza at the heart of Columbia Heights is used by a diverse and representative population of neighborhood residents at various times of day. It was built on a space that was otherwise unbuildable because the Metro runs under it. It is also protected from privatization by the public realm plan, and is used for everything from music and dance performances and family play time and teenage socialization to a resting spot for the homeless, and a Saturday farmers market. But before it was a civic plaza, finished with tile mosaics, stone benches, and a terraced lawn, it was an empty lot after the debris from the riots had been cleared. In the years before the riots, 14th Street was a lively shopping district, second only to downtown. After the riots the empty lots of the neighborhood's main street were used as cut-throughs and a public space for hanging out. The space was considered unusable for the purposes of the redevelopment. The new space is more comprehensible to the new residents who did not grow up in the neighborhood. It is managed and has the look and feel of a safe public space. There are high rises towering over it, and the impact of those buildings combines with the lighted signs from the DC USA and the Tivoli Theater to create an urban center-city feel in a neighborhood that has been almost entirely residential for almost 50 years. The plaza is something that residents consistently appreciate, unlike other public spaces in the neighborhood. It is managed by a combination of City agencies, and its rules are enforced through planning documents, police, and City staff. It has become neutral space because no one group has primary ownership, and it is new.

This space both embodies the contradictions present in the community and serves as a

Figure 12: Area map of the Columbia Heights Civic Plaza
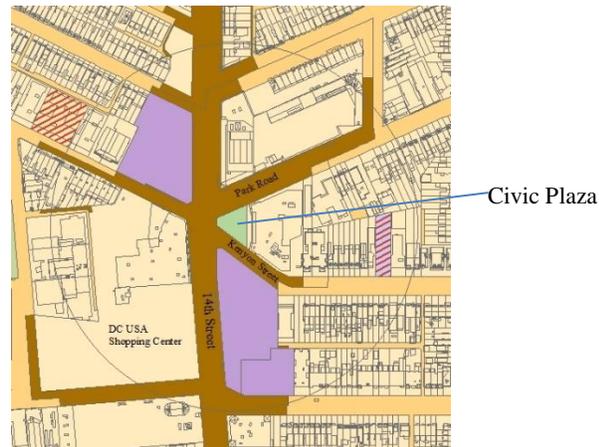
sort of common ground. Though not reaching the level of Anderson's "cosmopolitan

canopy" in which there is no dominant class or power struggle (Anderson E. , 2011), the

park is less contested than other parks in the community. As discussed in chapter four,

the fight over the meaning and use of the space is being fought in the planning and permit

approval processes in cases such as the Z Burger debate. However, this park does not

have the history and relationships that are central to the other public spaces in the

community. Instead, it is a place where people hang out. It has particular functions as

meeting space, play space, or resting space, but it does not have a role in the

community's identity yet. It sits in the heart of the redevelopment, apart from the

residential buildings that have stood in the community for a century. In short, though

middle class and professional norms of behavior apply in the plaza, it is not yet claimed

by one group to the perceived or real exclusion of another.

The use of this park has also been shaped by the closure of homeless shelters in neighborhoods across the city. In 2010, a homeless shelter once serving many men in the neighborhood closed, and a day shelter for families nearby will close soon due to funding cuts from City resources. In November of 2012, the City broke ground on the old shelter site, which sits in the shadow of a high-end condominium development and steps from the Metro entrance. The new building will provide 40 units of transitional housing for homeless men, with a focus on veterans. However, as other shelters across the city close, notably the Franklin Shelter about a mile south of Columbia Heights, homeless men and women continue to look for places to spend days and nights in neighborhoods across the city. When the discussion of the preservation of the Public Realm Plan emerged in the context of the Z Burger, residents argued that fencing off the seating at the restaurant would keep them from encountering the homeless and those perceived to be homeless who hang out in the civic plaza while they eat.

A city planner explained the different feelings of various groups of residents about the fencing of the public realm. He argued that new residents, who arrived after the neighborhood was redeveloped, feel that they "deserve a fence to keep those undesirable people away." Meanwhile, the early pioneers who moved to the neighborhood in the late

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1980s and early 1990s feel that the closing of the shelters complicates issues. They don't want to relax and eat dinner around the homeless, but they are a little more sympathetic or aware of the larger context. Meanwhile, many long term residents felt that there should be no fence and that the neighborhood should stick solidly to the plan. The discussions surrounding the fence caused resentment. He said,

> So can you imagine the new residents saying "Get them[the homeless] the eff out of here?" And the long term residents are like "Yo – screw you. They're more entitled to be here than you are." That's the type of tension that's constantly existing.

While political battles rage in the media, election campaigns, and the Council chambers downtown, a quieter battle over political power and cultural norms rolls along at a slow burn in the neighborhood's public spaces. From questions about who uses the space to the ways the space is designed, used and managed, tensions over the use of public spaces epitomize the challenges to individual relationships that occur in Columbia Heights. As a potential space for social interaction, parks in Columbia Heights offer the opportunities for the meaningful exchanges assumed in mixed income neighborhoods. However, as the neighborhood has changed, so have the types of issues that arise in the debate over public spaces. While debates were once framed in terms of public safety or specifically, violence and drug sales, now discussion centers on the protection of children from the dangers posed by drug users, the homeless and alcoholics that are perceived to use the spaces.

At the same time, long time Washington, DC residents have a culture of using parks and open spaces as extensions of their homes that dates back to the days before air conditioning made row houses and apartment buildings bearable in the dense heat and

humidity of the southern summer. For these residents, the parks were where one met

friends, spent the day while waiting for work, played cards after work, drank all day, read

the paper, or caught up on neighborhood gossip. Some residents told me about sleeping in

the larger parks at night when it was too hot inside while others talked about using the

parks for barbeques after work on Fridays. These parks, many of which have been

important social spaces for decades, have informal rules, and ways of being that have

been challenged as the neighborhood has changed. The parks also reflect the broader

changes in the neighborhood: Just as the neighborhood was once neglected, disinvested,

and violent, so were these community spaces.

Figure 14: Columbia Heights Parks, affordable housing and zoning
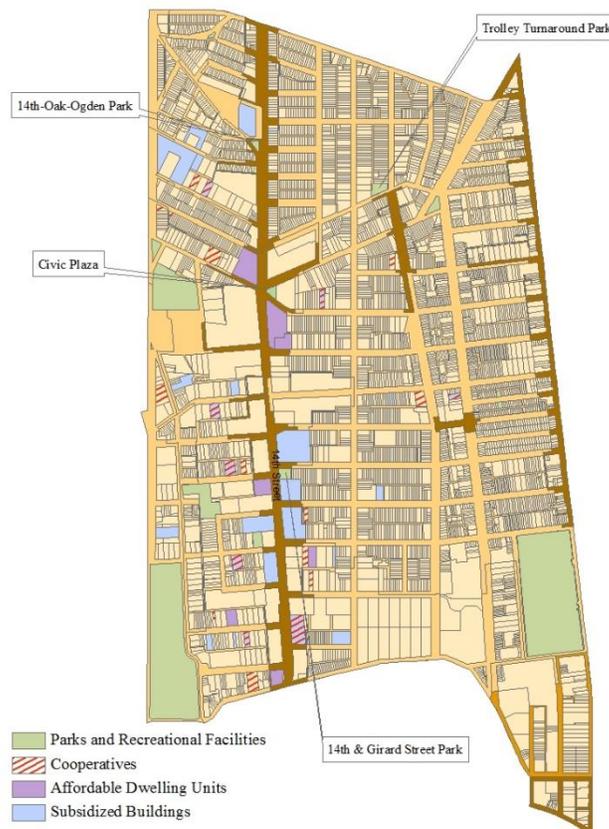
This chapter will describe the history of three local parks, exploring the way these parks have changed, the way different groups speak about and use the parks, and the significance of these spaces to different groups. Figure 14 illustrates the location of the four parks discussed in this chapter. Commercial and residential zoning is indicated in dark brown and tan, respectively. These parks are a lens for examining the changing relationships between residents over the past five years and the challenges and opportunities that have resulted. Conflicts over public spaces in Columbia Heights reflect fears about the changing demographics and changing representation of different groups in the neighborhood. They are where conflicts over the meaning and visual representation of safety, and clashes over norms of behavior, police presence, and uses of public space in the neighborhood and the city as a whole are played out. Further, as spaces of interaction, the competition over these norms creates a challenge to the meaningful relationships and opportunities between new and old neighbors in Columbia Heights.

Neighborhood Change in the Park

In November of 2012, the DC Office of Planning reported that Ward 1, in which Columbia Heights is located, was projected to have the second highest growth in children among all eight wards in the city over the next decade. This "baby boom" is at least partially attributable to the growth in young white families who bought homes and stayed in the neighborhood over the past decade, but Columbia Heights has been a family-focused neighborhood since its construction. The difference in this generation of population growth is that white and upper middle class families are staying in the District, and coming to Columbia Heights, to start and raise families – a trend once reserved for the neighborhoods west of Rock Creek Park and parts of Capitol Hill. While black and low income neighborhoods east of the Anacostia River have experienced large

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scale school consolidation, gentrifying neighborhoods of the City have experienced a rise in amenities for children, including new charter schools and parks.

The Office of Planning's report did not surprise me. My first day of field work in Columbia Heights and a subsequent year of interviews and observation offered a view into the neighborhood's shift. On my first day of fieldwork when I walked up the hill to Columbia Heights from U Street, I started at what I considered to be the eastern edge of the neighborhood and came upon a park in process of redevelopment. A year before, when I was in the neighborhood for preliminary fieldwork, the park was surrounded by a tall dark fence, had playground equipment in the center and tables and benches full of people on either side talking and laughing loudly. The park was surrounded by a mix of housing types and conditions, including immaculately renovated row houses, unpainted houses with slumping porches, and two aging apartment buildings home to Latino families, together comprising a mix of new and old residents. The primary park users were African American and Latino middle aged to senior men and women, reflecting the low income population surrounding the park. Shortly after the park was completed, a 24 hour high-end diner and bar opened on the ground floor opposite the park with renovated condominiums upstairs.

The park went from being an adult space to a child space seemingly overnight. Though not yet completed and covered in construction debris when I started fieldwork, the park was vastly different. It was still fenced and managed through locked gates, but the space was open internally with one end enclosed by a low fence surrounding a small child play area. Over the next few months, I followed the developments in the park and asked people about it. I went to the ribbon cutting where the Mayor, councilmember, Area

Neighborhood Commissioners[11] (ANC), and president of the Friends of the Park

organization spoke to a crowd of young families. I went to a "Friends of the Park"

meeting, and I interviewed several community members involved in the redevelopment

of the park. I also talked to people who had once used it.

Source: Prince of Petworth

Once the place where trolleys would turn around to return downtown from Columbia

Heights before the streetcars stopped running in 1962, the 11th and Monroe Park had a

divided reputation within the community by the early 2000s. Neighborhood blogs

discussed the residents who hung out there, calling it a "drunk park," and also described

it as prison-like due to the high dark fencing and closed-off feeling. Several who

commented on the list-serv and on neighborhood blogs argued that the drunks in the park

made it unusable for families with children. In an interview David, a white nearby

neighbor who had lived in his house for seven years and was part of the organizing for

the redevelopment said:

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[11] Washington DC is divided up into 8 Wards, and subdivided further into small Area Neighborhood
Commissions (ANC) that write letters of protest or support for local projects, develop voluntary agreements
and provide a voice to small groups of residents.

You had Hispanic folks that were drunk … at one time it was a daily occurrence that the ambulance was there because you'd have someone drunk out on the floor. It was costing the city a lot of money. And the African American folks that were there were very noisy – I mean really noisy – noisy enough that one of my neighbors who bought a year after I bought moved out because he couldn't deal with it.

Conversely in an interview with Bryan, a white father of a two year old, I was told that he never had a problem, and anyone sleeping on the equipment would move when children came to the park. He told me frankly, "And my son – I don't want him to be in danger, but when I'm there with him, he's not in danger. These folks have no place to sleep except here on this playground equipment. We try to treat them with dignity. We give them some water if we happen to have some." In online discussion of the park, some parents never had problems and described the other users as "respectful" to them and their children. Meanwhile, others differentiated between users who were drunk, loud and fighting, and those who played cards or dominoes quietly at the tables.

When neighborhood meetings began about the redevelopment of the park, many newer residents argued for a massive change in order to change these behaviors. They wanted the park to be primarily for the growing number of families with children. When organizers asked the City for assistance, they were told that the first thing they needed to do was get new people into the park. They had a picnic to get families into the park, and as Dorothy, an African American homeowner in Columbia Heights since 1987 and former ANC Commissioner, told me "those old drunks – drug using people –we even told them to come and have some food or whatever – stood off to the side, but they were not breaking glass, they were not fighting. They were not cursing. They just sat over in

the corner and were quiet." This was followed up with a neighborhood-organized Halloween parade for children.

By the time meetings with the City about the design of the park began, there was a large constituency of interested users that could testify about their desire for a new space. Police argued that there was no law against loitering and that the current users had a right to use the space. Generally they seemed reluctant to arrest the older users of the park, which was a consistent theme in redevelopment of other parks in the area. New residents complained that the police could arrest the men for public drinking if nothing else. However, in spite of the pervasiveness of public drinking and intoxication, arrests were not seen as a daily threat. Police in the community know the park users well but are limited in what they can do to arrest the users unless they actually see alcohol being consumed. They cannot arrest someone on suspicion of being drunk or force a blood alcohol check because it is considered a search. Further, the District has no loitering laws, although police can give warnings for and subsequently arrest someone for blocking the sidewalk.

Older users who showed up to the meetings wanted to have bathrooms installed, similar to what had been done at another park nearby. However, that idea was rejected by both new neighbors and City officials. After one planning meeting in which design options for the park were unveiled, a blog reported on the meeting, and many attendees commented. One summed up the meeting,

> Related to the policing issue, someone raised the issue of why tables were being put in the park if we were trying to make it not a "drunk park." "Tables just make it a bar for them." Representatives of the local church and others who reported trying to help the drinkers reacted pretty negatively to the 'no tables" discussion

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saying that "tables don't make people drink alcoholism does" and "we need to reach out and help the people in the park". (Interestingly, the church representatives were very concerned about being able to move the tables out of the way so they could hold services). Folks who had been working on fixing this park for a long time noted that they had tried previously to get the tables removed. This discussion sort of disintegrated with parents expressing concerns that tables attract the drunks and make the park unfriendly for children (i.e. not really a children's play park) and church reps insisting that we need to talk about long term solutions to social problems, not about tables (they were just talking past each other).

In spite of the efforts of the previous users of the park, it was redeveloped dramatically. It remains fenced and closes at 9 pm. The play equipment is intended for children under the age of 10, and that area is fenced in at the west side of the park. At the southeast corner are two unshaded permanent tables with checker boards on them with four seats around them. The entire park has a low wall intended for seating, with planters along the edges. The designers used a historic streetcar theme with enlarged replicas of the tokens accepted on the original DC streetcars on the fencing, brick accents where the tracks would have been, and pictures and interpretive signs about the trolley's history in the neighborhood before the riots of 1968, consistent with the before and after narrative of the neighborhood history. However, as one former park user complained, "you can't do anything in that park now – it's not for adults anymore."

Now, the park is most frequently used by families and young children. At various times

of day the children's playground is packed with children and parents and nannies of many

ethnicities and older children often kick soccer balls or throw footballs in the small open

space in the park. During the day, quiet groups of adults hang out to play cards, have

business meetings, or eat lunch. Due to community pressure a police officer on a

motorcycle was assigned to the park and hangs out either on one of the low walls or on

the corner outside the gates. He is also there often with nothing to do, compared to the

busy officers of the district. One of the organizers of the "Friends of 11th and Monroe

Park" has seen a positive difference, and has not noticed any of the old behavior that

drove the redevelopment process. Many parents look at the park as a positive example of

the power of mobilization. However, others see it as a sign of the neighborhood's

growing gentrification. The Friends of the Park group now organizes events such as

picnics, cleanups and outreach activities for young families. At one meeting of the organization, they debated charging for events or not. One member pointed out that charging for events might keep away many of the low income families that used the park, suggesting that socioeconomic status of the users might be less of an issue to organizers than the uses and norms of behavior of those users.

Another park on the western border of the neighborhood is going through a similar process as the Trolley Turnaround Park currently, including forming a new "Friends of the Park" group with the participation of the ANC commissioner for that single member district, the area's councilmember and other new parents. In one email chain, a parent wrote: "I recognize that this is a community space and not just for children. But the people who have taken it over have made it impossible for the majority of the public to use this park. We now walk way out of our way to go to Trolley Park on 11th and Monroe, a lovely park that clearly separates (with a fence) the space for children and the space for those who just want to hang out. The renovation of this park is a huge success, and I just can't help wondering why the same thing can't be done at 16th and Park. I ask again -- and I don't think I'm being hyperbolic, here -- will it take a child being assaulted or finding a needle under the mulch to get the attention of the city?" From her perspective, the park had been "taken over" by long term users of the park, rendering it unusable for her and her children.

Friends of the Park
It took three passes before I finally entered the 14th and Girard Street Park. When I first approached the Park, I was intimidated. The first few times I walked by, it was the middle of the day. I looked into the fenced park where a group of African American

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seniors, primarily men, laughed and talked loudly and familiarly. From a distance, I could tell it was a community full of people who knew each other and felt comfortable, and it felt inaccessible to me. When I finally walked in and sat down, it was early in the morning when there were only four men hanging out on a late January morning.

Figure 17: Area map of the 14th and Girard Street Park

The park was designed such that to enter the park, one has to walk in the middle of it. It is located on the east side of 14th Street at Girard Street NW. There is a tall fence surrounding the park and a gate that closes at 9pm every night. From the entrance on 14th Street, the park features three benches and three tables on either side, with four trees placed symmetrically in the center. Shade hangers cover the tables, and single sex bathrooms are on each side – men to the right side, and women to the left. In the center of this part of the park is a small splash pad with four water jets. At the back of the park down three steps between the restrooms is a basketball court.

Unlike the 11th and Monroe Park, which is located on a quiet corner of a residential community, 14th and Girard faces 14th Street, a major thoroughfare with four lanes, and across the street on the west side of 14th Street is a new mixed use residential-commercial building with a Dunkin Donuts on the ground floor and a group of low-rise (three story) apartments. Its nearest neighbors on the east side of 14th Street are almost exclusively multifamily buildings exceeding nine stories. The only exceptions are the line of row houses that abut the basketball court – of which, only one has direct visual access to the park.

The first two times I passed the park it was the middle of the day, and the park was busy and full on a relatively warm January afternoon. On the third time, I went first thing in the morning. Over the next year, I would hang out in that park and get to know the people in it. Not long after I started to hang out there, I began referring to the group that hung out there as the Front Porch Crew because the park felt a lot like a front porch – an informal, public gathering space where people come and go who are part of the same community. All are welcome as long as you don't cause trouble.

14th and Girard Street has been a social space for African Americans in Columbia Heights since at least the late 1960s. Current users of the park proudly state that they've been hanging out in the park "since before it was a park – since it was an apartment building." The current park space did not become a park until the late 1970s, according to current users who hung out in and around the apartment building when it still stood.

However, previously a vacant lot across the street served as a park to an older generation

of African American residents. A Washington Post article from 1970 reported on the

vacant lot, located on the 1400 block of Girard Street about a half a block away next to a

rat-infested building with hundreds of code violations at that time. The men in that park

played horseshoes, Tonk (bid whist), and dominoes; drank in the evenings; and went

home late into the night after hanging out.

When the current space transitioned from an apartment building to a park, the space

consisted of tables in the front and a basketball court in the back. Tall, old trees dotted the

14th Street side of the park, obstructing the view from the street for police to monitor park

activities, but shading the tables for park users. A low wall divided the table area from the

basketball court where park users would sit and hang out. There were no bathrooms in the

original park design so the men used a corner at the edge of the basketball court. On rainy

days, the poor drainage of the basketball court turned that corner into a cesspool, and on

hot summer days the smell from the corner would fill the park and the surrounding sidewalks. A long time park user who was employed in construction work at the site of the new Metro stop in the mid-1990s occasionally brought lime to spread over the corner to reduce the smell and improve sanitation.

As crack and heroin infiltrated Columbia Heights, the park gained a tough reputation. According to one park user, Jamaicans would tie drugs up in the trees to hide them from police. Another user said there was often a threat or reality of violence amongst park users over drug, gang or interpersonal disputes. Though these threats waned as the users of the park aged and harder drugs declined citywide and especially in Columbia Heights, the park took on a reputation as a dangerous place amongst newer neighbors. Moreover, new residents to the neighborhood felt that the fact that the park was open all night represented a neighborhood nuisance. One housing developer of a nearby parcel, formerly owned by the City, complained that the park made selling condominium units in the new building difficult and expressed shock that I hung out in the park due to its unsavory reputation. Park users conversely remember the park fondly. They remember how they used to hang out till 3 in the morning drinking and smoking and playing cards. Though they acknowledge that there were – and still are – some people you "can't trust" in the park, it is also integral to their sense of community. As one outspoken community member wrote on the neighborhood list serv in 2001: "I don't think there is much to worry about in that park. That crowd has been there for at least 15 years," in response to a deluge of complaints from passers by.

However, other residents countered that they did not feel safe approaching the park. The area around the park was known for crime, attributable in part to some poorly managed

housing developments near the park on 14th Street. Over the years, the park received significant complaints about noise, public drinking and public intoxication, litter, and gambling. There was always significant debate between list-serv participants about the park – with some suggesting the park is harmless and that complainers should participate in park activities such as chess, cards, eating lunch in the park, and talking with the people who hung out there. Other residents argued for strict enforcement of public drinking and public urination in the park.

In 2006, $2.1 million was allocated for green spaces in Columbia Heights - $250,000 was to go to the renovation of the 14th and Girard Park. A year later, the City hosted three community meetings to allow neighborhood residents the opportunity to voice their opinions about what the park should look like. Many new residents who were disgusted by how the park was used before its renovation argued for a dog park on the neighborhood list-serv and in public meetings. At the public meeting park users also showed up to share their opinions on what they believed the park needed. Generally, park users at the 14th and Girard Street park, like those at 11th and Monroe, felt that the only thing missing from the old park were bathrooms.

Figure 19: 14th and Girard Street Park after renovation (14th Street entrance)

These repeated comments suggest that, consistent with both common sense and literature, park users did not want to urinate in public, but felt that was the only option because there were no other public bathrooms. Particularly appalled by the idea of taking "our park" and turning it into a dog park, one park user and 35 year resident of Columbia Heights said he testified "you care more about a dog's shit than you do about human beings?!" He believed that the neighborhood was more interested in amenities for their dogs than for people who used the park.

In the end, the park was redeveloped with two bathrooms, more open space, and the splash pad for young children. Like 11th and Monroe, the park is now fenced and closes at 9pm when staff from the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) come to lock the gates. Unlike 11th and Monroe, the park users are largely the same. But in the meantime, the buildings surrounding the park have changed dramatically. One of the most notorious buildings, Meridian Park Terrace, was redeveloped by Somerset Development, a mission-driven developer who actively works to build bridges between the Section 8 residents and the neighbors, and provides support services to the residents. Buildings on every side of the park have been renovated or rebuilt with a mix of income restrictions, including market rate, deed-restricted affordable, Section 8, and a building for very low income seniors.

Oak-Ogden-14th Street Park

In 1791, Pierre L'Enfant produced a plan for Washington, DC that would reflect the power and future of the burgeoning nation (Harris, 1999). The design combined a grid pattern and diagonals that created a collection of pocket parks throughout the city (Barthold, 1993; Jackson D. E., 1980). As the city expanded beyond the boundaries of the

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Federal City to formerly agricultural places like Columbia Heights, the roads did not conform to the organization of the plan until 1888 when Congress passed the Highway Act, which imposed the plan throughout the city ((NPS) National Park Service, n.d.).

Figure 20: Area map of the 14th-Oak-Ogden Triangle Park
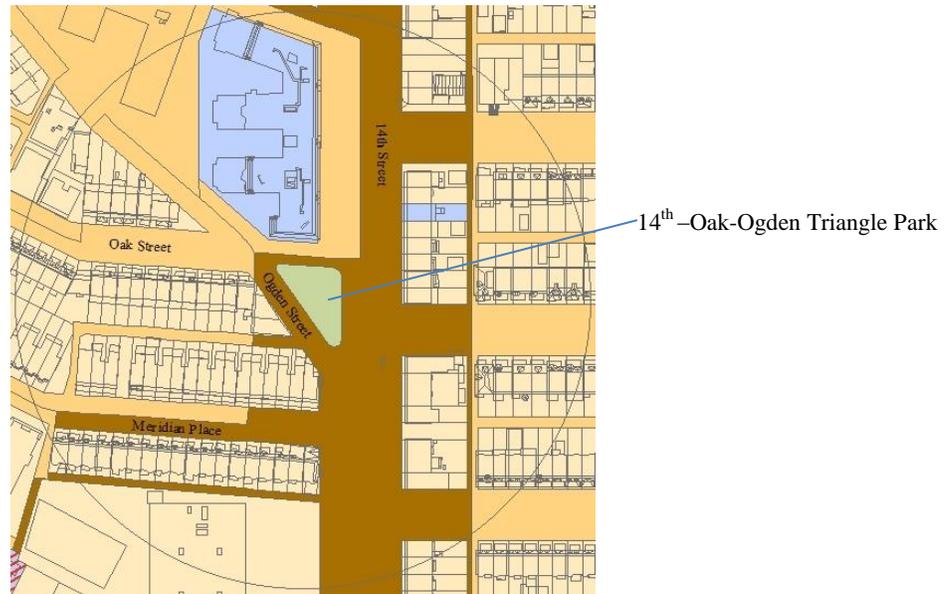
One result was the straightening of 14th street on the north end of the Columbia Heights neighborhood, and the addition of Ogden Street, which curved to the west and bisected the 1400 block of Oak Street. As a result, a small pocket park was created, bounded to the east by 14th Street NW, to the north by Oak Street, and to the southwest by Ogden Street.

Figure 21: 14th-Oak-Ogden Triangle Park, Spring 2010

This L'Enfant plan structure left the City government with small and often awkward

spaces which have "caused unceasing management and maintenance headaches and today

face innumerable threats from traffic, development and neglect" (Barthold, 1993, p. 29).

These spaces have been appropriated at various times for garbage disposal, animal

grazing, and living spaces (Barthold, 1993). In the case of the Oak-Ogden Park, it had

been appropriated as a social space. In 2006, $250,000 was appropriated for the

redevelopment of the park (DC Council, 2006). In 2010, after pressure from local

residents who complained that the park was a locus of significant crime, including drug

sales and gang activity, a plan for the park was released that included "single seating

pods," rain gardens, and concrete surfaces. It was redeveloped in March of 2011.

When I visited Columbia Heights in April of 2010, I was surprised to discover the park. It

was an oddly unsanctioned space in the midst of a neighborhood in which so much had

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been planned in public spaces. It had a bricked pervious surface that was reached by two steps down from the 14th Street elevation. A large old tree stood in the northwest corner, shading the entire park and surrounding sidewalks. When I walked by, the space was being occupied by a diverse group of African American men crowding on benches, standing around, and sitting on outdoor lawn chairs. Some had brought milk crates on which to sit in small groups under the large tree that shaded the park. It contrasted sharply with the new sections of 14th Street, particularly the nearby New Urbanist Civic Plaza three blocks to the south.

The park is across the street from Knight Gardens Apartments, a large affordable housing development that was notorious for crime and mismanagement with no outdoor public space in which to socialize, and it is down the street from Columbia Terrace, a Section 8 development that was abandoned by its owner. After years of mismanagement, Columbia Terrace was the site of crime that included drugs, gang activity, and prostitution and had spilled into the park. One housing advocate who worked at Columbia Terrace organizing the tenants commented:

> "That block was notorious for having drug and gang problems. Both of those buildings had huge problems – and a couple of vocal homeowners who were really tenacious and had own ideas of how to fix neighborhood were constantly meeting with [councilmember] Jim Graham and the police. Their thought on how to fix the park and the neighborhood was to displace residents – not to fix the underlying problems."

The side streets off of 14th Street near the park are exclusively single family homes increasingly owned by newer residents. However, the blocks around the park have been notorious for violence, prostitution and gang activity in the neighborhood. Ann, who lives a few blocks north, argues that the area near the park is a different Columbia Heights than

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her tight-knit community of residents who know each other and have successfully pushed drug dealers and prostitution off the block through a combination of Orange Hat Patrols and complaints to City agencies. Further complicating the park, a take-out store across the street was well-known in the community for being a front for drug dealing. In 2012, the owner was finally convicted for distribution of cocaine, and the business lost its license. In spite of the crime in the area, the park was a public space for residents in both buildings to socialize, barbeque and wait for the bus. Once the buildings were rehabilitated and preserved, and the police increased their presence through patrols and a police camera over the park, crime in the park reduced dramatically. However, after intense pressure from new resident neighbors, the city removed the benches to prevent sitting.

In 2010, Sarah Tooley, a local artist noticed that people were sitting on the ground in the park, or bringing chairs and milk crates to congregate and socialize. She received a grant to install benches (Samuelson, 2009; Prince of Petworth, 2009) and hosted a barbeque for local residents to come and talk about how they use the park, why they thought the benches were removed, and what they thought the city should do with the park. She inscribed the responses on the new benches (Samuelson, 2009). The vocal homeowners who fought to have the original benches removed complained again to the city to remove the new benches. Once the city guaranteed redevelopment of the park, the complaints stopped.

The new iteration of the park is not welcoming to long term users of the park. In March of 2011, shortly after the park was reopened, I revisited the park. As I was taking a picture, an older African American man walking by with a grocery bag was appalled and exclaimed, "all that time, and *that's* what they give us?! Where are the chairs?!" The space had been appropriated through design, and residents had been excluded in the decision-making and design. I visited the space many times in 2012, and typically I was the only person using the space as more than a pass-through for pedestrians and cyclists. Once in the spring of 2013, I found two children riding their bikes under their mother's supervision in the small space, but otherwise, it was rare that it was used as a social or play space. Further, the rain gardens were poorly maintained, and often collected trash and debris that flew around before the City starts sweeping streets in the summer months.

The park is now a concrete slab with no trees and a clear street-level view from 14th Street. Because it sits on a wide street and is surrounded by low-rise housing across the street, the park gets no shade during the day. In contrast to this park, when the City

hosted a ribbon cutting at the 14th and Girard park, they quickly realized that there was

insufficient shade to make the park usable after a large shade tree had been removed. As

a result, they installed shade hangers over the tables and benches. Although Oak-Ogden

similarly had a shade tree removed, there has been no effort to replace the shade that was

lost in the redevelopment. The park is clearly not intended for hanging out as before.

Figure 23: Redeveloped Triangle Park, 2011

Parks and their Meanings

Largely the discussion among newer residents was derisive and critical of the existing

users of the parks. Dorothy, an African American neighbor who moved to the

neighborhood in 1987 and was an Area Neighborhood Commissioner and also part of the

effort to redevelop the 11th and Monroe Park said,

> "The park was – became something for me that I focused on because I thought it
> was horrible that they used it the way they used it. And I would go there, and

there would be excrement under the slide. There'd be needles, there would be broken glass. No children were ever in that park. And so I said, "this is not good.""

She continued by describing how a young family she knew would use the park, but felt they needed to wipe down the equipment before letting their child use it. Parents like Bryan did not deny that some of these behaviors existed in several of the neighborhood parks. They differed on the degree to which those issues are cause for concern. He said, "When you go to playgrounds, there are homeless folks sleeping on the equipment - for some folks, they're like "Oh my God – that's horrible." For me it's like this is the reality."

Older users of the 11th and Monroe Park felt differently. To them, it was an integral part of their community. A former African American male user of the park explained about how on Friday nights, members of the neighborhood would pool their money to buy liquor and food, have a barbeque, and play cards in the park after they got off of work. It was a social place for them on the weekend, acting as a backyard space for the community. Like several other small parks in the neighborhood, this park was part of community life for many long term minority residents of various income levels. It was an extension of the front-porch, outdoor neighborhood culture that exists in Washington, DC and many cities like it.

Mike, a 65 year old father of four and Vietnam veteran asked me why I came to the 14th and Girard Street park, and I explained that it was because there were people, and it looked fun, but that I was a little intimidated by the park because they all knew each other. I added that I'm glad I came because it's fun. He laughed and said, "What did I tell you? This park will grow on you!" I returned the question, and he said, "I've been

hanging out in this park since it was a building." It used to be a 5 story apartment building before it became a park. Although Mike occasionally got tired of the social scene and the interpersonal "bullshit" of some of the other park users due to the fact that people borrowed money or did not pay for the alcohol that they drank, he still felt the space had meaning. Mike, who "fell in love with" and subsequently moved to DC after being part of the 14,000 troops called in to patrol the District during the 1968 riots, said he's been in the neighborhood for all but about six years of his residency in the city. In August, as the park was busy with card and domino games, and groups of people hanging out talking or reading the paper, a young African American man with gang tattoos on his face summed up the park: "This is why I like this park – everybody be doing they own thing – but everybody just be chillin'" I was sitting with Mike who looked at me meaningfully because we often talked about why the park was important. Later that day we sat on a bench, and I said, "I could just sit in this park and watch people pass…" He replied, "You really do like this park, don't you?" I found myself a little embarrassed and flustered, but he was right - I really do like it and the people who hang out in it.

Relationships between park users
In the 14th and Girard Street Park, the men and women who hang out talk about people they've known since the late 1960s or before. They bring their own cushions for the hard stone seats around the tables or the metal benches. Some of cushions are stored in the bathrooms, while others come from the trunks of cars. When I started to listen to the stories of people in the "Front Porch Park" at 14th and Girard, it seemed that one of the only common themes is the neighborhood. While the neighborhood theme has racial implications due to the historical nature of segregation and concentration of minorities in cities, it is not necessarily a reason people hang out there. Socioeconomic status varies –

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some of the older men are former government employees receiving government pensions, social security or other assistance; there are a handful of homeless individuals; there are women working in the service industry; others looking for work; and still others engaged in illegal work. People hang out there because it's the neighborhood hangout spot for a community of people who have known each other for decades. The users of the park focus on "neighborhood as community" over "neighborhood as place." While function is important to the park, the ability to use it for the cultural and social life of the community is more important.

Deanna, a 40 year old woman who hangs out in the park said when she pointed to a group of men over 60 and explained "these guys are my foundation." Because they have known her all her life, the park community and the neighborhood form an important part of her family. She grew up a block from the park, and explains how one man, Dan, knew her mother when she was small because he used to own the liquor store that has since been razed and made into a mix use commercial-residential building across the street. Her boss and Dan have known each other since her boss owned a club a few blocks north of the park.

Not all of the people who hang out in the public spaces of Columbia Heights still live in the neighborhood now, but this space offers outdoor places with friends. Ed told me he lives outside the neighborhood, but there's nowhere outside in his neighborhood for him to hang out. This echoes what I learned from Mr. Russell, a neighborhood resident who does not hang out in the park. He explained that he once moved outside the neighborhood to an apartment, but he would come up to his block of Columbia Heights to hang out because there was nowhere to hang out in southwest DC where he had moved, and he

didn't know anyone. Eventually, he moved back to be with friends because he was there daily anyway. Some of the people in the park moved out of the neighborhood for better housing, to get married, to go to jail, or for work in other parts of the city. However, they still frequently return to the park. Those who have been away are welcomed back, and often marvel at the changes in the neighborhood since they left. I had several conversations with men who had returned from living in another city or being in jail for a decade or less who were shocked by the way the neighborhood had changed in their absence.

While there are certain close friendships that have formed and constitute strong ties, including employment networks, rides to medical appointments, small loans, and other forms of assistance, it is the more casual weak ties, shared memory, and sense of community amongst users that predominates. One afternoon, a group of guys talked about how they look out for each other and don't "snitch" on each other. To explain, Will shared a story: "You remember that time when we were all drinkin' and Mike had a pocket full of reefer? The police came up in here and I wasn't drinkin' but Mike was. I knew he had that reefer in his pocket so I grabbed the bottle and told them it was mine. I gladly took that charge and Mike paid me out of jail." Though not universal, such ties and trust signify the sense of community among park users.

Generally, however, the park is a place for casual interaction and passing time. Discussions in the park range from local or national politics and the Redskins' season to neighborhood crime and the history and changes in the neighborhood. Additionally, the park is a place for sharing information about casual work such as painting, moving, or

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construction, as well as tips about more permanent jobs such as at the neighborhood Giant grocery store or on construction jobs around the city.

However, like the community in which the park is situated, the users of the park are not all friendly. Disputes in the park over games of dominoes, unpaid loans, Redskins-Cowboys rivalries, and politics often grow loud and are often resolved by someone walking away, distraction by another topic or, occasionally the threat of knife violence. Several of the older men in the park still carry knives in their pockets. Though threats of violence are less accepted now and rarely lead to actual violence, threats are not an infrequent occurrence. One day, a knife was pulled as I was standing around a dominoes game after a disagreement over a score, and Deanna, a comparably young 40 year old African American woman who plays frequently reminded the men that "we have guests," looking at me.

I was also warned as strangers to me arrived in the park. One afternoon, Ed and I were sitting on a bench talking and he mentioned another person in the park who had just been released from prison that had a reputation for stealing from seniors and "the weak." He explained, "the park is good – it used to be dangerous – not as dangerous – but there's still a quiet danger in the park. So be careful." After a middle-aged man I had been speaking to for almost an hour left the park, Ed warned me to watch out for him because he wasn't safe. Throughout the fall of 2012, there was a vendor who came into the park and questioned me, asked me out, and heckled. On an early occasion, he persisted in saying I was a police officer. To offer legitimacy, I gave him my business card. Later I was told that Ed demanded it from him and threatened him if he bothered me again because he was not trustworthy.

Users of 14th and Girard take an interest in the maintenance and running of the park on a

day to day basis. Many of them are actively involved in maintenance and rule setting.

Howard, a longtime park user has keys and has taken responsibility for opening the park,

opening the bathrooms in the morning and stocking them with toilet paper, and turning

on the splash pad fountain during the summer. Though obviously recognized by the DC

Department of Parks and Recreation, he is unpaid. However, at one point in the summer

of 2012, Howard lost his keys and control over the mechanics of the park after a

neighborhood resident reported on the listserv that he had traded space to post a sign on

the fence for free pizza from a pizza place next door to the park. As a result, the

bathrooms were not well-stocked and the water for the splash pad was often not on or

was not adjusted appropriately. After a few of the guys vouched for him to City staff

members (even those who did not like him), he was given the responsibility and keys to

the park again.

Like the man who used to bring lye to spread in the corner before the redevelopment, Ben

and Abraham, two other park users have taken responsibility for sweeping the park of

cigarette butts and other debris that blow in the park or is left. Meanwhile, George, a

former public schools landscape employee, weeds the garden beds to keep them looking

nice. Ed, who no longer lives in the neighborhood but hangs out in the park daily, said

that everyone takes responsibility for picking up paper and other trash laying around the

park. In spite of the newspapers, bottles, cups and plastic bags that are consumed during

the day, all users make sure to pick up after themselves and other users in the park.

Though the City does come to the park to sweep weekly in the summer, during the winter

and fall, park maintenance is entirely up to the users. Further, the City staff did not

address the landscaping that George suggested would have taken them five minutes to do such as pulling weeds and trimming rose bushes.

Ed also explains that he tries to keep other users respectful of newer park visitors – particularly women and children. He and others will reprimand those who engage in illegal activity, swear loudly, or use the women's restroom when children from a local charter school use the basketball court for gym, children are using the splash pad, or the young families are in the park. He explains, "we all have children – grandchildren" as if to explain that no one wants them to be exposed to swearing, drunken arguments or drugs. One day he complained that this led to suggestions that he was "acting white" by trying to keep things quiet. He replied that maybe he was "acting white," meaning that he was trying to conform to the ideas of the new neighbors about appropriate behavior in the park, but he was also conscious of attracting police.

Like Ed, Will, a father whose kids hang out in the park, has been known to be very direct about keeping men out of the women's room. One afternoon, Leo, a long time neighborhood resident who has been homeless off and on was changing clothes to play in the splash pad with the children. Will directly told him he needed to do this in the bathroom, not in the middle of the park because there are "children and ladies present." In another intervention, after being in a heated discussion with another man, Will told him to calm down in "this here family park."

Conversely, the 11th and Monroe Park has a formalized friends of the park organization. They meet to talk about park clean up and management, coordinate events, and even discuss access to the park and water hoses. They were able to maintain a political force

with City agencies, the Mayor's office (over two mayoral administrations), and their councilmember to make changes to the park and provide enforcement. However, their activities are largely similar. At one meeting the friends of the park organization discussed the issue of older, primarily Latino and African American children playing in the planters because the playgrounds are intended for children under the age of ten. The members decided that it was acceptable to learn the older children's names and tell them, politely, to stay out of the planters and play in other spaces, rather than either the playground or the planters.

Culture Clashes: public space, community and strangers

Ann, a single woman who has been in the neighborhood 22 years, said that "one of the big challenges is that people don't come home, close the doors and live inside because this is definitely a community where people live outside." The indoor-outdoor tensions have been growing with new residents moving in. She shared a story recently where she had come home tired and focused and did not greet her neighbor Mr. Russell and another friend on the neighboring porch. They told her about it later, and she described her own behavior as a "breach of etiquette."

This breach can also be understood in the context of the Front Porch Park Crew. Ed, a former police officer in Columbia Heights in the 1960s and 70s, later explained his own perspective after he greeted a person walking by the park who he did not know. "You stare at me – I'll say hello." There is a certain etiquette to walking into the park and living a life outdoors in which looking in at the porch or public space feels akin to staring into a living room window of a home. It is part of why I was allowed access, at least on a surface level, in the park. There is frequent debate about whether DC is a northern city or

a southern one – but at least in terms of public-private behavior, it is very much a southern one in which people talk to each other in public spaces and as they pass on the street. However, more often than not, new residents do not greet each other or long term residents and actively avoid speaking to people they pass sitting on their stoops.

This level of interaction becomes particularly problematic and threatening to new neighbors when men comment on passing women. Though most park users sit in the park, there is a group of older men who hang out outside on the low wall that surrounds the park. When women pass, they typically say, "hey, baby." Sometimes the men make other comments – "you got it goin' on, girl" or similar. Many white women ignore the comments but look uncomfortable. Black women often respond jovially or with a thank you. However, as Ed explained after the police officers started cracking down on the men sitting on the wall, "It's not like it's young guys causing trouble – you have to be at least 70 to sit out there…and if you were really trying [to pick up women], that's not how you'd do it."

However, some young white women in the neighborhood reported feeling threatened or uncomfortable by groups of black men and Latinos hanging out. One woman related a story about how a group of Latinos congregated on a corner near her house. When she complained to police about the loitering, they told her that the men hung out there after work and went home. However, she was frustrated to discover that they hung out all day and drank. She complained that her friends felt uncomfortable getting out of their cars on that side of the street. Her neighbors were less receptive to her complaints, suggesting that she meet them or let it go rather than calling the police.

In 2012 developers presented before the ANC regarding the redevelopment of a property

that residents had complained about for years as being an eyesore. In the summer of

2012, the developers brought the project before the ANC to get support for a variance

that would increase the allowable floor-to-area ratio. The project was initially criticized

because the design did not match the look and feel of the rest of the street. Taking that

into consideration, they returned in the fall of 2012 with a new design, including a low

stone wall to match the other properties along busy 13th Street. However, the wall was

soundly criticized by several commissioners. One stated, "Walls invite significant

amounts of loitering in this neighborhood" and create issues with hanging out. Another

argued "It [the wall] is also an invitation for graffiti" because "any solid surface is a

canvas." The developer and architect suggested that they could change the plan if this

was not "safe and not sanitary in some ways."

Catharine, an African American community development professional who grew up and

still lives in the neighborhood discussed the hanging out as an important part of the

community,

> I think there are a lot of things like that in our neighborhood for different people
> depending on where you are on the spectrum, and I think the parks are like that
> too. I'm not somebody who's going to go kick it at 14th and Girard Street, but I
> like that it exists as something there. I also miss some of the people that I used to
> see hanging out on the street…like I would walk to work every day when I would
> work…and they would give me the weather report for the day or like tell me what
> was going on in the neighborhood, and I miss that sort of feeling.

For her, those who hang out in public places were part of her community – people who

checked on her and made her safe in the neighborhood. She acknowledges that many of

them were alcoholics, but they also were part of the fabric of Columbia Heights that has

largely been lost as spaces are redeveloped. 14th and Girard is a notable exception.

Race and Redevelopment

Not all neighbors were happy about the way new neighbors were getting involved.

Dorothy explained that one neighbor of the park was openly hostile to park cleanups

because he saw it as part of the white-led gentrification of the community. For new

residents, changes to the park seemed apolitical – they felt that the park was dirty and

underutilized, and their kids needed a place to play. For some long term residents, these

changes were threatening – an exhibition of power to control the trajectory of the

neighborhood. Leigh, a young white woman who grew up in Washington and now

volunteers at a local thrift store that also offers homeless services, explained that she

hears some of the fears and frustration of long term residents of the growing presence of

new people as shoppers in the thrift store – as well as her presence as a worker:

> "You do experience – I mean, wouldn't necessarily call it anger…there is a
> frustration with everything that's going on. You know, people who shop at the
> thrift store or receive our services… often comment on – you know there's no
> place for them to go in the neighborhood anymore. You know, they can't afford
> things in the neighborhood anymore – and you know, it's interesting – I've once
> or twice received some "oh – now the thrift store has a young white person
> working behind the counter – you know – that's the sign of the change of the
> time." And… that's quite interesting because I think in my head – well, I'm a DC
> native so to me, it's not uh – too much a change of the times. However, I mean,
> they're not wrong – you wouldn't have seen too many white people working
> around this area 15-20 years ago.

Residents in other places in the neighborhood were often direct with me – either to

explain their feelings or to express anger at me and those who looked like me. However,

many lamented the resulting change in culture – not greeting each other, fear of the

existing users of the parks, for example. Catharine shared a story about how her neighbors called the police when two of her young male cousins were waiting for her to come home on the stoop of the house.

> So I went over there and I knocked on the door, and I was like, 'I just want to introduce myself, and I want you to know that those two boys belong at our house, and I appreciate the fact that you may have been concerned about *something,* but two boys sitting on a front stoop – even if they don't belong there do not constitute anything other than needing some place to sit down." This is not where two or more are gathered drug dealing is going on. Can you give me a break? So it's like that kind of thing makes you think that your neighborhood is not your neighborhood. And that's the way that I've been feeling lately. I feel like I can't – I don't feel the same level of comfort that I felt when I went away to college. I don't feel the same sense of 'oh it's not dangerous.' I don't feel the same way of I see my neighborhood as my place, and this is where I belong. I very much feel the sense of there are people here that don't know me and may react negatively to me. I have to modulate my behavior. Which is not how you should feel in your community.

In the few times when I was directly confronted about my race or the intersection of race, class, and gender, other long term residents were quick to dismiss the comments. For some, the conflict was clearly about class, while for others, it was about race entirely. New, particularly white, residents rarely framed the disagreements and power struggles in terms of race from their perspective – as none of them would call themselves racists - though there was a feeling that new residents were disliked primarily due to their race. Meanwhile long term, primarily African American residents more frequently argued that the changes in the neighborhood and Washington, DC as a whole were race-based.

Police and delinquency

After sitting by myself for an hour on the first day I sat at 14th and Girard, one of the four men sitting in the park walked across the center of the park to where I was sitting and demanded, "Are you a police?" I was shocked and stammered out that no – I was a

researcher. He immediately turned and walked back to his seat. The question of my

police affiliation came up every couple of weeks as people floated in and out of the park

who did not know me. When I first introduced myself as a researcher the next time I was

in the park, I somehow felt that I was explaining something important. However, the men

responded:

> Mike said, "We just thought you were hanging out."
> Ben asked, "Why would you think we'd be wondering?"
> I replied, "Man – you were staring at me!"
> Ben exclaimed, "You were staring at me, sister! I'm not Stevie Wonder or Ray
> Charles – I've got eyes!"

While I expected that people would care that I was there, they were primarily concerned

with whether or not I was a police officer – otherwise, they did not seem to care. This

was primarily because many of the men had previous criminal records, drinking and

marijuana smoking were daily occurrences, and there was a black market for single

cigarettes and cut-rate packs of Newport cigarettes, pirated DVDs and stolen goods that

moved through the park on any given day.

Ed explained to me one day when we were reading the Washington Post, "People

sometimes get the wrong impression about this park – we're just a bunch of old guys

havin' a good time." A young woman had just walked past the park, visibly

uncomfortable. He noticed that and explained about the park. Neighborhood complaints

about drinking, noise, hanging out and illegal behavior sometimes result in police

crackdowns in the park. However, the police are largely absent, unlike the 11th and

Monroe Park, where a police officer hangs out frequently. A consistent complaint about

current park users in the case of 14th and Girard – and former users in other parks – is

public drinking and public drunkenness. As Anita told me the Friday before Memorial

Day of 2012, "this is the partiest park I've ever seen." That day people brought folding chairs and a radio for music and spent the afternoon drinking, smoking marijuana, and dancing. Some folks continued to play cards or dominoes, while others hung out talking. The park was often noisier on weekdays before holiday weekends and usually involved more people, alcohol, and music than on an average day.

Neighbors complain that long term park users in all parks hang out and drink single beers out of paper bags with no harassment from police. During the day, individuals in the park drink single beers or hard liquor. Typically, someone acts as a runner to the liquor store and in exchange gets money to purchase a beer. Alcohol is consumed covertly, sometimes covered in plastic bags – but most often in new containers such as cups from local fast food restaurants to prevent obvious detection. Because the park is on a major road, people are often on the lookout for passing police cars – as well as those on bicycles or segways. The word will be passed around to let everyone know that police are around. One afternoon when I was talking to Mike, I asked after a couple of the regulars in the park and was told they had been caught drinking and banned from the park until they paid their fines or appeared in court. Occasionally, a police officer pulled his motorcycle into the center of the park to hang out and have a donut and coffee from Dunkin Donuts.

Like those of 14th and Girard, the users of the 11th and Monroe park who engaged in what was seen as "delinquent" or "anti-social" behavior such as drinking single beers also attended the planning meetings and argued to save their place in the park. They argued for bathrooms at the park so they would not have to use the corners or the alley. Others countered that bathrooms are unnecessary because "if you need to go, just walk to your residence. For those that are too inebriated to do so, bathrooms won't be a solution

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anyway, so there is no upside but a ton of downside (to start with, taking valuable real estate in a very small space, being an eyesore, providing a venue for drug use and sex, cost to maintain, odor, and so on)." This was an echo of similar comments about the bathrooms when they were proposed at 14th and Girard. However, the bathrooms remained clean and safe in that park.

The issue of single sales of beer comes up with relative frequency in the neighborhood. Neighborhood residents concerned with public drinking have tried to end the sale of individual beers of all sizes as a means of preventing public drinking. However, when it was introduced in 2012, it was hotly debated because the ban would include 22 ounce beers from micro-breweries popular with beer connoisseurs. A committee within the ANC was convened to discuss the issues and hold public meetings to obtain feedback from residents. I brought an email I got from the Columbia Heights listserv about one of the community meetings to the park because I wanted to know how the guys in the park felt about it. It started a loud discussion. Mike was visibly angry, "they're starting in on this park again." He then talked about how a neighborhood activist who lived near the park used to come and take pictures of people drinking in the park, and those photos were used in the redevelopment discussions to prove that illegal activity was happening in the park. "This is just about who has the power," he stated. However, this started a larger discussion with the other guys in the park who suggested that if they banned single beers, they would just buy a 30 pack of beer and bring it to the park, rather than actually stop the drinking. Although police periodically crack down on the park, they generally they do not try to bother park users and have supported the current users in community meetings when neighbors have asked for them to be arrested.

Conversely, the outdoor patios of Columbia Heights's growing bar and restaurant scene are full of young and more affluent residents consuming alcoholic beverages, laughing loudly, arguing over sports games, and listening to music. Alice, a 7th generation African American Washingtonian, argued that neighbors of these bars believe that the bars are not bothered because they are white clubs, rather than the ones primarily frequented by African Americans that are often shut for disturbances such as fights or shootings.

In addition, several residents complained about noise levels and drinking of their younger neighbors who have parties late into the night. Cheryl, a vocal critic of the place of subsidized housing in her neighborhood, argued that Section 8 housing was better – or at least quieter - than the group houses, houses that are perceived to have multiple people who change with relative frequency, that now surround her. However, because these are on private property, this is acceptable behaviors for new residents, while the public drinking of long term and minority residents appears disorderly and unsafe, suggesting an unmanaged and incomprehensible structure for new residents unaccustomed to this type of public behavior.

Police have a mixed perspective on the public drinking and loitering in Columbia Heights. Generally the residents who drink in the parks like 11th and Monroe and 14th and Girard are well known to the police and are considered harmless. Though aware that the public drinking can lead to fighting, public urination, and hanging out on the stoops of neighbors, other crimes tend to take precedence, and there are limits on what police can do. Those hanging out in the parks are more secretive about drinking in public, meaning that there are few opportunities for arrests. One officer recounted a time when police were called to the 11th and Monroe Park because a drunk man was sleeping in the

children's play area, which is specifically signed for children and their parents' use only. She woke the man and asked him to move elsewhere to sleep. The parents who called her were frustrated because she did not arrest the man, but he was not breaking laws.

Generally, police, like City officials more broadly, are challenged to respond to the concerns of a diverse neighborhood. While public intoxication is a complaint for many new residents, the neighborhood continues to face issues of violent crime, theft, prostitution and drug-related crime. People call to complain and demand the arrest of drunks passed out in the alley while police are trying to prevent stabbings and human trafficking. Police discuss being constantly busy with calls throughout the neighborhood due to the density of people, inadequate staff and changing demographics of the neighborhood.

They also have to balance and mediate between changing populations with conflicting norms of behavior. Illustrating the complaints of new residents in the debate over the Z Burger debate, police patrolling 14th Street where new high-end sidewalk café restaurants have recently opened, had to ask a man they have all known due to his frequent drunkenness to move along because he was picking food off the plates of horrified customers. Though the man was clearly not a danger, he was a nuisance and was continuing to function as he always did but in a landscape that had changed dramatically, offering more opportunity for conflict with neighbors.

Safety and Design
Because the parks were all perceived as unsafe and unusable – and the previous users as "low-lifes," "loiterers" and "drug dealers" – the new residents petitioned the city to change these spaces into something they could better read and use. In all cases, new

neighbors often felt that a dramatic change was necessary to change the delinquent and dangerous behaviors of these parks. Their goals in each case were stated differently. At 14th and Girard and Oak and Ogden, they cited general safety from drug deals and public urination. But at 11th and Monroe, the presence of children changed the discussion and helped to depoliticize it.

In the cases of the 11th and Monroe and Oak-Ogden Parks, new residents have interpreted the new designs to be safer, though, in the case of Oak-Ogden, not entirely usable or ideal. The woman who pushed to have Oak-Ogden redeveloped and to have the protest benches removed considers it a victory in her efforts to track and prevent crime in Columbia Heights in spite of the fact that she was largely demonized in the newspapers that covered the changes. However, in blog reactions, new residents were in agreement on the design and its functionality for long term users:

> "It [the design] IS ridiculous, but I'd rather have a concrete slab with tilted, useless stools than the drug park that was there before. Hopefully, if it works as intended, NO one will hang out there which means no one to throw their garbage on the ground. Yippie!"

> "I love this design. It says, "Hey drug dealers, keep on moving.""

> "I pass it every day and come up with different ideas as to what it could be….still clueless. You can't call that a park. It has to be a decoy (future construction) so the hood cats can relocate. Those seats are literally a joke. A park is a sanctuary of sorts. It's supposed to be pleasant and inviting…urban planning integrated with nature. This is an eyesore. Don't tarnish a progressive neighborhood with bad design. Just tacky." (Petworth, 2011)

The 11th and Monroe Park is considered to have combined safety and usability. Participants in the planning processes for other parks use it as an example of how to create a better park. In the case of 14th and Girard, the design is considered safe, but

people seem to be conflicted because the behaviors that were part of the park previously continue. As a result, some residents continue to feel that the park is unsafe and unreadable. Children of all socioeconomic backgrounds are often attracted to the small splashpad at 14th and Girard during the summer. Some parents will venture in with their children, but they are clearly uncomfortable. The park users, many of whom are parents or grandparents, try to interact with parents and children. Largely, however, they give their children a few moments in the water before leaving the park quickly without talking to anyone.

At Oak-Ogden, there has been some conflict over the impact of the design versus other interventions. For example, a few commenters pointed out that crime has not been a problem in the park "since the MPD put a camera on top of the lamp post across the street (the drug traffic moved to a nearby alley)." However, that perspective was not common in the way that new residents felt about the park. Unfortunately, that sentiment was not stressed in blogs, newspapers, or public meetings. Long term park users, like the passer-by when I visited interpreted the Oak Ogden changes as drastic and unexpected, impacting the way that it is used. This is similar to the way that long term users feel about 11th and Monroe. These redevelopments erased the history and context of the existing users and made it unusable as a social space. Instead, the dark historical narrative about previous users was replaced by a positive history of Trolley Cars and a Columbia Heights before the riots. Conversely, while the current users of the park at 14th and Girard felt that the previous design was better suited to their purposes, and the redesign was politically motivated, they have generally adapted to the changes because it was designed with the current users in mind.

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Discussion

These parks in the neighborhood were built out of leftover spaces in the community – a city-owned apartment building that was demolished; a former turn around for the street car; an intersection of changing roads; and undevelopable land with trains running under it. But for the time and places in which they were created and redeveloped, they would not exist. Like the neighborhood itself, the parks have experienced changes that have fundamentally challenged new and existing neighborhood norms, exposed shifting power and representation, and illustrated the multitude of the communities that exist within Columbia Heights.

Like much of Columbia Heights before it was redeveloped, the public spaces reflected the residents who used them and lived around them. Historically, the nature of public and private life in Columbia Heights meant that the parks were used by a variety of neighborhood residents, whether engaging in legal or illegal, safe or dangerous behaviors. Some used the parks as spaces for their children; places to meet and socialize; deal drugs; play games; exercise their dogs; eat lunch; and hang out. However such uses are often categorized now by new residents into safe and unsafe uses – illegal or legal – based on their reads of the city. Older residents tend to accept the bad with the good because there were no other options, and many do not feel unsafe because they understand how to read the spaces. Like the neighborhood at large in years past, parks in the neighborhood experienced a combination of community, violence, drug sales, family, and neglect. However, often the efforts to change the parks have lumped positive feelings of community and social life of the neighborhood's past into a dark narrative of Columbia Heights before the neighborhood gentrified. As a result, critique of changes, like in the

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case of the debate over Z Burger in the public realm plan, are taken to imply support of corruption and urban decline.

Perceptions of fear and safety

These stories illustrate the subjectivity of delinquency and safety. One of the lasting challenges of housing segregation by race and income since the post-war period is that at least two generations have grown up experiencing largely culturally, racially and economically homogeneous communities. This has meant that many white and upper income people fear the city as it exists and perceive urban history as uniformly deplorable. Unlike neighborhoods "in transition" on the path to gentrification, Columbia Heights arrested a certain amount of that transition through the preservation of affordable housing. As a result, new, younger and whiter residents moved into a neighborhood whose existing culture was outside of their experiences. Moreover, the populations that are represented in the socioeconomic diversity are relatively stable, rather than in transition as many neighborhoods going through a gentrification process, due to long term affordability of housing.

New residents' understanding of safety is colored by the way that the problems have been constructed over time – urban fear, race, public intoxication. For many residents, the disorder of public drinking and noise in a public park represents a "broken window" that, if left unaddressed, can lead to greater crime in the community. Regardless of what actually happens in the park, on street corners or on front porches, new residents believe that it is unsafe and discomforting.

One of the ways that new residents have worked to improve their sense of safety is through formalizing the norms of behavior for existing spaces that do not appear to them

to be governed by any norms now. Formality helps residents "read" the city in a way that is congruent with their cultural understandings of safety and comfort by establishing understood rules. At 14th and Girard Street, park users had their own rules and way of taking care of the cleanup and management of the park. However, from the outside, neighbors feel that the park is unsafe and disorderly. The rules that govern the park are not readable. Instead, new residents prefer formalized "friends of the park" organizations that they feel are more open to them and allow them access to the rule-making process.

Conclusion

In each park situation, the neighbors and the proposed uses had different impacts on the way the parks changed. The 11th and Monroe Park was surrounded by the low-rise single family homes common to this section of the neighborhood. The changes were also depoliticized by using the needs of children to justify its change. The result is a park that is clearly for child use, rather than as a social space for the older drinkers, card players and retirees who once used it. Oak-Ogden's transformation was justified as crime fighting and linked to the reputation of the surrounding buildings for criminal activity. While there were users who defended the park, the pressure to change this very small park came from the single family homeowners nearby who were looking for ways to change the environment of that area. The park's reputation was stronger for serious drug use and crime. It further had a vocal champion for change who pressured agencies, council members and the ANC. The redevelopment of 14th and Girard addressed the issues in a more balanced way that allowed the current users to continue using the park in similar ways, in spite of consistent claims of crime. Its neighbors were primarily multi-family buildings whose residents often hung out or had friends in the park, and it is located on a major thoroughfare, rather than adjacent to single family homes.

These parks were often the spaces where the surrounding neighborhood dynamics made an impact. New neighbors and NIMBY concerns primarily drove the processes in the Monroe and Oak-Ogden parks. However, the redevelopment of Girard Street was largely City-led. Although there were complaints, the new neighbors did not take ownership of the park either politically or personally to change either the users or the uses of the park. This balanced the process and meant that there were fewer stated goals coming from powerful neighborhood groups.

The parks were also places where the tensions inherent in community change surfaced and were contested. These include norms regarding public and private behavior; and one-on-one interactions on the street. Further these tensions were shaped by and continued to shape the narrative of neighborhood and city changes in Columbia Heights and the city at large. New residents considered the neighborhood before the changes brought by redevelopment and demographic shift to have only been violent and underdeveloped – a wild west in the middle of the urban landscape of Washington, DC. This narrative is also fed and confirmed for many by the role that socioeconomic segregation has played on the American understanding of race, cities, and disorder.

The coexistence of multiple social cultures in one neighborhood has created an awkward moment in the redevelopment of the city. Concurrently subject to Anderson's "code of the street" and the suburban disconnectedness that characterizes much of higher income America, Columbia Heights is in the midst of a struggle for control of the political and social life of the community. While long term park users distinguish between those they can trust and who are considered good for the community, similar to Anderson's "street" and "decent" families and people, interviews suggest that many new residents of

Columbia Heights do not distinguish between those in the parks who are dangerous and those who are not. The parks users are often lumped together with the places they hang out as dangerous. Like the tenements of the turn of the 20th Century, they too are considered a detriment to the health and morals of the community. This sentiment has translated, in this changing community, to other places where long term residents have lived and struggled through neglect and crime such as their rental housing. Like the parks, neighbors to the buildings often hope for a redevelopment away from subsidized housing in order to remove the people associated with these places.

However, in Columbia Heights, some of that removal has been arrested, confusing the process of cultural change. Instead of being only an up-and-coming restaurant scene, a high-end shopping center, or an expensive white neighborhood, Columbia Heights is a blend of old and new. One resident argued that she thinks people were surprised that Columbia Heights wasn't the "slam dunk" they thought it would be in terms of moving poor black residents out and wealthier white residents in. The difference may be found in the rules of the parks I studied. The Trolley-Turnaround Park has specific posted rules about the uses and prohibitions, while 14th and Girard's rules can be summed up what Anita told me one day: "You do you; and I do me." While the newly redeveloped parks have both posted rules and rules implied through design and enforcement, the rule at 14th and Girard is different. What Anita suggested was that she can't be me or live my life, and I can't and shouldn't be her or live her life. It isn't merely that one should be able to freely live her own life and participate in the community in her own way – it is also that she should let others do the same. This implied rule goes beyond the effort to retain long term, particularly low income renters in the neighborhood through the preservation of

affordable housing. Rather, it addresses the resultant cultural challenges that arise in the parks, public spaces and public meetings that were certainly not part of the plan.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

> [Council member Tommy] "Wells has a label for the people he sees as standing in the way of progress in D.C.: the old guard. Backroom deals are old guard. Circumventing the Council and going public with social media isn't. Corporate donations are old guard. A leaner campaign relying on volunteers isn't. When Bonds won her seat in an April special election over Elissa Silverman, a candidate who largely shares Wells' base but whom he stopped short of endorsing…he said it was a product of the old guard coming together." (Wiener, 2013)

In 2010, less than two years after the DCUSA complex opened for business, Columbia Heights was recognized with a Global Award for Excellence from the Urban Land Institute. The Congress for New Urbanism profiled the project in 2009 and gave it a Charter Award for "representing the best in New Urbanism." Columbia Heights had hit all the planning checklist items: a dense, transformative, infill development that was built on vacant property requiring no direct displacement of residents and featuring retail, office, and residential – both market rate and affordable. What was less heralded was the preservation of affordable housing throughout the neighborhood by the City's three housing agencies in partnership with mission-driven developers, tenant groups, and tenant advocates. The preservation, facilitated through the existing stock of Project-Based Section 8 buildings, the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA), and the significant funding from the Housing Production Trust Fund (HPTF) resulted in a partial mitigation of the indirect effects of redevelopment, rising rents and property taxes, and solidified

Columbia Heights as a mixed income neighborhood. It was a combination of old DC's protective laws and civil rights era organizations and new DC's transparent livable, walkable communities. But it was also a combination of old DC's informal backroom deals and new DC's formalized structure of organization. However, the socio-political environment of the neighborhood remains contested as the citywide fight between new and old plays out in daily life. The case of Columbia Heights brings to light the frequent overlaps between physical and social spaces, or the spaces of interaction, as cities change. After the redevelopment and demographic shift, social groups that rarely touched for four decades have moved into the same physical spaces: public parks, shopping centers, coffee shops, restaurants and schools. The resulting conflict has led to entrenchment of positions based on race, class, length of the time in the community, age, family type and whether the household has subsidies, rents, or owns a home.

My research suggests that the transformation of Columbia Heights from a high poverty, largely vacant and isolated neighborhood into a mixed income neighborhood with access to transit and amenities has brought costs for long term residents who have stayed[12]. While there were some variations in the way that long term residents viewed the changes and their communities, the vast majority lamented the loss of community and increased disenfranchisement that resulted from the massive alteration of the neighborhood, even as some acknowledge improved access to shopping or dining in the neighborhood. Although these residents were able to remain in the neighborhood, the changes the community has experienced call into question whose neighborhood Columbia Heights is today.

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[12] Although outside the scope of the dissertation, it is important to note that the changes particularly have not worked for residents who previously lived in some form of subsidized or unsubsidized affordable housing in Columbia Heights, but had to move because either the subsidy was not preserved, the tenants did not (or did not have funding to) exercise their rights of first refusal, or were the victims of illegal evictions, code violation-related moves, or exorbitant rent increases.

The three forces driving and reacting to the transformation of Columbia Heights –

residents, the private sector, and the City – have conflicted both with each other and

among themselves during this process. The conflict often originates with how the

neighborhood was defined by each group. For some, Columbia Heights was defined as a

physical space with a before and after story of glory, destruction and rebirth in which

they could play a role by improving the community for the benefit of various residents.

For others, it was a community of people – a community with some issues certainly – but

it was still a community of people who had a stake in its future and had a right to the city.

Those two perspectives result in divergent paths and policies. In Columbia Heights, these

conflicting policies coexisted – though not intentionally – and contributed to the social

environment that exists currently. Throughout the three chapters that comprise my

findings I describe 1) how the neighborhood has been understood and what it has meant

to residents, community and nonprofit organizations, and city officials; 2) the meaning of

changes to different groups in terms of amenities, services and institutions; and 3) the

way that power to define and manage spaces in the community has been distributed.

In chapter 4, I discussed the ways in which the history of DC's political development set

the stage for the City-led redevelopment in Columbia Heights. I introduced the various

ways in which the neighborhood was viewed by the City and residents, the policies in

place to promote equity and voice for residents in the neighborhood's planning efforts,

and the current conflicts about the implementation of those planning efforts. In chapter 5,

I explored the ways in which the private sector – primarily nonprofit and mission-driven

for-profit organizations – have worked to promote a voice for low income long term

residents, particularly residents of color. I found that those groups that were most

successful were those that, in spite of their focus on residents' rights to the city, were professionalized, had long term relationships with the City, could mobilize the residents they served to speak for themselves, and as a result, had access to agency staff, elected officials, and media outlets. Less structured groups that were not constantly mobilized had little success in gaining a long term seat at the table. Finally, in chapter 6, I used three public spaces to explain the way in which residents interact within the neighborhood, the processes by which decisions regarding the use and appropriate norms of behavior and safety have been set for these spaces, and to dissect the relationship between these processes and resulting rules and the readability of spaces to particular groups. In this section I will review the implications of these findings for planning theory and practice.

Discussion of findings

The different perceptions of the neighborhood held by new residents and the old guard is illustrated by the narrative of 'old glory-decline–rebirth." This causal narrative of decline implicates low income residents in the destruction of the built environment during the 1968 riots, when, according to the narrative, residents destroyed their communities and thus gave up the right to complain. But this narrative also implicates the leadership elected in the period immediately after Washington was granted home rule by Congress in 1975. The activities of the City and the residents who elected its leaders from 1968 to at least the election of former mayor Anthony Williams in 1998 are portrayed as corrupt, ineffectual, and destructive partially. Decision making in this period is seen as based on personal relationships, some corrupt, others just informal, rather than formalized, transparent democratic process. Based on this understanding of the past, new Washington—and new residents--represents the way forward.

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At the same time, neighborhood change in Columbia Heights is also situated in the larger context of housing and redevelopment trends. Columbia Heights was redeveloped in the midst of a perfect storm of consumption trends, market forces, and academic thought. The housing boom, the rise of the creative class and income inequality, and a nationwide back to the city movement for young affluent whites, coincided with a shift toward the view that city planning and housing policy should foster the creation of mixed income communities. Research on the association between residence in a poor neighborhood and a variety of problems has instilled in policy discussions the premise that low income neighborhoods are toxic for the residents in them, and thus do not contain communities or assets worth retaining. In discussions regarding the relationship between neighborhood conditions and affordable housing that are currently guiding policy, mixed income communities are assumed to provide low income residents access to a wider world of job networks, educational opportunities, middle class norms, and neighborhood amenities. Mixed income redevelopment and housing mobility programs that enable low income residents to move to the suburbs are strategies favored in policy and academic discussions. However, with the dispersal of the (often minority) poor and the influx of new residents come shifts in political power, and in the power to define neighborhood social norms which result in the loss of community spaces important to low income residents.

The dominant narrative about the decline of the neighborhood, when combined with similarly negative arguments about the toxicity of living in a poor neighborhood, undermine the ability of long time residents to argue that there is value in retaining aspects of the neighborhood that they value. Instead, they provide support for current

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redevelopment efforts and downplay the notion that there are costs to current residents. Physical displacement is collateral damage to the "way forward" and suggests an either-or dichotomy of development; either residents accept the forward momentum or there is no development.

The way that these views have been mapped onto the redeveloping community is through the planning processes for the adaptation for public spaces. These processes rest upon norms that value democracy, transparency and formality of institutions and processes such as incorporation of neighborhood organizations and known channels for accessing government agencies and City Council members. Translating the value of current uses and the meaning of the norms that govern behavior in them into the language of these processes has proven difficult for long time residents. For newer residents, whose formalized "friends of" park groups have successful transformed the use and norms of behavior in two local parks, these processes are a sign of progress toward becoming a transparent world class city, rather than a disorganized and corrupt political machine, as some new residents describe the old DC.

In sum, this framing of the current redevelopment of impoverished neighborhoods has meant that the preservation or inclusion of housing affordable to current low income residents has been defined as a social service need, a need that can be managed. Rather than talking about the ability--or right--to stay in one's community after it has been changed, discussion is about units or buildings that are not attached to specific people or histories.

Theoretical Implications

Consistent with Kleit and Manzo's (2006) research in HOPE VI communities, long term residents talk about the relationships they had in the neighborhood during times when outsiders defined Columbia Heights in terms of its crime, physical abandonment, lack of legal economic activity, and lack of desirability to upper income residents. By defining it in such terms and as a neighborhood, rather than a community, Columbia Heights was reduced to its physical characteristics and boundaries by outsiders. The community became a manageable physical place for government and others. It was a blank canvas on which to work because local history or residents could not be disrespected by outsiders ignorant of their existence. Further, the common narrative of the before and after of the neighborhood suggests that outsiders felt that it was a sort of abstract space that only had viable history before 1968. That narrative has been typified in the redevelopment of public spaces such as the Trolley Turnaround Park, which focuses on pre-riot Columbia Heights at the expense of those who used the park between 1968 and 2011. Using Lefebvre's concept of the social production of space, we can understand the way in which space throughout the neighborhood was adapted to change the social norms of the community and how the effort to create a dominant narrative about the neighborhood reinforced the way the space was changed.

Mixed income housing construction and the development agreements in Columbia Heights are grounded in the idea of a neighborhood as a manageable place, rather than a community. In policy discussions of strategies for creating mixed income communities, such as mobility programs or HOPE VI, the provision of affordable housing is presented as a social service, delinked from the role it currently plays in giving the low income community a voice in the community, a path to empowerment. Not only are these poor

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residents new to the redefined community (even if they lived there before redevelopment), they are intentionally outnumbered to reduce the impact of poverty concentration, and, as Fainstein (2010) suggests, fare worse in the democratic system due to the extreme inequality between renters and homeowners and new and old residents that exists both at the neighborhood level and citywide. The deconcentration of poverty that is the goal of integrating low income residents into existing middle class communities and new redevelopments results in the dissolution of political and social power in those same neighborhoods and the creation of a vivid unequal citizenship based on inequality. Many long term residents no longer wield the power to define community norms, uses of space, and policy goals. As a result, the spaces they inhabit - physical, social and political – have changed, often limiting the control they have over their communities.

Although rhetoric suggests that the increase in residential density and the negotiation of affordable housing set-asides would mitigate the gentrification effect of such a redevelopment, there is no preference for existing community members, and the amount developed is a small fraction of what would be needed to retain those members, as well as accommodate the new residents to the community. Further, the amount of affordable housing set aside was not tied to any projected estimate of need locally. Thus, as a negotiated community benefit, affordable housing is positioned as a social service and means to future diversity, rather than an affirmation of the right for community members to remain. Affordable housing as part of a mixed income community scheme is not seen as a way to make real the right to choose one's location nor as part of a real "right to the city" (Harvey, 2008).

In contrast to current inclusionary housing agreements, in Columbia Heights, laws that have enabled the preservation of existing subsidized and market affordable units for existing residents represent an intentional right to the city. The use of the TOPA funding and law were not targeted to Columbia Heights to achieve maximum mixed income housing. Instead, tenants are understood to have a right to stay in the neighborhood, and the law, funding and tenant organizing support are a means to giving tenants the opportunity to exercise that right throughout the city. The targeted preservation of affordable buildings by advocates similarly illustrates this right. The buildings were preserved in cooperation with the tenants (largely due to the power that comes from TOPA and the ancillary support of organizers) *for the tenants that lived in those buildings*. The coexistence of views of housing as a social service and housing as a right among residents and organizations in Columbia Heights also illustrates the combination of old and new guard policies – though the combination is not intentional. TOPA and the long term funding of community organizers and human rights laws institutionalized the community development goals of the 1960s. The affordable housing organizations involved in current inclusionary housing discussions were able to build on the foundation laid earlier through the long term mobilization of nonprofit groups organized not just to protest activity but to actively advocate for particular policies and funding for affordable housing. Such policies ranged from shelters and support services to homeownership, as well as dedicated funding generated through the taxes on home sales.

I argue instead that our policy and planning interventions need to be reframed to focus on the agency of existing residents and communities – on ways to institutionalize a right to the city – rather than a predetermined, normative outcome detached from existing

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communities and based on beliefs about the inability of existing low-income communities to speak for themselves. Diversity, like the goal of creating mixed income communities, may be an outcome of institutionalizing a more normative right to the city, but diversity per se should not be the goal of policy. In concrete terms, in this case, this means that the policy goal should be to ensure residents have the meaningful opportunity to purchase their buildings, participate in neighborhood planning, and use neighborhood spaces in ways that may diverge with the uses of other residents. Specifically, I argue that this case illustrates a diverse array of rights: discursive, opportunity, legal and substantive. Discursive rights, or rights talk, can be used strategically for political or other ends or can be part of the way we understand historic claims to space. Opportunity rights are rights that are not expressly prohibited or legally specified. Rather, they operate in spaces where the state or competing legal rights do not operate. Legal rights are the institutionalized rights such as TOPA or the Public Realm Plan that make it possible for a community to have and exercise a right to the city. Beyond legal rights are substantive rights, which make it practicable to exercise legal rights.

TOPA creates a space where residents not only have a discursive right to stay in the neighborhood, but they have a collective legal right to purchase the building, which is made meaningful through the funding, organizing and technical assistance provided by the City and a network of nonprofit organizations. These rights are what make agency in communities possible and upset – if only in a small way – the balance of power.

These legal rights are important in the changed neighborhood and--more broadly--the city. Increasingly, low income residents – particularly renters - face a landscape of uneven citizenship as a result of the rapid physical transformation, shifts in political

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power, and growing economic inequality. This landscape suggests a need for something beyond the idealized winner-take-all transparent democratic governance prized by the new residents of Columbia Heights (Fainstein S. , 2010; Roy, 2009). The challenges to this process can be seen as embodying the values of radical planning and insurgency as described by Holston (1995), Friedman (1987) and Miraftab (2009). The Radical planning values of voice from the ground up, acting in the spaces where government does not, and actively promoting a collective right to the city have been most acutely seen in the relationship between the city, tenant organizers and residents of affordable housing. The work of the DC Preservation Network, has used ethnographic methods akin to Holston's (1995) to better understand the everyday lives and the way in which policy impacts those living in affordable housing. Moreover, as radical "planners from below," they play the role of translator and a connection between the powerful players in the community and the low income residents who reside in the neighborhoods (Sandercock L. , 2000). These groups, moreover, help make substantive the legal right of residents to buy their buildings.

While that translation role is important, direct action by insurgent actors in the community have allowed them to assert their right to the city (Harvey, 2008), if resting within a context of opportunity rights instability. This was most visible in the case of the "front porch crew" who continue to show up and participate in meetings about the park, advocate on their own behalf, and manage the social and physical environment of the park. This was also seen when tenants exercised their right to the city through the purchase of their buildings. In both cases, however, these groups also benefitted from the formal-informal divide. At the park, there was not a more organized group to contest the

space; meanwhile, the tenants benefited from the highly organized housing advocacy community and legal rights which lent their efforts legitimacy. Though seemingly contradictory, the latter represents institutionalized insurgent and radical action. I argue that while insurgence must be anti-hegemonic, in this case opposed to redevelopment that does not value the existing community, it does not follow that it must be anti-statist. The efforts of the "front porch crew", in contrast to the Friends of 11th and Monroe, illustrate the practical reality that for insurgence to work, a group must be recognized by power, embodied through legal rights. Though the Front Porch Crew informally managed the park themselves and fought the pressure of new neighbors to change and manage the park, their management is sanctioned by the City. At the 11th and Monroe Park, the informal group that showed up to meetings to voice their opinions about the changes to the park was not recognized in the same way that the official friends of the park organization was – as a formal representation of the community of users. Thus, their input on the importance of features such as bathrooms went unheeded in favor of more child-focused amenities.

The question of formality and informality plays a role in the narrative of DC's transformation. Whether it was at the resident level where formalized resident groups held more sway than those with a less formalized structure or at higher levels of redevelopment where a public process was considered fairer than the southern, relationship-based, seemingly less transparent case by case processes, new residents felt that more formal public processes and input, democracy, and transparency led to a fair outcome. Though that has been beneficial for organized groups like CNHED whose professionalized structure lends credibility to the larger group of smaller organizations,

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less formalized groups like the "front porch crew" and volunteer organizations like the Georgia Avenue Community Development Task Force, an organization created to try to assert control over the changes occurring on the east side of Columbia Heights, are often sidelined in the face of formalized and professional groups who know the "rules" of engagement at the City level and have the time and resources to lobby the City government.

More than exploiting cracks in the hegemony, housing advocates in Washington have constituted a competing force to the City's growth regime that dominates downtown development. Built from the community development movement based legislation and programs, these groups have been sustained through the on-going funding and political support for laws like TOPA over the past three decades. Until recently, development in Washington has been focused in communities with minimal affordable housing and a small population of low income residents, meaning that there has not been much direct conflict between housing advocates and the pro-growth regime. As the two groups increasingly clash over issues of code enforcement, rent control, and TOPA, development interests are becoming increasingly vocal in their opposition to TOPA and other tenant rights.

Just as growth regimes have unique access to the City through long term connections and campaign donations, the competing affordable housing advocacy groups are well organized and have spent significant time building relationships with agency staff, elected officials, council staff members, and local development and banking leaders. Meanwhile, their work with tenants and cooperatives have given them access to a broad-based community of grassroots activists and residents who actively lobby their

councilmembers, testify at hearings, show up at rallies, and write letters and emails to agency staff. In short, their ability not only to lobby through policy – but also their ability to mobilize large numbers to both protest actions by the City and promote particular funding and policies-- gives them unique access and power at the City level.

Policy and Planning Implications

Though in many ways my findings challenge the assumptions of mixed income policies, they do not suggest that remaining in Columbia Heights has been entirely bad for long term residents. There have been positive effects of the changes to the neighborhood for those who remained. Consistent with findings in evaluations of the MTO mobility program, women with children feel happy and less stressed because their children are safer in the changed neighborhood. Older women particularly appreciate informal sit-down restaurants such as the IHOP or Ruby Tuesdays where they can meet friends. However, I also found that across the board long term, particularly African American residents feel pushed out in spite of their physical ability to stay. Together, my findings suggest that the goal of redevelopment be recast. Rather than focusing on the creation of mixed income neighborhoods or developments as the central goal, policy and planning should recognize the value existing residents place on their community and thus work to make them more central to defining the purposes and desired outcomes of redevelopment.

As a practical matter that means going beyond merely giving residents voice in initial planning decisions or building affordable housing as has been previously suggested by those studying the processes of gentrification (Hyra, 2013; Freeman, 2006). Rather, planners must change the way that neighborhoods are thought of and discussed – and

those dialogs have to move beyond the either-or of redevelopment and the before and after narrative of investment and decline. The tools are available to create and maintain equitable redevelopment that both respect the rights of long term residents, regardless of whether they rent or own, or the changing nature of urban environments. The focus on and acknowledgement of the existing community as more than just a neglected physical space is necessary to creating long term equity.

The neighborhood is defined spatially and socially according to the expectations of those defining it. New primarily higher income residents may define particular parts of the neighborhood such as parks or older retail spaces negatively with words like unusable, abandoned, or underutilized if they can't or don't use or read these spaces, despite how many others do use these spaces. However, many older and long term residents view those places as essential to daily living. There is also a class and age layer to this discussion. While new residents often felt a keen responsibility to and spoke with great respect for their older homeowner neighbors who had owned houses in the neighborhood throughout the neighborhood's history, renters, regardless of the length of their tenure in the neighborhood, were viewed as problematic to the neighborhood's way forward. They also differentiate by age; the older homeowner is approachable and part of the community – but their children who hang out in big groups on the front porch are not. New homeowners, though not happy with being the cause of displacement, are also not interested in being discomforted in public spaces, as was suggested in the discussion around Z Burger and the fight over the Public Realm Plan. Part of the role that planners have to play in this case, where long term residents may be poorly organized or represent a smaller share of the community, is to listen and make radical choices to address the

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imbalance in political power in the planning process. Though it is important to acknowledge the direct challenges surrounding the role of power from outside interests such as developers and the less supportive electorate, it is also notable that Washington, DC's housing advocates have also been a powerful force in DC's political arena, suggesting that political challenges may be overcome with an organized and connected group of residents and advocates.

The impact that redevelopment has on housing affordability in areas surrounding project sites needs to be explicitly addressed. One of the often repeated statements about this round of redevelopment in DC has been that there has been no "direct displacement." Translated, that means that, unlike urban renewal efforts of the previous century, the City did not bulldoze entire blocks and displace entire communities wholesale. Instead in the case of Washington – and specifically Columbia Heights – redevelopment has been done on largely vacant tracts of city-owned land. However, using the site as a metric for displacement ignores the ripple effects of large scale change – particularly adjacent to public transportation hubs such as Metro stations or street car lines.

This connection must be made by taking stock of existing neighborhood assets – affordable housing stock, existing businesses, and neighborhood demographics to understand what is there. This means consciously going beyond the readable middle class fears about low income communities of color so planners do not exacerbate existing divisions by race and class in the community. This must further be done so that planners and redevelopment authorities are aware of the need for preservation of existing units and can tie the number of units preserved or created to the number of residents who will no longer be able to afford market rents in the changed neighborhood. From a

redevelopment standpoint, public lands must have deed restrictions requiring long term affordability at deep levels. In addition, a preference for neighborhood residents, similar to that used in the hiring of residents in local jobs should be implemented in the sale or rental of inclusionary zoning/Planned Unit Development units. However, these units are often insufficient to address the overwhelming housing needs created be increased rent costs.

Further, the preservation of existing subsidized units, particularly units produced as part of the Project based Section 8 program in the 1970s and 1980s that are in danger of losing their subsidies, must be prioritized at the City and (if applicable) state level in changing communities as part of the redevelopment process. In Washington, DC TOPA played a significant role in the preservation of tenant rights to the city by organizing tenants and empowering them to buy, rehabilitate and maintain their buildings or empowering them to negotiate collectively to ensure their place in the community. Though a TOPA law is ideal in many ways, it requires significant infrastructure for funding, organizing and advocacy to be more than a paper right. Regardless of the mechanism, the preservation of existing affordable units using significant interagency, stakeholder, and resident cooperation should be a cornerstone of the preservation process as exemplified through the DCPN and TOPA.

The City should provide support for and recognition of tenant organizers, neighborhood organizations, and others who can create a direct link to the community. A strong civil society cannot flourish in spaces where they are not recognized. However, planners cannot solely rely on organizations to speak for residents or public processes after decisions have been made. It is necessary that they spend time listening and using

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ethnographic methods to triangulate their understanding of the uses of space and groups involved in the spaces in which they work.

The level of mixing in the new neighborhood is minimal except in the case of homeowners who may interact. Kids are still not going to the same schools, and amenities are used differently. As a result loose ties are retained along class lines, with long term low income residents providing job and social networks within class, rather than through mixing of race and class in the community. In Columbia Heights, the long standing institutions such as the community centers, churches, and schools are largely segregated, suggesting a need for a strengthening of new institution such as arts-focused organizations that encourage the voicing of counter narratives about the community to a wide group of neighborhood residents.

Conclusion

Throughout this process, I thought a lot about the "three DCs" and the way in which the division between and the definition of those groups changed the way a person sees the city. I considered the way in which DC is casually referred to as "a transient city" and the other narratives about Washington, DC and Columbia Heights that influence the way in which the city develops. The narratives create villains and heroes in the gentrification or redevelopment of neighborhoods. That wasn't my goal. Columbia Heights has gone through a dramatic transformation. Given the national and local trends in demographics, available vacant land, employment growth, finance, and consumption patterns, it was nearly inevitable that it would happen. Columbia Heights was, compared to similar scales of redevelopment across the city, a managed process for redevelopment in that the City

remained involved in the design decisions, affordable housing units, and community benefits.

In conclusion, my research suggest that community is an unappreciated but valuable component of redevelopment and that for community to be meaningfully valued existing residents must have rights--whether or not the exercise of these rights produce better "outcomes" defined in service term. Supporting those rights requires organizations that can exert pressure on decision makers in formal processes to gain resources to sustain their voice and victories. In contrast, inclusionary policies negotiated as part of redevelopment will produce little and are based on units/service logic. To support this alternative view of redevelopment, planners should try to understand existing communities and use that information to make equitable decisions regarding the design and uses of public spaces.

The way in which the social and political landscape emerges from such a change may be what sets apart the heroes from those who were in the right place at the right time with the right architects and planners. The social environment depends on not just abstract policy goals of diversity, walkability, amenities, and connectivity for the future residents of a community. Rather, it relies on the acknowledgement of the contributions, organization, culture, and connections among the residents who lived through the neglect, crime, and vacancy of the intervening decades and fought to preserve affordability and community spaces for those who remained in the neighborhood.

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