ABSTRACT

GEOGRAPHIES OF NEOLIBERAL REGULATION AND THE EVERYDAY URBAN EXPERIENCE: A CASE STUDY OF OVER-THE-RHINE, CINCINNATI

Jean-Paul David Addie

This thesis analyses the impacts of neoliberal urbanism through conducting a qualitative case study of the inner-city neighbourhood of Over-the-Rhine, Cincinnati. Drawing upon the geographic concept of 'actually existing' neoliberalism, combined with in-depth interviews with neighbourhood organisations, community advocacy groups and residents in Over-the-Rhine, I explore the complex, often contradictory and dialectical relationships between neoliberal regulatory-institutional restructuring, the production of urban space, and the practices of everyday life. Played out against a background of racial tension and civil unrest, the creation of a new, neoliberal institutional landscape in Over-the-Rhine politically and economically disenfranchises the most marginalised neighbourhood inhabitants through re-articulating urban and political space, and re-imagining the ideological form and function of the inner city and the urban poor. I assert the significance of place-based studies to explore the place-specific articulations of neoliberal urbanism and in doing so, present directions for future research.
GEOGRAPHIES OF NEOLIBERAL REGULATION AND THE EVERYDAY URBAN EXPERIENCE:

A CASE STUDY OF OVER-THE-RHINE, CINCINNATI

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1 Over-the-Rhine base street-map after Cincinnati City Council 2002:3
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-- Jean-Paul Addie
Imagine that some of the most influential and moneyed local businessmen form a development corporation that gets the go-ahead from your city to take charge of redeveloping your neighborhood.

They don't ask what your neighborhood should look like or what you think of how they want to go about changing it, even though Fountain Square, which they're also redeveloping, gets a series of hearings for public input.

They don't talk to you at all. They create a plan -- two years after you'd already participated in creating one and a year after you'd started helping redesign your neighborhood schools.

They introduce the plan first to the city, then to you. Then they ask you to focus on their ideas, not on your anger about the way they got them. They say they're listening to you; they want your approval. They say they're committed to keeping the housing in your neighborhood affordable, though you're not really sure for whom they mean.

Do you trust them?

Welcome to Over-the-Rhine.
This thesis seeks to address the central question of how neoliberal capitalism, as a specific articulation of political-economic accumulation and regulation, affects contemporary cities. Furthermore, as the implementation of neoliberal doctrine in practice tends towards increasing social polarisation and repressively attacks labour conditions and security – thus exacerbating the inequalities inherent within the capitalist mode of production – I aim to understand how neoliberalism, as a distinctly spatial strategy, is legitimised and naturalised in the everyday urban experience. I address these concerns through conducting a qualitative case study in the inner-city neighbourhood of Over-the-Rhine (OTR), Cincinnati.

In order to unpack these issues, I utilise the neo-Marxist conceptual framework of regulation theory. This has several significant implications for the political and theoretical projects of the thesis. Firstly, in contrast to orthodox Marxist approaches, I centre my analysis in the sphere of social reproduction and the regulation of the contradictions of capitalism (see Cox 2006, 2004). As such, rather than explicitly searching for revolutionary strategies through deconstructing the mode of production (although through the course of the thesis, theoretical and material moments of resistance are implicitly revealed), I am concerned with understanding how
capitalism is regulated to meet the conditions for social reproduction, and how these mechanisms are enforced repressively (through state and political power) and ideologically (in the popular conscience of capitalist subjects). Therefore my political project is to better understand how the political-economic structures and imperatives of capitalism are naturalised in contemporary city space and society in order to open potential moments of resistance, and move towards a counter-hegemonic project.

**Neoliberalism and Contemporary Urban Geography**

Experiences of neoliberal ideology in practice are the product of the contextual embedding of policy and re-regulation in place (Brenner and Theodore 2002). Neoliberal landscapes do not emerge uncontested or in a comprehensive ‘end-state’, but are the result of a continual mediation of crisis arising in specific social, cultural, political and economic contexts (Wilson 2004a, Peck and Tickell 2002, Jessop 2000, MacLeod and Goodwin 1999). The functioning of neoliberal capitalism results in uneven development at a number of scales and therefore a spatial, geographic perspective is important in both understanding contemporary urban processes and seeking ways to contest new forms of exploitation and marginalisation under hegemonic neoliberal projects.

Regulation theory posits that social reproduction is facilitated by a particular accumulation regime and ensured by ‘mode of regulation’ constituted by a set of state and private institutions (Jessop 2000). However, as Peck and Tickell (2002) point out, the imperatives of neoliberal doctrine devolve regulatory responsibility to the lowest possible scale; as such, the city becomes an increasingly significant scale at which to study the impacts of neoliberalism. Whilst a number of political, economic and organisational frameworks and structures constitute the capitalist regulatory-institutional architecture (see chapter 2), my analysis focuses primarily on the neoliberal restructuring of urban governance landscapes, modes of state intervention, and their dialectical relationship with urban space – both in terms of its physical environment and socio-spatial structures. I adopt this focus in order to exemplify how urban neoliberalism politically and economically disenfranchises the most marginalised and vulnerable urban inhabitants through re-articulating physical urban and political spaces and re-imagining the ideological form and function of the inner city and the urban poor.
A burgeoning body of literature demonstrates that the impact of neoliberalism on contemporary cities is a significant concern for urban geographers and regulation theorists (see, for example, Harvey 2005, May, Cloke and Johnsen 2005, Wilson 2004a, Antipode Special Edition 2002, Jessop 2000, MacLeod and Goodwin 1999). Whilst the fundamental principles of neoliberal ideology posit economic and developmental beneficence in open, competitive markets via the utility of the individual citizen (Brenner and Theodore 2002 see also Gough 2002, Jessop 2002, Peck and Tickell 2002 Peck 2001), the application of such neoliberal strategies produces new institutional and regulatory landscapes supported by new functional logics and political imperatives (Peck 2003, Jessop 2000).

However, much of this literature has followed a theoretical, state-centric perspective. While there are a few notable exceptions (May, Cloke and Johnsen 2005, Larner and Craig 2005, Fraser 2004, Wilson 2004a, Keil 2002, MacLeod 2002), there remains a disjunction between analysis of neoliberal governance and the material, empirical grounding of neoliberal urbanism in the everyday urban experience.

**Statement of Research Purpose and Questions**

This thesis seeks to provide a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of the spatialities and temporalities of neoliberal urbanism through conducting a qualitative case study of the everyday neoliberal urban experience in the Cincinnati neighbourhood of Over-the-Rhine. My fieldwork and analysis is guided by three research questions developing from the aims of this project and the conceptual framework being utilised;

1. **What are the impacts of neoliberalisation on the regulatory-institutional architecture governing Over the Rhine?**
2. **How do the imperatives of neoliberalism influence the production and regulation of space in Over-the-Rhine?**
3. **How do these new spatialities and modes of regulation influence the everyday urban experience of Over-the-Rhine inhabitants?**

In addressing these questions, I aim to respond to some of the key criticisms levied towards regulation approaches to urban geography and the literature surrounding urban neoliberalisation.
whilst adding to the empirical and conceptual debates surrounding neoliberalism and contemporary cities (see debates in chapter 2).

**Study Area: Over-the-Rhine, Cincinnati**

Located adjacently north of Cincinnati’s Downtown, Over-the-Rhine is an historic city neighbourhood, host to significant urban architecture, yet is also a locus for many characteristics of inner city decay, including out-migration, disinvestment, urban blight and the image of an unsafe and unhealthy environment. Figure 1.1 illustrates Over-the-Rhine’s situation and the location of several key neighbourhood institutions, landmarks and districts discussed in this thesis. The neighbourhood’s history of economic decline, class and racial tension, political struggle, and contested urban morphology, place Over-the-Rhine as a prime case study location for this project. Over-the-Rhine represents certain universalities of the history of social change and urbanism in the American inner city (Miller and Tucker 1998, Smith and Feagin 1995), but also stands as a unique, and extreme, example of the contest surrounding urban space.

*Historical Development*

The land north of the city centre was utilised for largely agricultural purposes during the initial settlement of Cincinnati in 1789. However, Over-the-Rhine rapidly developed to accommodate the city’s growing population and economic significance as the completion of the Miami-Erie canal in 1837 connected Cincinnati to markets from New York to New Orleans. The construction of the Miami-Erie canal produced a physical and symbolic spatial barrier delineating the boundary between Downtown and Over-the-Rhine – with the cheaper cost of land north of the canal attracting many warehousing and manufacturing companies as well as the influx of migrant labour (Scheer and Ferdelman 2001).

Following this pattern of growth and socio-economic development, Over-the-Rhine became a neighbourhood of immigrants and the working classes\(^2\). As such, Over-the-Rhine was constructed as a location for Cincinnati’s urban poor and immigrant communities; a trend that has continued through successive waves of European (1830-1900), Appalachian (1930-1950) and

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\(^2\) Initially, the neighbourhood housed many German immigrants who re-named the Miami-Erie canal ‘the Rhine’. The land north of the canal therefore became ‘Over-the-Rhine’. The Germanic influence in the neighbourhood extended to street names and churches, however, following the political ramifications of World War, many streets were renamed to sound more American; for example, the City renamed Bremen Street ‘Republic Street’ (Over-the-Rhine Foundation 2005).
Figure 1.1: Study Site: Over-the-Rhine [insert after Google Earth]
African-American migrants (1960-80) (Over-the-Rhine Foundation 2005, Miller and Tucker 1998). The modernisation of industry and transportation led to the draining of ‘the Rhine’ in 1919 and the construction of the street ‘Central Parkway’ (opened in 1928) which follows the path of the canal (Over-the-Rhine Foundation 2005). Whilst a number of public buildings were constructed in the neighbourhood between 1910 and 1930, and the physical barrier of the canal was removed – producing a greater connection between Over-the-Rhine and Downtown – the ‘Rhine’ / Central Parkway remains symbolically important in constructing Over-the-Rhine’s identity (Miller and Tucker 1998).

**Current Conditions**

Today, Over-the-Rhine covers 300 acres of mixed-use commercial, industrial, institutional and residential zoned plots (Cincinnati City Council 2002, Scheer and Ferdelman 2001). The overall population of the neighbourhood has declined throughout the twentieth century, dropping from 15,025 in 1970 to 7,638 in 2000 so that currently, Over-the-Rhine is home to a population one fifth the size of that at the turn of the twentieth century (United States Census 2006, Scheer and Feldman 2001). However, coinciding with this decline, the proportion of African-Americans in the area has grown since the 1960s and 70s as a result of displacement from surrounding neighbourhoods; a trend consolidated throughout the 1980s and 90s as the African American community has succeeded the previous white, Appalachian population (Table 1.1). Whilst gentrification in Over-the-Rhine introduces significant variations the class and racial composition of residents, the neighbourhood’s inhabitants tend to be predominantly African-American, and younger and poorer than the rest of Cincinnati’s metropolitan area. For example, in 2002, Over-the-Rhine had a median household income of $9,042 compared the city’s median income of $32,278 (Cincinnati City Council 2002: 7). Yet, reflecting the diverse socio-economic population of Over-the-Rhine, annual income is highly disparate and spatially distinct as can be seen in Figure 1.2, a higher per capita income level in the heart of Pendleton whilst poorer districts include Mulberry-McMicken and the Brewery District.4

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3 Largely as a result of Urban Renewal programmes and the construction of the I-75 corridor which displaced many black residents from the West End into Over-the-Rhine.
4 The area of the Brewery District alongside W. Clifton Avenue is somewhat anomalous as this is a partial census block group which also includes an area of the more affluent Clifton neighbourhood.
Scheer and Ferdelman (2001) report that 70% of the Over-the-Rhine’s nineteenth century buildings were destroyed during the twentieth century, yet as local politicians and property developers rediscovered the neighbourhood’s remaining architecture (left relatively intact), the built environment has been highlighted as a key component facilitating the drive to gentrify the district (see Smith 2002, Weber 2002). Figure 1.3 represents the current and predicted gentrification and development trends in Over-the-Rhine. Although land-use and property values within specific blocks remain highly variable, this map highlights the general direction and timescale of private, market-rate development. The majority of condo, gentrified housing and retail developments exist along the Main Street entertainment district corridor, Pendleton and Central Parkway – with the gentrification frontier currently pinpointed along Clay Street to the west of Main Street. Although the market for this new housing stock is yet to take off (as will be discussed in detail in the following chapters), Cincinnati City Center Development Corporation [3CDC, see chapter 4] is targeting the area surrounding Washington Park as a locus for the next wave of development and is currently in the process of acquiring property in the district. Finally, debate surrounds the future gentrification of Findlay Market / the Brewery District; either this

5 Whilst the decline in population and reduction in total housing stock points to a general out-migration from Over-the-Rhine, this is part accounted for by a de-concentration of low-income units within buildings (see chapter 6) combined with the presence of number of vacant condos which have been developed but not occupied. This represents a drive towards facilitating neighbourhood gentrification (through the planning and development of housing units, but a drive that has failed to be matched by large-scale gentrified in-migration (also see figure 1.4).
Figure 1.2: Per Capita Income by Census Tract Block Group (2000)
Figure 1.3: Current and Projected Patterns of Gentrification

Current & Projected Patterns of Gentrification

Direction of Gentrification Frontier

Unit Appearing in the Over-the-Rhine Summer Tour of Homes 2005

Existing Gentrified Development:
Focused on condo development along the Main Street Entertainment district and Central Parkway, and housing renovation surrounding Broadway

Targeted Gentrification District:
Focused around Washington Park and stimulated largely by 3CDC's involvement in Over-the-Rhine. Whilst development has yet to take off, 3CDC is purportedly obtaining control of many buildings in this district

Prospective Future Gentrification:
Focused around Findlay Market and the potential renovation of the Brewery District. Opinions differ as to whether development will take off in 5-10 years, or be stifled by low-income resident, homeless and criminal displacement from south of Liberty Street
district will take-off in 5-10 years when market demand and property prices are favourable, or development will be infringed by the displacement of poverty and criminality from south of Liberty Street (see chapter 5 and 6).

**Presentation of the Study**

This thesis is organised into seven chapters. Chapter 2 contextually grounds the research project in the conceptual framework of regulation theory, particularly placing my theoretical, empirical and methodological contributions within the growing body of literature examining ‘actually existing’ neoliberalism. Chapter 3 discusses the case study research design and the methods of data collection and analysis. I argue for the theoretical benefits of qualitative empirical research to understanding contemporary city processes and everyday life whilst pointing to several conceptual debates and practical difficulties surrounding the use of qualitative methods and analysis. Through addressing my first research question, chapter 4 examines the usurping of Over-the-Rhine’s existing political institutional infrastructure by market-rate development advocacy organisations, the devolution of state power and authority, and the rescaling of the neighbourhood’s governance regime as three key moments in the rolling out of a hegemonic neoliberal project in Over-the-Rhine.

The two following chapters unpack the everyday, neoliberal urban experience – in turn addressing research questions two and three. In chapter 5, I explore how neighbourhood space is produced, regulated and contested under the political-economic imperatives of neoliberalism through examining the exercise of ideological and repressive state power. In doing this, I emphasise the significance of space, and its production, in facilitating acts of resistance and defining the right to the city. Chapter 6 explores the relationships between political-institutional restructuring, emerging neoliberal spatialities and the practices of everyday life adopted by users of Over-the-Rhine space. I conduct this analysis through exploring; the contextual grounding of urban housing and development policies, the impact of Over-the-Rhine’s institutional landscape on neighbourhood society, the construction and contestation of everyday social-spatial practices and, the spaces of resistance produced through residents’ everyday lives. Finally, chapter 7 presents the conclusions I draw from this research project and discusses its relevance and implications for future research.
This chapter contextually situates my own research on neoliberal urbanism in Over-the-Rhine, Cincinnati, within the burgeoning body of literature examining processes, impacts and realities of ‘actually existing’ neoliberalism. Firstly, I trace the emergence of neoliberalism as a significant object of inquiry for economic, political and urban geographers analysing the restructuring of [international] political-economy, emphasising the conceptual framework and theoretical contributions of the neo-Marxist Regulation School. Secondly, I examine how, reacting against several critiques, urban geographers and regulation theorists have conceptualised contemporary urban governance and regulation in terms of ‘actually existing’ neoliberalism in order to explore the geographic specificities of regulatory-institutional restructuring and policy implementation. Finally, I situate my own research within the contextual framework developed in this body of literature, laying out how the thesis will contribute to the study of contemporary urban neoliberalism.
2.1) Neoliberalism and the Geography of Regulation

For the last two decades, a major component of critical social analysis has been focused upon understanding and conceptualising the collapse of the post-war Keynesian consensus and the subsequent restructuring of the global political-economy under neoliberal imperatives (Hackworth 2006, Green and Huey 2005, Brenner and Theodore 2002, Jessop 2000) - as Peck and Tickell observe – “neoliberalism seems to be everywhere” (2002: 380).

Although popularised in the influential writings of Friedrich Hayek (1944) and Milton Friedman (1962), neoliberalism has morphed and mutated beyond their intellectual contributions, gaining popularity amongst politicians and economists in response to the political and economic crises of the 1970s / 1980s as an alternative to the Keynesian-Fordist paradigm of high mass employment and mass consumption, (with its tendency towards overproduction and stagflation) (Peck 2004, 2002, Jessop 2002).

The fundamental principles of neoliberal ideology posit economic and developmental beneficence in open, competitive markets via the utility of the individual citizen (Brenner and Theodore 2002, Gough 2002, Jessop 2002, Peck and Tickell 2002). In order to remove barriers and obstacles to open markets and unrestricted accumulation of capital, national and local states, as well as international monetary institutions, introduced policies intended to “extend market discipline, competition and commodification throughout all sectors of society” (Brenner and Theodore 2002: 350 see also Peck 2001, Jessop 2000) so that, by the end of the twentieth century, neoliberalism has emerged as the new regulatory orthodoxy.

In attempting to construct these broad transitions, regulation theory has made a significant contribution in conceptualising this sea-change in political-economic ideology and practice. Regulation approaches seek to explain economic structures and networks by placing social reproduction as the central imperative underlying capitalist dynamics (MacLeod 2000, Peck 2000). Social reproduction, facilitated by a regime of accumulation, is ensured by a set of state and private institutions that constitute a ‘mode of regulation’ (Jessop 2000, Peck 2000, MacLeod and Goodwin 1999, Gibson-Graham 1996, Lefebvre 1976). Political and economic institutions implement economic policies and social practices and norms to regulate societal production and consumption, and stabilise the contradictions of capitalism. As the mode of regulation is produced through active and dynamic human struggle, regulatory mechanisms may differ.

Following the assumption that the ‘invisible hand of the market’ does not produce economic equilibrium, the internal contradictions of capitalism eventually produce moments of crisis in the accumulation regime and act as a catalyst for the restructuring of institutional regulatory mechanisms (Jessop 2000, Goodwin and MacLeod 1999, Peck and Tickell 1994). It is within this theoretical framework that neoliberalism is conceived as producing new and distinct modes of regulation to manage capitalism’s crises and facilitate social reproduction (Peck and Tickell 2002).

**Spatio-Temporal Fixes**

Drawing on the influential work of Bob Jessop, regulation theorists have conceived of the structuring of capitalist accumulation, and strategies of political-economic government / governance (in advanced capitalist societies) during the post war period as characterised into two modes of regulation. 1) The Keynesian Welfare National State (KWNS) which has been dismantled (to varying degrees) by national governments and restructured towards 2) a neoliberal Schumpeterian Workfare Post-national Regime (SWPR) following the crisis of Atlantic Fordism as an accumulation regime (Brenner and Theodore 2002, Peck 2002 2001, Jessop 2000, 1994, MacLeod and Goodwin 1999). David Harvey (2005, 1989a) posits the transition between these two modes of regulation as occurring c. 1973 when he identifies a ‘sea-change’ in both the organisational imperatives of the global economy and socio-cultural cognitive understandings of the world, whilst David Wilson (2004a) and Roger Keil (2002) mark the transition later, with the ushering in of the Thatcher [1979] and Reagan [1980] governments in the United Kingdom and United States.

Bob Jessop (2002, 2000) analyses modes of accumulation and regulation through the theoretical framework of *spatio-temporal fixes*. He conceives these as strategies for facilitating the reproduction of society – whilst allowing increasing rates of accumulation; meeting a ‘social fix’, whilst redressing the overtly spatial ‘spatial fix’ introduced by David Harvey (1982). The basic regulatory-institutional architecture underpinning contemporary capitalist society (its spatio-temporal fix) is constituted of the following: a wage relation, forms of inter-capitalist competition, financial and monetary regulation, strategies of state management, and uneven
spatial development from the international to local scale. Brenner and Theodore (2002) argue that in the face of the collapse of Keynesian-Fordism, these regulatory structures and mechanisms have become the site of creative destruction and contestation as capital and labour seek to alleviate political-economic crisis in the transition from the KNWS to SWPR.

Whilst such spatio-temporal fixes are broad generalisations, they are characterised by internal contradictions and mutations dependent on their contextual embeddedness in existing institutional and societal structures (Brenner and Theodore 2002, Jessop 2000) and as such, governments at a number of geographical scales must construct regulatory mechanisms to stave off crisis within their specific, geographic accumulation regime. Therefore, Peck and Tickell (1994) have argued that rather than forming distinctive historical blocs, modes of regulation are defined, particularly in the case the post-Fordist neoliberal political-economic governance, by a search for a new institutional fix that can effectively regulate and support capitalist growth.

MacLeod and Goodwin (1999), drawing on the insights of Jessop, emphasise the complexity of such spatio-temporal fixes and in doing so, call for a neo-Gramscian interpretation of the state and governance as the regulatory-institutional bodies constructing specific modes of regulation. This, they argue, provides a theoretical framework through which political-economic projects are articulated and realised through social and cultural life - as well as in economic and political spheres. Such an approach to conceptualising the naturalisation of regulatory and accumulation regimes broadens understandings of the scope of political-economic hegemonic projects into the sphere of everyday life and practice. Following Gramsci’s (1997) understanding of cultural hegemony as operating in a dialectical relationship between both dominant (capital) and dominated (labour), and through the expression of consent and coercion, the complex relationship between society and economy suggests that rather than operating with a concept if a single “logic of capitalism”, analysts can conceive of a number of “capitalist logics” bearing close family resemblances and producing different outcomes in different locales (Jessop 2000). As such, neo-Gramscian state theory emphasises the importance of place, geographically specific articulations of the economy and society, in producing the material and representational experiences of political-economic strategy; both at the level of abstract government policy and the lived experience of capitalist subjects.
From Keynesianism to Neoliberalism: Capital Mobility, State Workfare, Labour Insecurity

Although, as Jessop notes, no accumulation strategy can ever be completely coherent or fully institutionalised as a result of the need to form consensuses across conflicting social relations often (although not exclusively) constructed along class lines (2000: 337), broad regulatory strategies can be adopted to constitute a working accumulation strategy. During the post-war period, this consensus was constituted around the KWNS.

The KWNS was an accumulation regime based on a “virtuous autocentric circle of mass production and mass consumption secured through a distinctive mode of regulation” (Jessop: 338). State demand management mediated the spatial-fix at the national level and was premised upon the concept of a national economy and national citizenship, and regulated at the national level by a regime that could adequately maintain economic growth through (near) full employment (Jessop 2000, Harvey 1982). However, the KNWS and its reliance on the high mass production and consumption of Fordism contained inherent contradictions which led towards crisis in the accumulation strategy.

Jessop (2000) points to a crisis in Fordism, notably the tendency towards stagflation and the crisis of over-production which national state level economic crisis management strategies and incremental institutional restructuring sought to mediate. Whilst the high growth afforded by American post-war economic dominance (grounded in the Bretton Woods agreement) and European restructuring and rebuilding could support the KNWS institutional fix whilst providing increasing wages levels and standards of living for the majority of society (Peck 2002, see also Bluestone and Harrison 1982), the crisis of Fordism materialised when these mechanisms of crisis control broke down. Several historically specific events and economic trends (e.g. the Oil Crisis of 1973 and the internationalisation of the economy as countries [i.e. (West) Germany and Japan] regained productivity and competitiveness after the Second World War) compounded the inability of national economic crisis management to restore growth against increasing international competition.

As growth slowed in the middle of the twentieth century, and communication and transportation technology improved to facilitate the New International Division of Labour (NIDL), capital became increasingly flexible over space; although still retaining an element of local dependency through existing trust and exchange linkages and the fixed capital in the built
environment (Dicken 2004, Cox and Mair 1988, Harvey 1985). The internationalisation of the global economy combined with the growing mobility of capital meant national state level protectionist policies, a key in ensuring the mass-production and employment of Keynesianism, increasing acted as barriers to capital accumulation. Indeed, the gains made by labour during the ‘Golden Age’ of capitalism and the strong collective bargaining position vis-à-vis the wage relation, served to place workers in the manufacturing sector of the United States at a competitive disadvantage to the cheaper labour and technological innovations made in international markets (Peck 2002, Bluestone and Harrison 1982). Furthermore, increased unemployment – produced by deindustrialisation – and the functioning of the NIDL exacerbated the deskilling of labour, placing workers in increasingly insecure and contingent labour markets (Theodore 2003, Peck 1996, Beauregard 1993, Bluestone and Harrison 1982). Thus, faced with declining accumulation rates and the collapse of the Keynesian mode of regulation, governments across the advanced capitalist world shifted towards neoliberal policies and regulatory strategies including; the privatisation of social provision, dismantling welfare programmes and establishing state sponsored workfare strategies, the retrenchment of public finance, removal of trade barriers, and the restructuring labour market regulations in order to stimulate growth in an increasingly hostile global marketplace.

Neoliberal doctrine views the national scale demand-management underlying the KWNS as producing barriers to accumulation; the deficiencies and crises of Keynesianism were held out as reason enough to place social regulation and distribution in the hands of the market. Therefore the neoliberal state shifts in function from market regulator to market facilitator representing a paradoxical re-articulation of state power (Hackworth and Moriah 2006, Brenner and Theodore 2002, Jessop 2002). Liberal markets have not displaced the state, but governments’ adoption of neoliberal ideology restructures the state’s traditional forms, thus producing “new forms of statecraft…[and] in the process, new institutional and regulatory landscapes are being created…and animated by new functional logics and political imperatives” (Peck 2003: 222-3 original emphasis).

This shift in ideological imperatives, and restructuring of the organisational structure of the capitalist regulatory-institutional architecture, is expressed through several key moment of creative destruction in which the state utilises its repressive functions to ensure the continuation of capital accumulation. The wage relation is atomised as the state attacks collective labour and
trade-unions, thus promoting new forms of flexible / precarious employment (see Theodore 2003), the state removes support from national industries through policies of trade liberalisation, governments replace demand-management with supply-side and monetarist intervention, and public capital increasingly underwrites private investment. At the same time, democratic articulations of government are restructured, rolling-out ‘QUANGOS’ and ‘public-private’ governance bodies as the new organisational orthodoxy (see Brenner and Theodore 2002: 364-6, 369-72 for a comprehensive analysis of neoliberal restructuring processes). Therefore;

under such conditions, social relations were being reconstituted in the image of a brutal reading of competitive-market imperatives, while their geographic corollary – interlocal relations – were also being remade in competitive, commodified and monetised terms, with far-reaching consequences for local political conditions and regulatory settlement (whether neoliberal or not) (Peck and Tickell 2002: 385).

Following this observation, Peck and Tickell (2002) note that neoliberal re-regulation rescales political-economic authority and power to the global scale, towards international organisation and monetary institutions such as the IMF, WTO and World Bank (Peet 2003) whilst responsibility is devolved to the local / city scale without the authority or ability to truly act (also see Swyngedouw 1997 and glocalisation). Yet, in distinguishing between the deconstruction of the Keynesian regulatory regime and implementation of a neoliberal political-economic agenda, the national level government still remains important as facilitator of the logic(s) of capitalism (Keil 2003) and as such, the state interacts with society in an increasingly penal, disciplinary form (Peck 2003).

Neoliberal ideology professes the ‘end of the social’, placing the ‘individual’ as responsible for their own material conditions (Peck 2006, Gough 2002). The removal of regulatory [state] barriers to economic markets and capital accumulation frees individuals to maximise their own utility and as such, if a person is in poverty, ideologically, it is their individual fault because they must lack the appropriate work ethic (Wilson 2006, see also Gough 2002). Furthermore, labour is increasingly disenfranchised by the state’s allocation of structural power in unaccountable public-private governance organisations; a position exacerbated by the competition found within an internationalised reserve army of labour and the state’s withdrawal
of the welfare system (Theodore 2003, Peck 1996). Therefore, whilst Herod (2000, 1997, 1995) has called for a ‘labour geography’ to illustrate the active role played by workers in creating contemporary landscapes, their position under contemporary neoliberal capitalism remains weak and reactionary. As such, political-economic as well as socio-cultural landscapes remain defined by the power of capital; where power in the structural systems of SWPR lies (Dicken 2004, Lefebvre 1991).

However, the disenfranchisement and depoliticisation of labour is not even or unbiased. Historical social geographies have been mutated and transformed by neoliberalism but these re-articulated social and spatial structures themselves are contextually embedded in existing institutional and societal organisations and socio-cultural beliefs as Massey and Denton (1996) have explored in regard to African Americans and conceptions of ghettoised and marginalised spaces (see also Wilson 2004a).

**Critiques of the Regulation Theory Approach**

In highlighting institutional and organisational restructuring in capitalist accumulation strategies, regulation theory provides a useful conceptual framework and language through which we can begin to grasp the major historical trends in the restructuring of the global economy. However, the focus upon the regulatory-institutional architecture of political-economy and government has produced a number of critiques from both within the regulation school, and those pushing alternative theoretical and political agendas.

*Regulation Theory as ‘Neo-Smithian Marxism’*

In focusing upon the structuring of capitalist regulation and distribution, Cox (2006, 2004, 2002) utilises Robert Brenner’s (1977) argument to posit that regulation theory engages in ‘neo-Smithian Marxism’; this is say that the concern of the regulation approach centres upon the sphere of consumption, thus undermining the primacy of production which orthodox Marxism places at the core of analysis. For Cox, such analysis “is fixated upon the circulation of values, while their production is ignored” (2006: 9) and therefore, those engaging with the injustices of neoliberalism and globalisation merely critique a politics of redistribution, for example mediating the bargaining position of labour vis-à-vis capital (Cox 2004), a politics that does nothing to unravel the exploitation of capitalism in practice.
In contrast to the dominant discourse surrounding globalisation and its utilisation as catalyst for political-economic restructuring, Cox (2004, 2002) argues that globalisation is a symptom of larger trends in the world economy. He argues that focusing on social reproduction misses the broader trends occurring in international political economy; the globalisation of production, trade and finance, whilst an important empirical and analytical tools, are not the de facto explanation for the rise of neoliberalism, or collapse of the Keynesianism. Through critiquing regulation theory, Cox wishes to reassert the inseparability of politics and economy and with this, he constructs globalisation as a reaction to the ‘long downturn’ – experienced as the rates of accumulation declined in the international economy. As such, Cox points to cycles of accumulation as both facilitating and restricting the social and economic gains made by labour.

Cox’s argument is convincing; it is not the mode of regulation that produces exploitation and alienation, the urban poor and dependence of labourer upon capitalist (it merely regulates them) - these are fundamental necessities facilitating the reproduction of capitalism itself and as such, originating in the structuring of the mode of production. The problem at the heart of the capitalist class relation lies not in that poverty is not regulated efficiently and adequately enough (through the state regulations of welfare provision or collectivised social organisation), but in the fact that poverty itself is required to facilitate accumulation (through generating a reserve supply of labour, the wage relation, unemployment etc. (Cox 2004 also see Brenner and Theodore 2002)). Therefore a Marxist political project, to truly enact radical societal change, must place the sphere of production at the core of its analysis.

However, the mechanisms of redistribution, crisis management and regulation of capital highlight the moments of contradiction and crisis in the capitalist mode of production and in doing so, reveal the discourses and practices utilised by the state and capital to reproduce and legitimise conditions of exploitation (see Peck 2006). Through theorisations, such as the neo-Gramscian state (Jessop 2000, MacLeod and Goodwin 1999 see also Gramsci 1997, Althusser 1962), critical Marxist geography has expanded upon focusing on the mode of production to engage in the socio-cultural factors that support and naturalise capitalism as an exploitative class relation. Whilst I agree that the sphere of production needs to be placed at the centre of geographical analysis (more so than at present), Marxist geography cannot blot out the significance of social and cultural practices, and the role of government / governance regulations and strategies that naturalise capitalism in the everyday experience. For as Lefebvre (2003)
argues, the revolution, if it is to be embraced by, and ultimately restructure, society, can no longer be achieved through solely contesting the mode of (industrial) production, but the urban – encompassing the totality of modern society and everyday life.

**Constructing a Homogenous, Impenetrable Capitalism**

Whilst Cox attacks the reification of [neoliberalism as a] mode of regulation beyond being a mere symptom of larger fluctuation in capitalist accumulation regimes, Gibson-Graham (2002, 1996) critiques the conceptual framework of regulation theory for producing a homogenous capitalist unity which social actors are powerless to confront.

Gibson-Graham criticises the regulationist construction of distinct spatial and historical blocs complete with accumulation regime, mode of regulation, industrial paradigm and class compromise. Regulation approaches, in asserting the importance of regulatory institutions and policies, become economically deterministic and as such, can only reproduce the conditions of exploitation and inequality capitalism interpolates. State-centrism, locating power and the ability to act within political-economic institutions, for Gibson-Graham precludes an understanding of contemporary political-economic systems that might yield prospects for social justice or even the emergence of non-capitalist spaces between the ruptures of heterogeneous *capitalisms*. Supporting this position, Barnett (2005: 10) too views state-centrism as reducing society to either elite neoliberal enforcers or subjects constantly engaged in acts of resistance and struggle and as such simplifies the complexities of social and cultural life.

However, this position contradicts Peck and Tickell’s (1994) understanding of a *search* for a new institutional fix to regulate and reproduce both society and rates of accumulation. Whilst she extols the deficiencies of abstract essentialism in creating the totalising power of global neoliberal capitalism, Gibson-Graham fails to adequately account for the structural power of capital and the state (Glassman 2003), as well as theorising the relationship between non-capitalist spaces and the capitalist economy in which they exist. Instead she argues that communities can still rely on single industry manufacturing employment and, through establishing a cooperative communal access to coal and steel plants, workers can protect or effectively withdraw themselves from the violence inherent within the capitalist system. Whilst Gibson-Graham’s post-structuralist critique raises important questions surrounding language in creating an overwhelming discourse of global capitalism, she does so at the cost of dismissing
Marxist accounts of the material, structural power relations constituted by contemporary governance - from international institutions to restructuring of local urban governance regimes – as if they did not serve a useful purpose in understanding society and the economy (Glassman 2003).

**Accounts of Neoliberalism are Over-Generalised and Confused with Globalisation and [Moral] Conservativism**

Proponents of the regulation theory have also levied critiques at this mode of analysis. Given the global scale of such analysis, accounts of neoliberal processes in practice remain highly generalised (Peck 2004, Brenner and Theodore 2002). Such generalisations, focusing at the national and international scale, lead to an analysis that (as Cox 2004 argues) confuses and intertwines the tenants of neoliberalism with globalisation – whilst the growth of the right in (significantly) American and British politics in the late 1990s (with the election of George W. Bush and swing of the Tony Blair’s Labour party to a centre-right position) further intertwines ‘neoliberal’ market ideology with moral conservatism. Whilst these material and ideological projects share many similar epistemological and ontological groundings (belief in the freedom of the individual, roll-back of state interventions etc. see Peck 2006), the lack of clarity between them is problematic.

Many scholars producing the contemporary explosion of geographic research engaging with neoliberalism have a tendency to lump a vast spectrum of phenomena under the label ‘neoliberal’. With the problems surrounding the looseness of the term ‘neoliberalism’ and its conceptions as a ‘one-size-fits-all’ political-economic strategy, Jason Hackworth amongst others (2006, Hackworth and Moriah 2006 also Peck 2006, 2004) have called for a re-conceptualisation of neoliberalism, looking back to its intellectual roots in the writings of Hayek (e.g. 1944) and Freidman (e.g. 1962). This is certainly a beneficial project and will aid in clarifying what neoliberalism and its impact upon contemporary society and economy actually are.

Furthering this project, whilst the Regulation School has posited the nation-state as the key scale and site of governance, the political-economic shifts towards neoliberalism have had far reaching implication in both scaling up, and scaling down (Gough 2004, Brenner 2001, 1999, Swyngedouw 1997). The devolution of responsibility for social reproduction onto the city /

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6 Anything touching on urban renewal or ‘the creative class’ becomes neoliberal even if the analysis does not engage with the specificities of neoliberal doctrine – as several presentation at the 2006 AAG Annual Meeting demonstrate.
region elevates the significance of the urban as the scale where the ramifications of neoliberal spatio-temporal fixes are experienced most tangibly in people’s everyday lives and employed in particular ways resulting from the uniqueness of specific places. As such, recent theorisations of urbanism in advanced capitalist societies have had to engage with the impact of neoliberalism on contemporary cities. In doing so, these scholars have sought to move past the over-generalisation of neoliberalism and its intertwining with constructions of globalisation (Wilson 2006, 2004a, Brenner and Theodore 2002, Smith 2002, Weber 2002). Focusing on the urban as scale of analysis brings with it several advantages, making the lived experience under the imperatives of neoliberal capital more tangible and enabling focused accounts of policy implications on the ground.

Following this, it is vital to emphasise the significance of the urban as the scale in which the phenomena of governance restructuring and everyday life find their most concrete expression (Brenner and Theodore 2002, Jessop 2002, Kipfer 2002, Keil 2002). In the city, social relations between capital and labour become manifest in the built environment and class and wage relations which are defined by both antagonism and compromise; but are always struggled over, contested, produced and reproduced (Smith 2002, 1996, 1984, Harvey 1989b, 1985, 1973, also see Lefebvre 2003, 1991) However, as neoliberal doctrine and policy implementation retracts the collectivised and state sponsored social provision, and generate shifts in use and exchange value in the built environment – such as historic preservation and gentrification (Wilson 2004b, Weber 2002) – these relations become more problematic.

The neoliberal devolution of responsibility without authority onto the city scale (Peck and Tickell 2002, Swyngedouw 1997) produces an environment where city space is acutely contested along class divisions by the imperatives of primitive accumulation and necessity for social reproduction (Katz 2001). The state, as Marxist theorisations attest (Engels 1894) sets up and mediates the conditions in which power relations are defined (based on the irreconcilable antagonism between classes (Marx and Engels 1992, Lenin 1939)); through the production of urban space, the state lays down the conditions through which its hegemonic position can be applied via mechanisms of consent or coercion (Kipfer 2002, Robson 2000, Gramsci 1997, Lefebvre 1991, Simon 1982).

For Stefan Kipfer (2002: 138), the forces of the state, technocracy, and commodification that produce abstract space also create the physical and lived experiences of users of
contemporary cities and in this sense “the urban is not only the setting of struggle but also the stakes of that struggle” (see also Lefebvre 2003, 1991, 1973) - with this, regulation studies of neoliberalism have increasingly become urbanised.

2.2) The Urbanisation of Neoliberalism

‘Actually Existing Neoliberalism’

Numerous studies have indicated a significant disjuncture between the goals of neoliberal ideology and its actual impact on markets and regime structures (Macleod and Goodwin 1999, Bourdieu 1998, Peck and Tickell 1995, 1994). By introducing the concept of geographies of ‘actually existing neoliberalism’, Brenner and Theodore emphasise the spatial unevenness of neoliberal doctrine in practice. In doing so, they hope to “move critical studies of neoliberalism away from the rather generalised accounts that have up to now dominated the field” (May, Cloke and Johnsen 2005: 703).

Brenner and Theodore argue that the applications and outcomes of neoliberalism are dependent upon their contextual embedding in the existing regime and governance structures of specific localities. Whilst actual neoliberal projects are usually articulated as “complex politico-ideological hybrids derived from contextually specific adaptations, negotiations and struggles” (Brenner and Theodore 2002: 360), the projects themselves have exercised a striking influence on capitalist restructuring at a multitude of scales. Therefore neoliberal political and economic policies at once structure the regimes and regulatory frameworks of specific localities whilst simultaneously shaping the nature of the restructuring within these spaces. As a consequence, geography has a major contribution to make in understanding current urban restructuring and re-regulation.

In seeking to develop a political-economy of ‘actually existing’ neoliberalism, Brenner and Theodore claim the concept is;

…intended to not only underscore the contradictory, destructive character of neoliberal policies, but also to highlight the ways in which neoliberal ideology systematically misrepresents the real effects of such policies upon the macro-institutional structures and evolutionary trajectories of capitalism (2002: 353).
and aims to;

illuminate the complex and contested ways in which neoliberal restructuring strategies interact with pre-existing uses of space, institutional configurations, and constellations of socio-political power (2002: 361).

Such an approach problematises the construction of neoliberalism as a ‘one-size-fits-all’ model for policy implementation, the neoliberal assumption that markets and states are diametrically opposed principles of social organisation, and the importance of understanding both the ideological grounding of neoliberal doctrine and its varied developmental tendencies, socio-political effects and multiple contradictions (Brenner and Theodore 2002). Engagements with moments of ‘actually existing’ neoliberalism utilise the urban, city scale as the lens through which the actual implications of neoliberal ideology in practice may be studied at their most material and tangible. As such, this step moves away from the highly-generalised, global scale interpretations of neoliberalism as intertwined with conceptualisations of globalisation. Brenner and Theodore (2002) represent the spatialities and institutional-structural organisational imperatives of neoliberalism as following a rough set of tendencies that are expressed in different localities based on their path dependent application, embedding in pre-existing socio-political and economic context, and place specific restructuring in the mode of regulation in response to crisis in the accumulation regime.

In a similar vein, Wilson (2004a) identifies four key concepts regarding the implementation and impact of neoliberal governance structures in advanced capitalist countries. Firstly, they are historically and geographically specific. Secondly, they are culturally complex. Thirdly, the production and use of space facilitates the operation of neoliberal urban governance and finally, such projects are constantly evolving in relation to their spatio-temporal context. Drawing on an analysis of Chicago’s urban governance regime, Wilson expands upon the concept of the neo-Gramscian state by engaging with both the political-economic imperatives and socio-cultural [ideological] factors. Thus Wilson supports the understanding of neoliberal urbanism as, rather than being a set of pre-ascribed policy recommendations violently applied ‘top-down’, contingent and tangible; neoliberalisms are divergent, complex and culturally embedded class compromises that are constantly reconfigured with existing social hierarchies.
There is No Such Thing as Neoliberalism

However, such efforts to reveal the variations and geographic specificities of urban neoliberalism raise other questions. Whilst the agglomeration of research by scholars including Neil Smith, Roger Keil, Jamie Gough, Bob Jessop, Helga Leitner and Eric Sheppard, Gordon MacLeod and Rachel Weber (amongst others) to Brenner and Theodore’s volume ‘From the ‘New Localism’ to Spaces of Neoliberalism’ (Antipode Special Edition 2002) point to the complex topography of contemporary urban processes and forms, Clive Barnett (2005) questions the value in pursuing such a project.

Particularly, Barnett (2005: 8-9 critiquing for example, Keil 2002) is concerned with the seeming preoccupation with unifying a Gramscian neo-Marxism with Foucauldian governmentality in a ‘marriage of convenience’ as this misses the point. Whilst they provide geographers with the ‘reassurance’ that they are being appropriately sensitive to geographic difference, as both Gramscian ‘neoliberalism-as-hegemony’ and Foucauldian ‘neoliberal-governmentality’ view political-economic processes as being applied ‘top-down’, they are unable to conceive of how neoliberal initiatives take in everyday situations. Following this, such an alienating discourse needs to be bypassed; “perhaps the best thing to do is to stop thinking of ‘neoliberalism’ as a coherent ‘hegemonic’ project altogether” (Barnett 2005: 9). By rejecting understanding the varying constellations of a ‘universal’ and hegemonic neoliberal project as connecting back to core political-economic imperatives, Barnett calls for a rediscovery of long-term socio-cultural change and what might be considered ‘bottom-up’ governmentality.

Whilst Barnett raises a key concern surrounding the literature on contemporary neoliberalism and governance – that being the undermining of ‘bottom-up’ socio-political actions and the neglect of the everyday urban experience – dismissing neoliberalism as a discourse and material reality does not seem necessarily productive. Taking the steps Barnett suggests in proposing “there is no such thing as neoliberalism!” (2005: 9) risks missing the dialectical and contested relationships between socio-cultural change and political-economic policies and processes that are still definitely imposed top down through, to use Althusser’s (1962) framework, the repressive (police, government) and ideological (education, discourse) apparatus of the state (Peck 2003, Peck and Tickell 1994). Hackworth and Moriah (2006) point to the hegemonic nature of neoliberal projects as, (when) being implemented in liberal democracies, they rely upon the support of the masses; a support that requires both the voluntary subjugation of
citizen subjects (either by consent or coercion) and the lived practices of Foucauldian ‘governmentality’.

Comparably to Barnett, Wendy Larner (2005) claims that neoliberalism is not a cohesive whole, but a series of political projects that are rationalised, after the fact, as neoliberalism. In seeking to identify the moments in which projects become rationalised as neoliberal, Larner (2005, Larner and Craig 2005) identifies the manner in which projects become politicised as a means to legitimise constructions of neoliberalism, downplaying the common linkages between discrete and contradictory projects. She argues that such linkages are constructed after the event, rationalising projects that were started independently and occasionally in conflict with each other, into the concept of a definitive universal political-economic project. For Larner, this represents ‘after-neoliberalism’, and through this argument, she identifies both the dangers of reifying a universal (in Peck’s 2004 terminology) ‘neoliberalism-in-general’ and the importance of sensitising research in space and time. In articulating this argument, Larner employs feminist and post-structural critiques to question the shifting meanings and discourses utilised in neoliberal rhetoric, highlighting the murkiness of language and the ways in which it is employed in the construction of the concept of neoliberalism.

However, her conceptualisation of ‘after neoliberalism’ in New Zealand rejects the underlying logic behind these [neoliberal] projects, one that can be seen as definitively coalescing around core political-economic assumptions and principles. As such, I suggest Larner gets the ‘cart’ of political and social restructuring before the ‘horse’ of neoliberalisation, or indeed fails to conceive the dialectical relationship between the two. In failing to give credence to the logics behind neoliberalism; understanding it in terms of its actually existing and contextual embeddedness (Brenner and Theodore 2002), Larner’s argument misconstrues the mutations and murkiness that are key to neoliberal hegemony and continued survival in the face of both geographic unevenness and constant material crisis.

Moving Urban-Geographic Studies of Neoliberalism Forward

Positing an alternative argument to Larner, Jamie Peck (2004, 2003, 2001) emphasises the significance of historical and spatial neoliberalism and in doing so, identifies common traits within political projects. With this, neoliberalism is conceived as a contradictory and tension filled ideology that must be understood as both market libertarianism and neoconservative moral
authoritarianism, *both* reactionary response to fiscal and debt crisis *and* handmaiden of financialisation and corporate globalisation (Peck 2004: 403 see Hackworth 2006). In calling for this conceptualisation of neoliberalism, Peck allows a more complete and flexible account than Larner provides whilst providing a conceptual framework that Barnett lacks.

Peck’s conceptualisation of neoliberalism as contradictory and tension-ridden, serves to assist in demystifying some of the ideology’s stereotypes (see also Antipode Special Edition 2002). Peck attacks the binary relationship utilised between state and market through noting the growth of one does not necessitate the demise of the other (2004: 394). However, he also notes that conceptions of the hegemonic reach of neoliberalism are not necessarily overdrawn (2004: 395). In order to give weight to studies of neoliberalism, there is a necessity for more empirically grounded research into the specificities of spatial and temporal neoliberalisms. Arguing against Larner’s ‘*after neoliberalism*’, Peck also calls for more research into the connections between the conjoint effects of neoliberalisation (2004: 399).

Whilst I agree that in moving to produce more contingent understandings of neoliberalism in practice, the powerful and influential discourse of a hegemonic, near demonic wave of regressive political-economic ideology sweeping the globe losses some of its power and imagery, the complex realities being revealed serve to highlight the importance of geography in shaping contemporary society. The picture being painted might be clouded, muddled and apparently disjointed but it is important to note that whilst the discourse and strategies of neoliberalism are mobilised in different settings; “the local institutional context clearly (and *really*) matters in the style, substance, origins and outcomes of reformist politics” (Peck 2004: 395, Brenner and Theodore 2002).

Therefore, whilst the inequalities and exploitation of capitalism, exacerbated under neoliberal imperatives, are still having negative implications on society, the regulation approach – and understanding its Marxist political project and the flaws of meta-theory itself – provides a more than adequate theoretical framework and discourse to move a radical project in urban geography forward. The fundamental logics of capitalism are expressed and applied differently in varying spatio-temporal contexts but their underlying exploitative imperatives remain (Jessop 2000, see Marx 1976).
The Process of Urban Neoliberalism: ‘Roll Back’ and ‘Roll Out’

Following the interpretation and assumptions of regulation theory outlined above, the restructuring of urban governance based on neoliberal ideology dismantles Keynesian welfare state strategies; a process that increasingly disenfranchises the poor. This, Peck and Tickell (2002, Brenner and Theodore 2002 see also May, Cloke and Johnsten 2005) have theorised as occurring in a chronology of firstly, ‘destructive’ moments of neoliberal ‘roll-back’ and ‘creative’ moments of neoliberal ‘roll-out’. ‘Roll-back’ neoliberalism is characterised by the removal of protectionist state policies, social-collectivist institutions and attacks on organised labour whilst ‘roll-out’ neoliberalism is identified through the purposeful construction of state forms, modes of governance and regulatory relations that position the state in the new role of market facilitator (Peck and Tickell 2002: 384 see also Jessop 2002, 2000, Peck 2003, 2002).

Within this framework, it is important to note that for neoliberal agendas to become truly embedded, firstly, the alternative spatio-temporal fix offered by Keynesianism, needs to be discredited and destroyed both materially and ideologically (Margaret Thatcher’s “There Is No Alternative”) before secondly, neoliberal ideology and policy can become accepted and normalised in contemporary society (Hodgson 2005, Hay 2004). ‘Roll out’ neoliberalism however is largely a reactionary process, enacted in response to the manifest crisis in the accumulation regime and as such, reflects “both the frailty of the neoliberal project and its deepening (Peck and Tickell 2002: 390 original emphasis).

A useful distinction which complements this theorisation arises in the identification of both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ neoliberalisms (Peck 2004, Peck and Tickell 2002). Hard neoliberalism refers to the coercive implementation of neoliberal policies often associated with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund’s engagements in the developing world (Kohl 2004, Peet 2003, Lawrie and Marvin 1999) but also the introduction repressive laws governing the use of urban space in advanced capitalist societies (Mitchell 2005, 1997, 1995, Peck 2004, 2003). Contrary to this, soft neoliberalism can be seen as a more open approach to policy implementation attempting to reach consensus across varying class interests as epitomised by the ‘Third Way’ (May, Cloke and Johnsten 2005, Peck and Tickell 2002). Peck and Tickell move to associate hard instances of neoliberalism within moments of ‘roll back’ neoliberalism whereby the alternative (Keynesian) accumulation regime is discredited and dismantled; this then facilitates the practice of ‘soft’
neoliberalism during the ‘roll out’ period of technocratic embedding and normalisation of neoliberal institutions through explicit political management and intervention (2002: 384, 396).

However, Peck and Tickell, building on their earlier proposition that the introduction of neoliberal policies in practice serves as more of a search for a new institutional fix, rather than an end-state in itself (1994) purport that the mechanisms of neoliberalism are dynamic, mutating over time and space (2002). The ‘roll back’ of Keynesian welfare states and ‘roll out’ of restructured neoliberal urban regimes produce locally specific neoliberals, both spatially and temporally (Larner 2005, Larner and Craig 2005, Peck 2004) as a result of the restructuring of governance structures over all social scales (Gough 2004). Peck and Tickell (2002) therefore claim that neoliberalism is not an end-state, but a process of neoliberalisation reflecting continuing adaptation and development in the face of constant crisis. Such a construction of ‘neoliberalising space’ provides a using theoretical development in understanding the nature of Jessop’s spatio-temporal fix as the re-articulation of the mode of regulation in the face of crises in and of accumulation regimes will generate locally specific expressions of political-economic imperatives both temporally and spatially.

**Neoliberal Socialisation: Class Compromise / Class Discipline**

Alongside the restructuring of urban regulatory institutions to avert political-economic crisis and ensure social reproduction, the shift in state function from market regulator to market facilitator and ‘scaling down’ of state power has had profound impacts on urban and regional governance (MacLeod and Goodwin 1999, Jessop, Peck and Tickell 1996). In order to attract and retain capital and jobs in a locality, key actors within urban governance regimes have shifted their policy focus and development aims from managerialism to entrepreneurialism (Harvey 1989b also see Hall and Hubbard 1998).

Jamie Gough (2002) identifies new modes of socialisation arising as both capital and labour are confronted with economic and social problems in employment, housing and transport resulting from neoliberal ‘roll out’ and ‘roll back’. These modes of socialisation, facilitated through the cooperation and collaboration of urban actors from local state, capital and labour, are necessitated by the inability of the core mechanisms of capitalism to provide the means for social reproduction. Gough (2002: 406) views modes of socialisation under the imperatives of neoliberalism as mechanisms to bypass the palpable failures of inefficient production in the
accumulation regime; the idea of ‘community’ is seen as a “flanking, compensatory mechanism for the inadequacies of the market mechanism” (Jessop 2002: 455, Cox and Mair 1988).

Key to Gough’s argument, drawing from Marx (1976), is the contradictory nature of class cooperation which increased inter-locality competition fosters. Paradoxically, under the imperatives of neoliberalisation, the arising modes of socialisation, including business organisations, industrial clusters and community mobilisation, coerces capital into partnership against its natural inclination for competition and monopoly as well as generating cross-class collaboration in seeking to ensure the survival of particular localities in the wider space economy. However, such cooperation is often controlled top-down by capital and the state (as market facilitator) and as such, serves to reinforce the neoliberalisation of society and space (Gough 2002, see also Elwood 2004, 2002, Eisenschitz and Gough 1996, Gough and Eisenschitz 1996, Cox and Mair 1991, 1988). As such, Brenner and Theodore note the intensification of inequality, destructive inter-locality competition and persistent economic stagnation in precisely those contexts where neoliberal doctrines are most extensively employed (2002: 352).

The influential role of capital in bringing about such public-private coalitions across conflicting class lines has serve to prevent the politicisation of labour and subsequent class discipline furthers these trends towards depoliticisation, disenfranchisement and alienation (Gough 2004, 2002, Fraser 2004, Lipietz 1994). In such capital-labour cooperation, the spatial and temporal interests of either side rarely coincide (Weber 2002: 519 see also Green and Huey 2005) – particularly to the disadvantage of labour; as Marx insightfully notes “where equal rights exist, force decides” (1976: 243).

This is certainly a pressing concern for contemporary urban democracy and social (in)justice (Schiller 2004, Dikeç 2002, McCann 2002, Purcell 2002). The embedding of the United States economy into the global system has been a key component of exacerbated income inequality within the United States (O’Loughlin 1997). Kodras (1997) argues that with this, it is the most marginalised communities who are most vulnerable to the effects of economic restructuring. Combined with this observation, the ability of different groups to secure a position within society is dependent upon their access and participation in both formal politics (the ability to have representation within state government from local councils to national and global institutions) as well as extra-governmental activism (including activities ranging from social movements to political violence) (Kodras 1997). However, access to these power structures is
contingent upon human capital (i.e. education, awareness of such options) as well as the ability to mobilise a group behind a common cause (Squires and Kubrin 2005). Participation in the political process under the imperatives of neoliberalising space is subsumed under the logic of inter-locality competition and insecurity.

In contrast to the negative understanding of contemporary urban socialisation articulated by Gough (2002, also see May, Cloke and Johnsen 2005), Wendy Larner’s analysis of social development in New Zealand purports that community-state partnerships arise as a progressive solution for local issues to be tackled locally, thus supporting the government’s own rhetoric. Yet whilst Larner (2005) sees community-state governance as a necessary mutation reacting against the market-centric lens of earlier ‘after neoliberalisms’ (providing avenues whereby individuals can catch up with the skills that the knowledge economy demands), Gough (2002) points to the role of the state in this mode of socialisation arguing that it is through community projects that labour becomes both depoliticised and subservient to the neoliberal accumulation regime rather than being empowered by it.

Larner does note that there is scepticism towards partnerships in academic literature (2005: 13-14), but she fails to adequately engage with these critiques. Although the task she sets herself is to highlight the disjunctive and contradictory development of locally specific neoliberalisations, greater importance needs to be placed on the role and nature of the ‘partnering state’ (Larner 2005: 14). The account Larner provides indicates that whilst the state is concerned with addressing the specifics of locally based problems, it does so in a manner that serves to reproduce the neoliberal knowledge economy the New Zealand government wishes to promote. As such, Gough’s conceptualisation of community partnerships appears more appropriate as a socialising mechanism under which the state can depoliticise those who may potentially challenge neoliberalisation.

2.3) Neoliberal Urbanism and the Everyday Urban Experience

Despite the rich theoretical and conceptual additions to the study of contemporary urbanism provided by recent regulation accounts, much of the literature on ‘actually existing’ neoliberalism (with a few exceptions, May, Cloke and Johnsen 2005, Larner and Craig 2005, Fraser 2004, Hubbard 2004, Wilson 2004a, Keil 2002, MacLeod 2002) lacks concrete empirical investigations. Certainly there is a pronounced lack of empirical studies of urban neoliberalism in
relation to the lived everyday urban experience (see Newman and Ashton 2004 for a quantitative approach to neoliberal neighbourhood development). This neglect in connecting the institutional and regulatory frameworks of neoliberal restructuring and the everyday urban experience reveals a gap in the literature in urban neoliberalism; however, Keil (2002) offers a highly insightful account of how political-economic institutions and the sphere of everyday life interact with each other. Through employing a theoretical framework that includes the importance of the political economy, technologies of power and everyday life, Keil recognises the multiple dimensions through which neoliberalism impacts on contemporary urbanism. In doing so he provides an empirical example of how ideas of neo-Marxist regulation theory, Foucauldian critiques and Lefebvrian conception of the urban can be combined (despite some inherent theoretical tensions, see Barnett 2005) and employed in empirical research on neoliberalism.

Keil emphasises the contradictory nature of the urban although he does so giving greater detail and importance to the spatial nature of these factors. This is illustrated through his engagement with Harvey’s work on the entrepreneurial city and the spaces this logic imprints on the urban landscape but crystallised in the claim “urban neoliberalisation refers to the contradictory re-regulation of everyday life in the city” (Keil 2002: 583 original emphasis). Developing from Lefebvre, Keil emphasises the importance of the urban as the sphere in which the pressures of the macro-scale produce the experience of the everyday through exploitation, domination, protection and repression (2002: 585). In doing this, the totality of the everyday experience of neoliberalism is understood as both social reproduction but also the processes through which this occurs (Keil 2002: 583).

The significance Keil places on the everyday experience of neoliberalism introduces several important ideas. Firstly, he engages with the concept of consumption in the individualisation of citizens through the commodification and marketisation of the state, civil society and market. Furthermore, potentially problematic concepts (for the neoliberal project) are seen as “suspended in a web of control, homogenisation and isolation” (Keil 2002: 584). Secondly, Keil articulates the relationship between economic and social critiques of the neoliberal urbanism, thus, to fully comprehend the object of study, strategies to oppose exploitation and inequality and issues of collective and individual autonomy need to be combined to decipher the political imperative of formal and informal structures. Understanding the cultural and economic duality of actions in everyday life and regulatory restructuring, as Keil argues,
provides a revealing angle to tackle issues of hegemony and the reproduction of the conditions of neoliberal urbanism.

**Research Purpose**

In reviewing the development and critiques of regulation approaches to the study of political-economy; particularly the urbanisation of neoliberalism, we can see a theoretically rich, yet contested, conceptual framework through which contemporary urban processes may begin to be understood. However, as several of the critiques outlined above (both internal and external) illustrate, there are a number of gaps in the literature that need to be addressed. In conducting this research project then, I seek to make a contribution to the development of neoliberal urban studies in terms of theory, empirical evidence and methodological approach.

**Hold theory to account through an empirical case study**

Firstly, following the critiques of Barnett (2005) and Larner (2005), I aim to assess the validity of the concept of ‘actually existing neoliberalism’ through a rigorously conducted case study. Whilst the nature of case study research precludes the possibility of formulating generalisations that may be applied in other contexts (see Chapter 3), I aim to examine the impact of neoliberal policies and processes on the everyday lives of urban inhabitants. In doing so, I hope to shed light onto the practical applicability of regulation approaches to contemporary urbanism; can they be adequately utilised to understand the urban process or does the disparate, spatio-temporal contextualisation of neoliberal projects render the concept of a contingent and tangible urban neoliberalism too messy and unwieldy?

**Lack of qualitative empirical research**

Whilst the input of May, Cloke and Johnsen (2005), Hubbard (2004) and Keil (2002) amidst the tentative emergence of grounded case studies examining neoliberal processes are beginning to produce a deeper, less generalised understanding of contemporary political-economic society and space, Wendy Larner (2005, Larner and Craig 2005) and Jamie Peck (2004) amongst others, have called for more empirical research to be undertaken to understand the spatialities and temporalities of neoliberal urbanism in particular locales. Following this, whilst Keil (2002 also Kipfer and Keil 2002) provides an interesting account of neoliberalisation in Toronto, for me his analysis does not go far enough in revealing the everyday qualitative lived
experiences of those subjected to the restructuring and re-regulation of Toronto’s political-economic landscape. Responding to this, I will address these issues through a qualitative case study of the contemporary urban processes in Cincinnati.

**Place, not Policy**

In reviewing the burgeoning literature seeking to open the complexities of urban neoliberalism, I argue that whilst Keil’s approach lacks the grounded depth and qualitative approach I wish to employ, in keeping with the goals of regulation approaches to the city May, Cloke and Johnsen (2005) and Hubbard (2004) focus on specific policies whilst Wilson (2004a) and Larner and Craig (2005), concentrate their analysis on governance regimes. Although noting these empirical foci is not to critique the research studies, I wish to follow an alternative approach by conducting a comprehensive analysis of neoliberalisation in a specific place. This encompasses examining more than one specific policy, practice of regulation and scale of urban governance through conducting a place specific, qualitative case study. As such this research will provide a detailed historical-materialist account of the impact of neoliberalisation and its influence upon localised society and space.

**State-centricity to everyday life**

A place based case study permits the transition between the state-centric focus of regulation theory and the everyday lived experience of urban dwellers. This shall meet Barnett’s (2005) critique regarding the ‘top down’ analysis of much recent research on neoliberalism and governance whilst avoiding the dismissal of the theoretical framework developed by Brenner and Theodore et al (Antipode Special Edition 2002). Political economic restructuring and the articulation of a new mode of regulation, with new imperatives has a fundamental and deeply significant impact on socio-cultural experiences of the city as well as impacting upon the materiality of everyday life and class struggle.

**Broaden understanding of neoliberal socialisation**

Whilst the state, and its shifting role from market regulator to market facilitator remains of fundamental significance in understanding contemporary urban society and space, the percolation of neoliberal ideology into all aspects of everyday life engenders new class relations and modes of socialisation outwith the formal institutional governance structures. As such, I wish
to broaden current conceptualisations urban class compromise and discipline beyond the focus of public-private partnership and business coalitions (Larner and Craig 2005, Wilson 2004, Gough 2002, Cox and Mair 1988) to account for the coercion of local non-profit agencies, democratic institutions and neighbourhood residents into tacit support for a hegemonic neoliberal project. In doing so, I hope to reveal how neoliberal imperatives impact and operate at the local, urban scale through the practices of everyday life and community democracy.

**Open potential understanding for resistance**

Finally, I seek to move beyond the remit of the existing literature on urban neoliberalism by exploring, both theoretically and empirically, the possibilities for resisting the hostile neoliberalisation of physical and social space. Whilst many authors have identified the urban and setting and stake of class conflict under neoliberalism (Brenner and Theodore 2002, Jessop 2002, Gough 2002, Keil 2002, Kipfer 2002, Lefebvre 1991), there has been little articulated about the forms such resistance might take and the tactics and strategies that might produce a more socially just society (see Imrie 2004). A substantial component of the literature focusing on resisting neoliberalism has been focused either in the developing world (Löwy and Stanley 2002, Sanabria 2000) or engaged with globalised resistance network in the ‘Age of Seattle’ (Wainwright 2006, Routledge 2003, Worth 2002, Watson 2001, Bourdieu 1998). As such, I believe there is significant potential in bridging the gap between such understandings of resistance and the scale of urban everyday life.
This thesis aims to fill an empirical void in contemporary understandings of urban neoliberalism in advanced capitalist societies. Although recent scholarship has shed a great deal of light on the impact of neoliberalisation both theoretically (Brenner and Theodore 2002, Peck and Tickell 2002) and in the material analysis of particular public policies (Larner and Craig 2005, Keil 2002), I seek to provide a localised and qualitative study in order to reveal how neoliberal policies in practice impact the everyday urban experience of inhabitants of Over-the-Rhine, Cincinnati. To answer my research question, I conducted a neighbourhood case study.

### 3.1) Case Study Approach

The case study approach is best suited to answering questions that ask ‘how’ and ‘why’ about a contemporary set of processes over which the researcher has little or no control (Yin 1994: 9). Therefore, as a comprehensive research strategy, the case study copes with technically distinctive situations with many points of interest and as such, relies upon multiple methods, triangulating to support data sources (Yin 1994: 13).
Given the research goals of this project, a case study approach proves valuable in analysing the impact of neoliberal policies in practice in a location that is both unique and extreme (Yin 1994: 39). Over-the-Rhine meets these criteria with its long history of ethnic and migrant succession, class and racial conflict – developing on several occasions into full scale rioting and civil unrest – and a complex, dynamic socio-political contestation over community democracy and neighbourhood development; all of which has become crystallised under the imperatives of neoliberal political economic strategies.

Yin further claims case study inquiry “benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis” (1994: 13); as examined in Chapter 2, neoliberal urbanism in advanced capitalist has generated substantial interest in urban, political and economic geography and with this, there is a strong theoretical grounding underlying its analysis.

Although [qualitative] case study research has been criticised for producing ahistorical geographies which lack the ability to generate generalisations (Crang 2002, Herbert 2000, Burawoy 1991), through conducting an intensive, empirical case study, I seek to challenge theoretical assumptions through illuminating the specifics of a materially grounded example. Methodologically, case study research design facilitates the adoption of both quantitative and qualitative research tools; combining primary data from participant observation and interviewing with secondary archival research and census data, and therefore allows the triangulation of data sources and findings; ensuring the standard of vigour in the research process (Clifford and Valentine 2003, Yin 1994). The process of triangulation and adoption of a qualitative methodological approach avoids both the dangers of oversimplification by theoretical generations and opens up the study’s potential empirical richness (Duncan and Duncan 2001).

3.2) Primary Data Sources

Data collection began during the spring of 2005 with exploratory archival research in order to familiarise myself with both the history of Over-the-Rhine and the contemporary issues and debates shaping neighbourhood development. The majority of the primary data was collected during a six week period between 20th May and 1st July 2005. Given the limits placed on the research project in terms of time and funding, data collection in the study site was scheduled intensively to ensure I achieved theoretical saturation in the time allotted. I embarked upon
several day trips both before and after the main period of data collection in order to keep abreast of current news and development. Such follow-up research provided data relating April 2006’s ‘Downtown Hop Around’ (discussed in chapter 5) and the placement of Over-the-Rhine on the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s list of 11 Most Endangered Historic Places in May 2006 (discussed in chapter 6).

In the field and during data collection, I employed a number of methods including in-depth interviewing, participant observation and archival research in order to triangulate my research findings. In the following, I discuss the practical and theoretical issues which arose through conducting research in the field.

Interviewing

Given my research objectives, interviews with neighbourhood experts and residents constitute a major component of the data collection. All methods utilised in social science research are subjective to some degree; whether in the construction of questions for surveys or the interpretation of statistical data. However, the use of interviewing as a method introduces a complex set of theoretical, logistical and ethical problems (Duncan and Duncan 2001). The interview format interpolates power relations through the dynamics of interviewer – interviewee interaction and with this, everything from the setting of the interview to the performance and identities of those involved have profound implication upon the information the researcher is able to obtain (Fontana and Frey 2003, Longhurst 2003, Winchester 1996). The relationship and rapport between researcher and participant lie at the heart of successful interviewing. However ethical considerations and problems of trust and access produce complex practical difficulties in conducting a simple conversation (Raju 2002, Mullings 1999).

During my time in Over-the-Rhine, I conducted seventeen in-depth, semi-structured interviews with nineteen neighbourhood experts and local residents. In doing so, I adopted different tactics, strategies and positionalities in setting up and guiding conversations in order to elicit as much productive information as possible. Below I discuss the actual interview process and techniques employed in the field.
Sampling

Who Are the Neighbourhood Experts?

Woods (1998) has argued that whilst there has been a renewed interest in empirical research into the position and practices of elites, there has been little interest in theorising who ‘elites’ actually are (Ward and Jones 1999). In noting this concern, I understand elites in terms of those neighbourhood actors who operate as ‘gatekeepers’ to particular situated knowledge as a result as their political and economic position (Oinas 1999, Ward and Jones 1999) but also as a result of their position in terms of controlling access to marginalised and disenfranchised groups. This construction of neighbourhood elites is important in relation to this research project as although I am seeking to investigate the impacts of the excursion of political and economic power in the guise of neoliberal policy application, knowledge of the neighbourhood is controlled and mediated by individuals and organisation in a position of social and cultural authority.

Ten of the interviews conducted for this project were with representatives from groups and organisations whom I deemed to have expert knowledge of Over-the-Rhine (see Table 3.1). These included members from the neighbourhood-scale governance regime, non-profit neighbourhood agencies and service providers, local estate agents and housing developers. These groups were selected for their expert knowledge of Over-the-Rhine in terms of understanding its history, controlling its future (through developing and selling residential and commercial space) and being in a position to influence the discursive and material vision and development of neighbourhood society and space.

My primary data collection thus focused on key actors, agencies and residents in Over-the-Rhine. Following this logic, the decision was made not to directly interview representatives from Cincinnati City Council, Cincinnati City Center Development Corporation [3CDC] or other external agencies involved in the production of abstract spaces of representation (Lefebvre 1991). This is because I wish to emphasise the lived urban experience of the inhabitants of neighbourhood space. Secondary data collection and archival research into government policies and urban planning strategies suggested that this material adequately represented the actions and intentions of Cincinnati City Council and 3CDC. Another concern related to the decision not to focus on these groups involves access to city elites. Whilst 3CDC appears, both in the physical
Table 3.1: Interview Sample Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description / Position in OTR</th>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Type of Interview</th>
<th>Mins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OTR Experts</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop Inn Center; homeless shelter providing essential services to the homeless and assisting people moving from homelessness to housing.</td>
<td>DIC</td>
<td>Semi-Structured</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative from the <em>Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement</em>; neighbourhood activist and community organiser.</td>
<td>OTR PM</td>
<td>Semi-Structured</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Low-Income Advocacy        |         |                   |      |
| Over-the-Rhine Contact Centre; a non-profit community organising agency constituted by, and advocating on behalf of low and moderate income people. | OTR CC  | Semi-Structured   | 50   |
| *Race Street Tenants Organisation Cooperative*; a non-profit housing organisation advocating affordable housing in a community environment. | ReSTOC  | Semi-Structured   | 70   |

| Market-Rate Advocacy       |         |                   |      |
| Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce; advocates for market-rate economic development, business and private investment (2 Interviewees). | OTR C of C | Semi-Structured | 80   |
| Over-the-Rhine Foundation; a non-profit group promoting economic development and cultural diversity. | OTR F   | Semi-Structured   | 60   |

| Housing Market             |         |                   |      |
| White male, c.35, *Property development and manager* operating affordable and market-rate housing units. | Property Developer | Semi-Structured | 100  |
| White male, c.28, *Cincinnati-based real estate agent*. | Realtor 1 | Semi-Structured | 50   |

| Miami University Center for Community Engagement; promotes cross-cultural educational opportunities for university faculty and students (2 Interviewees). | MU CCE | Semi-Structured | 45   |

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7 I have omitted the age and race of expert interviewees from neighbourhood organisations, to ensure participant confidentiality (see Miami University Human Subjects Internal Review Board 2005).
Table 3.1 continued: Interview Sample Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description / Position in OTR</th>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Type of Interview</th>
<th>Mins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 White male, c.65, Streetvibes Seller, Resident of Drop Inn Shelter Housing</td>
<td>Resident 1</td>
<td>Informal Conversation</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 White male, c.50 University Professor, Pendleton district</td>
<td>Resident 2</td>
<td>Semi-Structured</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 White female, c.40 University Professor, Central Parkway condo</td>
<td>Resident 3</td>
<td>Semi-Structured</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 White female, c.35 low-income single parent, Race Street</td>
<td>Resident 4</td>
<td>Semi-Structured</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 White female, c.27, graduate student, Main Street apartment</td>
<td>Resident 5</td>
<td>Semi-Structured</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6, 7, 8 3 Black female low-income pensioners, residents and homeowners in Vine Street and Race Street districts.</td>
<td>Residents 6, 7, 8</td>
<td>Group Conversation</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 White male, c.27, graduate student, Main Street apartment</td>
<td>Resident 9</td>
<td>Semi-Structured</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

neighbourhood and online, an illusive organisation (3CDC’s website was down for the most of the summer), Cincinnati City Council was in the process of warming up for Mayoral election to be held in the autumn of 2005. With this, I believed it would be somewhat problematic to gain access to governance elites during this busy and important political time.

Initial contacts with community organisers and low-income advocacy groups were made through established social networks between Miami University and the urban governance infrastructure and neighbourhood institutions of Over-the-Rhine. Miami University has a physical presence in the neighbourhood in the form of the Miami University Center for Community Engagement and this institution often works in collaboration with Over-the-Rhine’s social and political entities. Therefore, these neighbourhood experts have experience working with Miami University students and by and large, were willing to give up their time to participate in the research project. Neighbourhood groups not traditionally aligned with the Community
Engagement Center were selected from my background research and contacted by email or phone to request their time to participate in a formal interview.

Obtaining a sample population for estate agents and housing developers was greatly facilitated by the Over-the-Rhine Summer Tour of Homes, an annual event showcasing the benefits of Downtown living in Cincinnati which occurred during my time in the field. I took the tour, gaining both an insight into the gentrification and transformation of Over-the-Rhine’s physical space through informal conversations with developers and other ‘tourists’, whilst also using the event as an opportunity to collect contact details for the neighbourhood’s housing experts. Having selected several key representatives, individuals and companies were contacted over email and phone to request their participation and time. Of those I contacted, approximately fifty percent expressed an interest in my research and agreed to meet with me.

**Selecting Resident Interview Participants**

A diverse resident and ‘user’ body (De Certeau 1984) contests Over-the-Rhine space as the neighbourhood has increasingly become the site of the hostile gentrification of physical and social space. Whilst, as this thesis will go on to explore, the idea of whose neighbourhood Over-the-Rhine actually is, is hotly debated, both existing residents in the low-income community, the African-American population, gentrifiers and ‘creative classes’ lay claim to the place. As such, when selecting participants for resident interviewees, I wished to identify a targeted sample population that would reflect the demographic, racial and class composition of Over-the-Rhine. A total of nine neighbourhood residents were interviewed for this project (see Table 3.1). Whilst this figure may initially appear relatively small, I feel that through the responses the interviews elicited, I achieved theoretical saturation whilst also obtaining a rich collection of narratives and experiences.

As previously mentioned, Miami University and the geography department itself are well connected to the socio-political infrastructure of the study site and as such, personal contacts of professors and friends opened up access to what would be a more difficult population to access. Combined with the leads offered through my own personal contacts, neighbourhood experts provided access to groups which my position as an academic and a cultural outsider would have put off; both through facilitating direct conversations and inviting me to community meetings. Unlike the neighbourhood expert population, neighbourhood residents have no real benefits from
participating in this research (e.g. spreading the about an organisation’s view on neighbourhood development) and in reality have a lot to lose, especially those in marginalised groups (Longhurst 2003, Bernard 2000, Valentine 1997). In order to avoid the sampling process of snowballing and its ethical problems (Clifford and Valentine 2003, Longhurst 2003, Bernard 2000, Kuzel 1992), all potential interviewees were approached by the researcher with the utmost care taken not to appear as coercing or intimidating participation in the research project.

**Researcher, Participant, Positionality: The Interview Process**

Mullings (1999) notes that research participants have many roles defined by their position in multiple social structures; a community leader may also be a mother and a day labourer, and these multiple identities express different concerns and lived experiences that qualitative, semi-structured interviewing may draw from. However, whilst being sensitive to such positional understandings as developed in literature on qualitative research (Raju 2002, Elwood and Martin 2000, Herod 1993), I sought to remain focused on questioning the interviewee in the context that they had agreed to participate in the research project. As the interviews with neighbourhood experts and residents sort to elicit different information from participants, I adopted different strategies during the interview itself. In the following I discuss some of the interviewing problems arising from the relative positions of researcher and researched and how I treated these during my time conducted fieldwork.

**Interviewing Elites**

The interviewing of elites has its own specific pitfalls, ethics and issues regarding positionality of the researcher. As the researcher, seeking to gain deeper insight into the patterns and processes of neoliberal urbanisation, I found myself reliant on the cooperation of individuals in a leadership position in both neighbourhood organising and community service provision but also in charge of alternative visions of Over-the-Rhine. Indeed, as Cormode and Hughes (1999: 299) comment “when researching elites, the scholar is supplicant, dependent on the cooperation of a relatively small number of people with a specialised knowledge, and not usually a potential emancipator or oppressor”. My dependence on these individuals required a level of subtlety and sensitivity in interview process in order to obtain the trust required to get participants to open up and speak frankly with me (Perkins and Wandersman 1990).
**Political Bias, Subjectivity and Performance**

A key factor in making the interviewee comfortable, gaining their trust and subsequently getting them to speak freely during the interview itself revolved around both my real political bias and where participants viewed my loyalties lying. As a researcher, I have my own particular political bias and views of elite neighbourhood groups and organisers and as such, it is vital for me to acknowledge these opinions and my own subjectivity in the research process (Denzin and Lincoln 2003, Valentine 1997). However, with my own self-reflexivity (Rose 2003), I found my preconceived ideas being challenged as often as they were reinforced and this proved problematic to a certain degree as interviews progressed; in particular, this emphasised the complex and often contradictory nature of everyday life and interviewees perceptions of Over-the-Rhine and its development. The interview process is a form of play whereby interviewee and interviewer are acutely aware of their own position in relation to each other and the research project. Participants may, as Mullings (1999) and Fontana and Frey (2003) suggest, withhold information or change their views either to please the researcher or protect themselves. In turn, the interviewer, as Mullings illustrates, may adopt varying identities to make the most of the interview by playing on indicators of class, race, age or knowledge.

In order to gain the trust and access required to make the interview successful, there is an element of performativity on the part of both interviewer and interviewee. Whilst negotiating this trans-positional landscape is easier said than done (Mullings 1999: 340), it is necessary in order for the interview to progress passed the theoretical quagmire of deconstruction and the linguistic problem of transposition (Raju 2002). When conducting interviews during my fieldwork, I adopted the identity of naïve yet interested researcher. In doing so, I hoped that the neighbourhood experts would not become wary or suspicious of my personal bias, and to a large extent this proved a successful strategy. Participants appeared to be more comfortable and less threatened by my questioning; this became especially evident when they realised the power and importance of their contribution to the research project (Longhurst 2003).

However, my personal approach and behaviour during the interview process did have drawbacks. Although I was able to obtain the trust and confidence of most interviewees through adopting a sympathetic position to the participants’ viewpoint, and yielded a lot of interesting and informative data, I found myself holding back on asking the difficult and problematic questions. This was a problem both when interviewing individuals whose position and opinions I largely
agreed with as well as those whom articulated an understanding of the neighbourhood contradictory to my own. Many of the occasions where I wished to push an interviewee on a point occurred in the middle of our conversation at a point I did not want to break down the trust established earlier in the interview. Whilst I kept these issues in mind, and sought to raise them towards the end of the interview, I found myself acutely aware of the power relations between research and [elite] participant, and my dependence on their cooperation and as such, my overriding concern was not to jeopardise my fieldwork and later interviews by alienating certain individuals and organisations (Elwood and Martin 2000, Mullings 1999, Sabot 1999).

The Researcher as Outsider

An added dimension to the interviewing experience in Over-the-Rhine arises from my particular background as interpreted by the research participants. Researchers who may be considered an ‘outsider’ in a particular social context, face differing challenges and problems than someone who is a socio-cultural ‘insider’ (Delyser 2001). Being a white, middle class, male university student, engenders certain biases and suspicions in interviewees, whether positively in terms of offering the participant the opportunity to discuss their opinions and work, or negatively my image being the manifestation of a cultural outsider seeking to enter and subvert an individual’s work (Smith 2003, Mullings 1999, Perkins and Wandersman 1990).

However, my position as an outsider and my position as a researcher are also complemented by my nationality and accent. Although foreign researchers may encounter bias and stereotyping by elite interview subjects, “a foreign researcher is always an unexpected visitor, who always charms local elites. The local politician will be proud to present his territory, and honoured by the presence of this foreigner who, moreover, seems so interested in his fiefdom!” (Sabot 1999: 332). Whilst this comment may appear glib, and certainly in my time in the field, did not always prove a truism, I was often able to ease interviewees into conversation through discussing my accent and what I was doing in Over-the-Rhine, let alone the United States. When I contacted potential participants over e-mail, I defined myself as a Masters’ student at Miami University but it was upon either meeting, or through phone conversations that my

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8 For example; wishing to push representatives from the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce on their views of April 2001 (see chapter 5), or the Property Developer on his views of low-income resident displacement resulting from his tenant selection criteria (see chapter 6) – as well as attempting to have low-income residents unpack their personal experiences with crime and policing in the neighbourhood.
position as foreigner became evident and a curiosity to research subjects. Appearing as a foreigner, an outsider to the specific contexts and discourses prevalent in Over-the-Rhine also presented other advantages in that expert participants often assumed I knew less about the study area and it’s history than I did [as a result of my archival research and previous fieldtrips]. As a result of this, I was able to play up to this expectation and through adopting the positionality of the naïve – yet interested outsider (Mullings 1999), I felt research participants would often open up more to me in their responses as to suggest that their opinion and experiences might have a significant formative role in my own understandings and interpretations of the neighbourhood.

I raise the above issues largely in discussing the processes of interviewing those I have deemed ‘neighbourhood experts’. This is not to suggest that factors such as my position as a cultural, and national, outsider were unimportant when conversing with local residents and urban inhabitants, but often such concerns became marginalised to more important issues involving mistrust and scepticism of my motives.

Conducting Interviews

I predominantly utilised a semi-structured interview format as this allows participants to articulate their own experiences and opinions in their own words (Valentine 1997) whilst facilitating tangents and allowing the conversation to flow (largely) organically onto topics interviewees felt most important and wanted to discuss (Fontana and Frey 2003). Once interviews had been arranged, I drew up a rough interview guide containing twenty to thirty questions in order to structure the narrative and ensure I covered all the topics necessary during the interview. During the course of data collection and interviewing, I was able to develop and refine the questions used, dropping those that stumped respondents or yielded little useful material whilst using trial and error to construct questions in a manner that participants both understood and felt able to talk about. As such, building on my experience conducting actual research proved the best method to develop my interviewing technique and behaviour; a fact which proved particularly beneficial given that interviews with residents were scheduled towards the end of my time in the field. Residents, unlike neighbourhood experts, do not have a direct and vested interest in the research project and therefore were less inclined to tolerate or placate poor interviewing technique or lapses in professionalism.
Interviews lasted between twenty minutes and three and a half hours although most took approximately sixty minutes. Before the interview began, I explained the purpose and context of the research project to the interviewee and provided a statement of consent which I asked be signed once the participant felt comfortable with how the conversation would progress and data be used. During this stage of proceedings, I asked permission to tape record and transcribe our conversation with the proviso that the interviewee’s identity would be concealed, only I would have access to the tapes and transcripts, and that confidentiality would be maintained in accordance with guidelines laid out by Miami University’s Human Subjects Review Board (2005).

In order to focus my full attention on the interviewee, I chose to digitally record my interview conversations. Whilst most of the interviewees agreed to be recorded, issues of trust lead several neighbourhood residents to request that interviews were not recorded. Amongst the reasons cited included issues of confidentiality, police access to the interview materials and concerns that participant’s would be harassed as a result of being interviewed. There were also several other occasions when tape recording was not a realistic possibility; these included informal conversations and community meetings that evolved into unstructured focus groups with residents who discussed their concerns surrounding Over-the-Rhine and its development amongst their peers. In these situations notes were either taken during the interview or recorded at the end of conversations to ensure the issues discussed remained fresh in my mind (Longhurst 2003, Valentine 1997).

‘Interviewing ‘Down’’

Many researchers have pointed to the practical and theoretical differences in interviewing elites and marginalised individuals (Raju 2002, Cormode and Hughes 1999, Hughes 1999, Hertz and Imber 1995). Whereas the researcher is reliant on a small number of elites in order to gain knowledge and access to particular historical and material geographies, interviewing neighbourhood residents brings out the ethical and practical challenges of “interviewing ‘down’” (Cormode and Hughes 1999: 299). When interviewing ‘down’, the power relations between interviewer and interviewee are reversed, whilst the researcher is still dependent on respondents’ involvement and cooperation in the research process, residents do not act as ‘gatekeepers’ (Oinas
1999). Although their individual experiences and viewpoints provide fascinating narrative and histories, the potential population from which a sample may be drawn is much greater.

Power rests with the researcher as they control the access and interpretation of interview material and this is a potentially threatening and unnerving position for interviewees to be placed in (Valentine 1997). Understanding and negotiating these issues is highly problematic and requires sensitivity during the arrangement and conducting of interviews. In order to make participants feel as comfortable as possible, I suggested they recommend a location for our meeting (this will be discussed in more detail in the following section) I dressed down and behaved in a relaxed relatively informal manner. Whilst this proved a successful tactic for several resident participants as they opened up and talked for up to and over an hour, several interviewees clammed up during the conversation answering short responses and remaining vague. The times this occurred were often with the most marginalised research participants and when this happened, I attempted to remain sensitive to the situation, did not push them and tried to make the conversation as comfortable as possible.

Placing the Interview

Elwood and Martin discuss some interesting observations on the “micro-geographies of spatial relations and meaning” (2000: 649) arising from analysing the ‘placing’ of interviews. The interview process provides an opportunity to engage in participant observation where the physical setting of the interview and body language of the participant can reveal more than the spoken (and transcribed) exchange. Noting that different spaces produce varying power relations and levels of comfort for researcher and participant, Elwood and Martin suggest that the selection of interview site may have profound implications for the quality and quantity of material data obtainable. Not only do interview sites impact upon the willingness of participants to open up and engage with the researcher, either through feeling comfortable (the home, familiar) or in a position of authority (office, workplace), but they can also reveal social and spatial relations in the group being studied.

In selecting interview locations, I offered the participant the choice of meeting place as I wished to ensure the felt comfortable during our meeting (Longhurst 2003). Also, it was beneficial for them to suggest a meeting place as I was staying in Cincinnati away from the potential office space at Miami University. Meetings with neighbourhood experts were for the
most part carried out at the organisation’s office. At once this places the interviewee in the situation of expert and authority figure on their own turf but also provides access to materials and secondary data sources available in these buildings; on several occasions, interviewees were able to provide me with new data sources and documents.

Asking interviewees to select a site where they would feel comfortable and able to talk led to a number of research locations to an extent dependent upon the age and class of the participants. Middle and upper middle class interviewees arranged meetings at local coffee houses and their homes, the younger research subjects in this demographic group I met over beers in a pub garden at one of the bars on Main Street. In contrast to this, interviews with lower-income residents were held in the offices of a neighbourhood service provider on Vine Street in the blighted district of Over-the-Rhine. Given the power dynamic between myself as researcher and this marginalised group as research participants, it is understandable that interviewees did not feel comfortable inviting me into their homes and as such, the selected interview location provided a safe middle ground for both parties (Longhurst 2003, Valentine 1997).

**Accessing Over-the-Rhine: Participant Observation**

As a research technique, participant observation enhances understandings of place through engaging with the practices and processes through which actors “reproduce and challenge macrological structures in the everyday of place-bound action” (Herbert 2000: 550). On one hand, participant observation appears at once an easy methodological tool to employ, one that we have engaged with in our everyday lives as we both observe and participate in the world around us. However, on the other hand, participant observation has many potential pitfalls arising from the fact that, as a methodology, it has no preset formal steps; there is, so to speak, no method to the method (Angrosino and Mays de Perez 2003, Laurier 2003, Herbert 2000). This engenders problems in the field yet proves an excellent way for the researcher to immerse themselves in the life-worlds that are being studied; “anyone doing participant observation must go through stages which arise out of the phenomenon and settings [that are being investigated]” (Laurier 2003: 134, Burawoy 1991).

Employing such ethnographic methods as participant observation in the field enables the researcher to move beyond the merely observable to uncover the processes and meaning that underpin socio-spatial life, placing the researcher in a position to comprehend and interpret the
interconnections between social structures and human agency (Herbert 2000). Although, given the time limit placed on my time in the field and my personal appearance, I was never able to fully engrain myself in the social structures of Over-the-Rhine, in traversing neighbourhood streets and spaces or sitting in local cafés and bars, I was afforded the opportunity to observe life-worlds and uses of space and record these as both a useful and anecdotal data source (Laurier 2003).

During my time in the neighbourhood, which included both planned observation trips and time spent walking around between appointments, I kept a field diary in which I took detailed notes of events that appeared significant or interesting. When doing so I often retired to secluded spots in Over-the-Rhine in order to keep my position as researcher in the field low-key (Laurier 2003: 138, Crang 2002). This is significant as, when conducting participant observation, the researcher needs to make conscious decisions about what their relationship should be with others in the field (Del Casino Jr. 2001). My fieldnotes are supported by digital photographs documenting neighbourhood space and key events during my time in the field. Taking these photos was something of a concern as at once, it raised questions as to what I was doing and, in some of the more secluded and blighted areas of Over-the-Rhine, I was aware of my position as potential victim of crime. However, in spite of these problems, photographic data both supports empirical written notes, serves to keep memories of events and spaces in Over-the-Rhine fresh and visually represent Over-the-Rhine space to readers of the thesis.

The Street

Throughout my time in the field, I sought to observe the behaviours of various social groups and the use of neighbourhood space in Over-the-Rhine. The street proved to be a fascinating space of social action and contestation (Whyte 1999, Jacobs 1993, De Certeau 1984). At once the site of many neighbourhood events including; Cincinnati’s International Food Festival, the Over-the-Rhine Summer Tour of Homes, Summer in Washington Park, Sunday’s weekly ‘Markets on Main’ and the monthly ‘Final Friday’ gallery walks provided the opportunity to observe and participate in community events.

The street and public urban space provided the most accessible forum for me to engage with and investigate Over-the-Rhine. Although delineators of race and class always marked me as an outsider in certain neighbourhood districts, I was free to observe and use these spaces. The
neighbourhood streets provided an urban lived experience all of its own; revealing how racial and class identities are constructed and played out. Such revelations were discovered as one day I was walking down the road accompanied by the melody of ‘Go white-boy, it’s your birthday’ hailed from an African American lady leaning out of her top floor window, whilst the next day (during a conversation with an inebriated man) I was told ‘you ain’t no white boy, you a nigger if you in the ghetto’.

**Informal Conversations**

Another key element of the participant observation conducted during data collection for this research project was the opportunity to engage in informal conversations with urban inhabitants and also to overhear how people discussed their experiences in Over-the-Rhine. Key sites for this observation included Findlay Market where, on several weekends, I was able to spend a number of hours interacting and observing with residents, ‘tourist’ shoppers and people involved in neighbourhood protests, and selling *Streetvibes*, the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless’ newspaper. Other sites included periods spent in local restaurants and taverns where I was able to have brief conversations with barmen and other staff. As noted earlier, my position as foreigner was of great help in opening conversations and enquiring about individual’s experiences in Over-the-Rhine (Sabot 2003).

**Community Meetings**

I was further able to act as a participant observer in several community meetings in Over-the-Rhine; before, during and after my main period of data collection. These meetings were organised by a diverse set of neighbourhood groups and organisations including the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce, Over-the-Rhine Contact Center and Miami University Center for Community Engagement. The size, scale and organisation of such gatherings also varied a great deal, from over 100 people attending a meeting at which [defeated] 2006 Cincinnati Mayoral candidate David Peppers and a prominent Cincinnati police chief spoke and took questions, to a small gathering of 5 neighbourhood residents that performed in a similar manner to a focus group (Longhurst 2003, Madriz 2003, Area Special Edition 1996). During my attendance at neighbourhood meetings and gatherings, I observed the crowd’s behaviour and viewpoints taking fieldnotes either during or after the event.
Through receiving invitations to these events, I feel I achieved a certain level of access and embeddedness in the research site. The passion which many neighbourhood experts spoke of Over-the-Rhine and, as discussed previously, the desire for me, as an outside researcher looking in, to gain as comprehensive an understanding of the actions and activities of the organisation they were involved with, in part explains why I able to access these spaces, but also, many of the people I met during my time in the field expressed an interest in my research long after their formal participation had ended.

3.3) Secondary Data Sources

In line with the case study approach being employed in this research project, secondary data sources and quantitative statistics have been obtained in order to triangulate the data produced through primary data collection (Yin 1994).

Archival Research

Over-the-Rhine in the News

Before moving to Cincinnati, archival research on Cincinnati newspapers’ websites provided an indication of both the history and current issues in Over-the-Rhine and an opportunity to assess how various interest groups produced and framed discourses on neighbourhood change (Hastings 1999). However, whilst this data provided a valuable source in directing my research as it developed in the field, it did not stop upon my arrival in Cincinnati. Throughout the period of primary data collection and beyond, I collected newspapers and other documents to remain informed about the events and issues currently developing in Over-the-Rhine and in terms of the neoliberalisation of urban physical and social space.

As Denzin (2003: 459) notes in relation to the practices and politics of interpretation, writing is not an innocent practice; interpreting the world is as much about changing it. Material documents and historical text have the quality of physical endurance across time and space so whereas issues of the researcher as ‘insider’ or ‘outsider’ are negated, the interpretation of the narratives is fundamental significance; and a highly loaded practice (Hodder 2003). Whilst I do not wish to enter into the territory of a Derridian philosophy of language regarding the deconstruction of the text and abstraction of content from the author, such understanding do
emphasise the significance of the reading of material texts as data sources (following Hodder 2003: 156).

In analysing the representations of events, individuals and organisations in newspapers, I predominantly utilised three sources; the Cincinnati Enquirer, a pro-capital paper whose CEOs have a vested interest in Over-the-Rhine through serving on the board of 3CDC, CityBeat, a liberal entertainment paper that also often features local commentaries regarding issues in the neighbourhood, and StreetVibes; a paper organised and supported by much of the social service infrastructure in Over-the-Rhine. Another news source worth mentioning here (although it will be further discussed in following chapters) is an hour long, award winning documentary ‘Visions of Vine Street’ filmed in 2001 by Channel 9’s ‘I-Team (available online: Over-the-Rhine Foundation 2005, also as a transcript; Quinlivan 2002).

**Analysing Neighbourhood Websites**

Supporting the concepts of interpreting material documents outlined in relation to local news reports and articles discussed above, I applied similar analysis to the websites of key neighbourhood organisations; as well as those of the state at a number of scales. The materials available on the websites for 3CDC (www.3cdc.org) and Cincinnati City Council (www.cincinnati-oh.gov) provided adequate information to understand their role in neighbourhood neoliberalisation meeting the necessary requirements to answer this project’s research questions. Many of the Over-the-Rhine centred organisations interviewed as neighbourhood experts during my primary data collection have websites (e.g. The Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement, www.overtherhine.org, The Over-the-Rhine Foundation www.irhine.com) which lay out their own mission statements and provide details of projects and events and as such, these websites both act as representational discourses in themselves and serve to triangulate data obtained during the interview process.

**3.4) Data Analysis**

**Coding Transcripts through Grounded Theory**

Upon returning to Oxford after the main period of data collection, I fully transcribed my interviews from the digital files saved to hard-disk, and typed up the notes from my field diary. The material was then coded and analysed following the process of grounded theory (Punch
1998, Baxter and Eyles 1997). In coding, I used a variety of coloured highlighters to identify and distinguish key themes and concepts in the text and annotated the text in the margins to provide and points of interests for the next level of abstraction (Cope 2003).

The grounded theory approaches to data analysis mediates between theory and practice; it is a mode of analysis for the generation and testing of theory through the process of iterative abstraction. Abstraction is fundamentally important as it an “adequate method to mirror social structures and generative mechanisms…serves as a first sound step towards conceptualising and theorising …and helps distinguish between [contingency] and [necessity]” (Yueng 1997: 58). The process involves examining data in search of core categories at a high level of abstraction, yet grounded with the empirics of the collected research material (Punch 1998). In order to realise this, several levels of abstraction were drawn through multiple coding and readings of the data.

Firstly, through the practices of open coding, the initial conceptual engagement with the transcripts looking to open their theoretical potential, I drew out a substantive code; defining categories and themes discussed during interviews. Secondly, a theoretical code abstracted from these categories, through axial coding; identifying common theoretical linkages and contradiction before finally, through selective coding, I constructed the core code, drawing a higher level of abstraction which connects both existing theories and the empirical data collected during the course of this research project (Punch 1998 also see Yeung 1997).

**Discourse Analysis**

In analysing secondary data from newspapers and websites, combined with similar processes of abstraction described above, I employed the technique of discourse analysis. This approach focuses upon the use and application of language in particular social contexts (Punch 1998). The political bias of newspapers and institutions inform the production of ‘discourse’ on Over-the-Rhine and the societal and developmental questions facing the neighbourhood. As such, they provide a framework through which ideas are formed and ideological, epistemological and ontological conceptions of the world are naturalised, legitimised and subsequently disseminated into popular consciousness.

The strategy I adopted centres on an attempt to show how “institutions, practices and even the individual person can be understood as produced through the workings of a set of discourses”
(Potter and Wetherell 1994 cf. Punch 1998: 227). Discourse analysis is not a unified theoretical cohesive practice (Punch 1998) and as such, the approach I adopted is one of many, but for the purposes of this research, it provided the best fit for extracting the most relevant information from the data.

3.5) Urban Neoliberalism through Qualitative Methods

Through the utilisation of qualitative methods, this thesis broadens understandings of urban neoliberalisation to encompass the everyday meaning making and material practices of human actors. The combination of methods described above both allows the triangulation of results, ensuring academic rigour, and the production of a wide-ranging collection of narratives. Ethnographic methods such as interviewing and participant observation, combined with the focus of this research on neighbourhood residents and everyday users of urban space opens a ‘bottom-up’ representation of the experience of urban neoliberalism thus responding to critiques of regulation approaches to the study of the city. Utilising both grounded theory and discourse analysis provides the opportunity to engage with the physical / material mechanisms and realities of neoliberalisation at the urban scale, and the discursive / ideological assumptions and imperatives that support the retraction of Keynesianism state-managerialism and roll-out of its market-based Schumpeterian alternative.

Thus, through the adoption of this particular research design, the following analysis examines both how neoliberal restructuring and policy implementation are being applied in the historic-geographic context of Over-the-Rhine and analyses how the ideological discourse of neoliberal political-economic doctrine is naturalised, legitimised, yet also contested, in the production, regulation and use of urban [neighbourhood] space.
Chapter 4

The New Institutional Landscape: A Brief History of Restructuring in Over-the-Rhine’s Political-Economic Infrastructure

The importance of the political and economic institutions within governance structures lies in their function as regulators of capital accumulation (MacLeod 2000, Jessop 2000). Through the implementation of policies, laws, and, by proxy, the shaping of social norms and practices, governance institutions of the state and private sector mediate social production, reproduction and consumption. In doing so, they significantly shape the spaces and spatialities of everyday life. Governance structures and modes of regulation arbitrating capitalist accumulation in space and over time are therefore of fundamental importance in shaping the terrains of the lived experience in various locales as ideological and material political-economic imperatives permeate all scales of society.

In this chapter I examine the impact of neoliberalisation on Over-the-Rhine’s institutional landscape, historically contextualising the spatial and social structures that define the everyday urban experience of the neighbourhood. In order to understand the emergence of the particular, place-specific neoliberalism in Over-the-Rhine, I interpret the establishment, actions and ideologies of key organisational actors through highlighting the contextual embedding of

The emergence of political organisations in Over-the-Rhine has neither been haphazard, nor accidental as temporal and spatially specific issues of class and race have polarised interests within the neighbourhood. Community activists, politicians and business leaders produced a governance infrastructure through which their own political, economic and social concerns may be articulated and acted upon. In examining the infrastructure of Over-the-Rhine’s governance regime, I make two broad distinctions between the institutions acting in the neighbourhood based firstly upon geographic and political scale and secondly, upon class interests (see Table 4.1). Whilst these broad generalisations overlook some of the complex experiences of socialisation, scalar relations and overlapping political, economic and social objectives of these institutions, this framework accounts for the major political and ideological standpoints adopted by the key actors in Over-the-Rhine’s governance infrastructure.

At the city / urban scale the key actors are, the state, manifest most prominently in the guise of Cincinnati City Council, but also the apparatus of state power (the police etc. see Althusser 1962) and Cincinnati City Centre Development Corporation [3CDC], a non-profit agency charged with developing Cincinnati’s Downtown; including Over-the-Rhine. Secondly, I draw a distinction between those organisations operating at the neighbourhood scale based along class interests. The first group of institutions constitute, for the most part, what is known as the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement, a network of low-income advocacy non-profit organisations whose predominant concern lies with social service provision for the homeless and economically marginalised in the neighbourhood. Juxtaposed with the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement are the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce and Over-the-Rhine Foundation; institutions established with the political and economic project of stimulating inward capital investment and facilitating market-rate development.

In the following, I draw on my in-depth interviews to chart how Over-the-Rhine’s regulatory landscape has developed in response to urban neoliberal imperatives. I illustrate how restructuring in the district’s governance infrastructure has been conceived by those involved in the neighbourhood’s institutions and users of neighbourhood space. My analysis highlights three

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9 Whilst I acknowledge the important cultural and economic role played by the voluntary sector in Over-the-Rhine, including the social function of the neighbourhood’s churches for example, as this chapter is concerned with the neighbourhood’s institutional landscape, these organisations have been omitted.
Table 4.1: Over-the-Rhine’s Regulatory Landscape

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Private, Non-profit Corporation / Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>U.S. Government</td>
<td>Cincinnati City Center Development Corporation [3CDC]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Ohio Government</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>Cincinnati City Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood [Over-the-Rhine]</td>
<td>OTR Community Council</td>
<td>Low-Income Advocates [OTR People’s Movement] • ReSTOC • OTR Housing Network • Drop Inn Center • Contact Center • Peaslee Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Market Development Advocates • OTR Chamber of Commerce • OTR Foundation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

key moments in the neoliberalisation of Over-the-Rhine’s governance structure. Firstly, I examine the emergence of low-income and market-rate advocacy organisations operating at the neighbourhood scale, assessing their motives, perspectives and relationships. Secondly, I assert that Cincinnati City Council, through the devolution and privatisation of state power, exemplifies the neoliberal state as market facilitator and class disciplinarian (Peck 2003, 2001, Jessop 2000, MacLeod and Goodwin 1999). Finally, I investigate the rescaling of urban governance in Over-the-Rhine through the establishment of Cincinnati City Center Development Corporation [3CDC] as jumping scale to the interests of capital (Keil 2002, Cox 1998, Smith 1984, Harvey 1982). I argue that each of these moments represent key process in the establishment of a neoliberal hegemonic project in Cincinnati and with this, marks a distancing from democratic access and accountability for the neighbourhood’s residents.

**Three Key Moments in the Neoliberalisation of Over-the-Rhine’s Governance Structure**

I worry a lot because the political will of this city, they have a different design for Over-the-Rhine and there’s no real processes that involve neighbourhood people…How, all of a sudden, did they get the authority to plan our neighbourhood? (OTR PM)
4.1) Usurping the Existing Neighbourhood Infrastructure

The Emergence of the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement

Over-the-Rhine, comparably with the experience of other U.S. cities’ urban cores, suffered during the period of deindustrialisation in the 1970s and 1980s; the out-migration of people and capital from the Cincinnati’s urban core exacerbated poverty, homelessness and crime (Peck 2002, Bluestone and Harrison 1982). Although Cincinnati City Council played a major role in neighbourhood governance and the funding of social services throughout this period, this moment of crisis revealed the state’s regulatory mechanisms were unable to ensure the conditions of social reproduction for Cincinnati’s most marginalised residents.

Responding to these trends, local activists, lead by-and-large by the charismatic Buddy Gray, mobilised in the latter 1970s as the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement to challenge and alleviate the neighbourhood’s marginalisation, and to advocate on behalf of its politically and economically disenfranchised population (Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement 2005). Activists further created a landscape of non-profit organisations, to provide social support services such as emergency shelter for the homeless (Drop Inn Center), community development facilities and education (Peaslee Center), legal advice (Over-the-Rhine Contact Center), and affordable housing for local residents (Race Street Tenant’s Organisation Cooperative [ReSTOC], Over-the-Rhine Housing Network) (see Table 4.1).

Whilst these non-profit organisations represent the original, grassroots political institutions in Over-the-Rhine, this low-income advocacy infrastructure poses a significant obstacle to those individuals and agencies wishing to stimulate capital investment and market competition in the neighbourhood. Yet, as this thesis explores, distinctly spatial neoliberal processes of re-regulation, rescaling and policy implementation have served to undermine the social base of the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement – thus questioning its political legitimacy to advocate and represent the neighbourhood. With this, a key moment in this neoliberalisation of Over-the-Rhine’s urban governance regime has come as market-rate development advocates, politicians and pioneer gentrifiers established their own neighbourhood institutions which contest and weaken the established regulatory infrastructure.
Grounding a Neoliberal Alternative

The People’s Movement and the Over-the-Rhine Foundation couldn’t be more oil and water. Just totally opposite goals, a different kind of process; they pretty much hate each other full stop (OTR F).

Since the 1980s, key corporate interests and City politicians have viewed Over-the-Rhine as an increasingly significant asset for Downtown Cincinnati’s regeneration, largely as result of the rediscovery of the neighbourhood’s architecture (see Smith 2002, Weber 2002). However, according to market-rate advocates, Over-the-Rhine lacked the infrastructure to facilitate capital investment as there was nowhere for potential developers to go in the neighbourhood to find out about investment opportunities in the commercial or residential sectors, thus impinging on wider regeneration goals (Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce 2006). Realising the need for an organisation to address the “great needs and prospective opportunities of Over-the-Rhine” as well as ascribing to the idea that a good business climate is the best way to tackle poverty, in 1984, market-rate development proponent and City Councillor, Jim Tarbell¹⁰, brought together a small group of local businessmen and civic leaders to establish the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce (Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce 2006). The neighbourhood Chamber of Commerce subsequently spawned an offshoot organisation, the Over-the-Rhine Foundation, that seeks to improve quality of life for users of Over-the-Rhine space by “enhanc[ing] artistic expression, and embrac[ing] diversity of culture which enriches this community” (Over-the-Rhine Foundation 2005).

This new neighbourhood institutional infrastructure poses a direct challenge to Over-the-Rhine’s existing social networks and political legitimacy. Furthermore, a representative from the Over-the-Rhine Foundation described the interaction between market-rate and low-income advocacy organisations as one of mutually destructive antagonism;

No [I don’t think there is anything that can bring these entities together] as the Foundation is stuck in what it used to be…and its membership is just going to perpetuate their way of doing business. They’re not

¹⁰ Jim Tarbell was elected to the position of Cincinnati Vice Mayor in the 2006 election under Mayor Mark Mallory.
interested in [cooperating] with the People’s Movement. Yet [the People’s Movement] is going to have to open to bigger sets of more diverse community planning than 20 years ago and the conflict that happened there (OTR F).

Whereas the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement, through the established neighbourhood organisations – including the Over-the-Rhine Community Council – sought to resist capitalist gentrification to prevent the displacement of low-income residents and focused on meeting the social needs of the neighbourhood’s disenfranchised population, the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce and their supporters sought to undermine this position; depicting low-income advocates as stifling investment and attempting to produce a “haven for the poor” (Quinlivan 2002). According to Jim Tarbell;

All I can say about Buddy [Gray] is that it didn't work. Regardless of his intentions and what drove him, the methods in terms of succeeding and providing a better environment for the city in general and low income people in particular was a disaster (cited in Quinlivan 2002).

Whilst a local property developer confirmed this sentiment;

ReSTOC, started by Buddy Gray – heart definitely in the right place – but I didn’t agree with their policies in that his idea was to preserve Over-the-Rhine as a utopia for poor people and you would have homeless people working to fix up their own houses...[but] that just hasn’t materialised (Property Developer).

**Political Contestation and Succession**

At the neighbourhood scale then, we can see a succession of political-economic organisations and with this, a succession of political and economic interests prevalent in Over-the-Rhine. Whereas the institutions of the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement sought to address the inability of the state to ensure social reproduction for Cincinnati’s most marginalised inhabitants, the emergence of the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce and Over-the-Rhine
Foundation reflect a new spatial political logic; addressing the state’s inability to stimulate investment within Over-the-Rhine.

The top-down establishment of the new pro-market governance landscape highlights a fundamentally important moment of hostile, institutional neoliberalisation in Over-the-Rhine (Gough 2002) and the conflict between social support provision and market-rate advocates in Over-the-Rhine clearly expresses the ideological clash between Keynesian solutions to poverty and marginalisation and the roll-out of the neoliberal alternative.

The Over-the-Rhine Community Council is dominated by low-income residents and advocates and as such, market-rate proponents have been unable to steer the future direction of neighbourhood development through the existing, democratic channels. However, for market-rate advocates to produce a new institutional infrastructure in an attempt to shape neighbourhood politics is highly concerning as this at once serves to de-legitimise the elected neighbourhood body and negate a public space through which disenfranchised residents are politically represented. Such a re-articulation of institutional governance enables new forms of political participation (Swyngedouw 2005) but the ‘Janus-faced’ character of neoliberalised urban governance, in turn, erodes the democratic nature of the political sphere. Following this, in assessing new expressions of urban governance and socialisation, it is vital to scrutinise the concepts of democracy and citizenship in order to understand to changing ways citizens can – and do – interact with their political representatives (Gough 2002, also see Schiller 2004, Lefebvre 2004, 1991, Dikeç 2002, Elwood 2002, McCann 2002, Purcell 2002, Lipietz 1994).

The position of the state – Cincinnati City Council and by extension, 3CDC which I shall discuss in more detail in the following sections – deserves particular attention. When these bodies wish to implement plans or policies in the neighbourhood, City Council and 3CDC bypass the Over-the-Rhine Community Council to deal first with the neighbourhood Chamber of Commerce as a Chamber employee attested;

When it comes to things involving Over-the-Rhine, we’re pretty high on the ladder. A lot of our members serve on some of 3CDC’s committees so they keep us informed though that and we’re working very closely with them (OTR C of C).
A neighbourhood activist from the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement concedes that the growing significance of the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce and their allies is undermining the legitimacy of the low-income advocacy in the neighbourhood;

"The Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce are speaking on behalf of Over-the-Rhine and their interests do not include low-income people. They can easily call up a Jim Tarbell or some other councillor and get some of the things that they need and want and it is discrediting the Over-the-Rhine Community Council (OTR PM)."

Yet an interviewee from the Miami University Center for Community Engagement who works with the institutions of the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement notes the prioritising of the Over-the-Rhine Chamber and the apparent marginalisation of Over-the-Rhine society within the wider city core;

"I imagine [the City and 3CDC] are talking to the Chamber more than the Community Council; but then I’d say they’re talking more the Downtown interests (MU CCE)."

Through these relationships, Cincinnati City Council legitimises the ideas and actions of market-rate development advocates, and politically ostracises the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement. In turn, as I shall show below, the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement has been coerced, through a number of political and economic mechanisms, into cooperation with organisations whose views are diametrically opposed to theirs. In this new arrangement, the spatial grounding of low-income advocacy organisations in the neighbourhood is undermined by both the physical construction of a new institutional landscape in Over-the-Rhine – the production of a hostile and confrontational physical presence (see Figure 4.1) – and the material and abstract neighbourhood spaces that the new usurping governance structure produces (Peck 2001, 2003, Brenner and Theodore 2002, Peck and Tickell 2002, Smith 2002).

**4.2) Devolving City Authority and the Neoliberal State**

The development of Over-the-Rhine’s governance structure at the neighbourhood scale has been shaped in relation to the role, function and operations of the state; namely in the guise of Cincinnati City Council. Here, I trace the increasing animosity between the City and low-income
advocacy groups in Over-the-Rhine in order to illustrate how the structuring and processes of urban governance become rearticulated and rationalised. Frustrated by the development stalemate produced by competing institutions in the neighbourhood, and restricted by funding cutbacks, Cincinnati City Council has increasingly devolved responsibility for planning, neighbourhood development, and social service provision; moves which empower Over-the-Rhine’s market-rate advocacy organisations and erode the democratic nature of neighbourhood governance regime.

**Establishing the Neoliberal State**

The establishment of Over-the-Rhine’s market rate development advocacy institutions introduced an alternative imagining of Over-the-Rhine’s future, and the incompatibility of the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement and the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce’s agendas led the relationships within the neighbourhood’s governance institutions to spiral downhill throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Increasing clashes between the political grassroots organisations of the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement and top-down market advocacy bodies scuppered potential development and investment in the neighbourhood.

According to interviewees from the Drop Inn Center and Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the retraction of the City from social service commitments placed low-income advocacy organisations under increasing stress;

> The City Council has had a really reduced role, reduced impact in deciding social issues (DIC).

> You know, it’s funny; when I first got involved [in Over-the-Rhine] I used to think our City Council was really reactionary, unprogressive, but when I look back to the City Council we had in 1970 compared to now, they seem really progressive! (OTR PM).

Furthermore Cincinnati City Council became increasingly frustrated at the unwillingness of the Over-The-Rhine People’s Movement to cooperate with private development proposals during this period. City Council established a spark of hope through commissioning a community led Comprehensive Plan for the neighbourhood during 1997-2002 (Cincinnati City Council 2002) and to a large degree, this successfully brought the divergent factions around the same table. Yet
in keeping with the general perception of incompetence of Cincinnati City Council articulated by Realtor 1 and the Property Developer I interviewed (see also Leibovitz and Salmon 1999) the City collapsed the Planning Department into the Economic Development Department in 2003, effectively killing off the implementation of the Community’s Plan.

The effective end of the 2002 Comprehensive Plan, I argue, represents the last moment where the residents and neighbourhood organisations of Over-the-Rhine could exercise self-determination – a sentiment confirmed by several interviewees;

[City Council] would be mediators and deal breakers on all sorts of social issues…from then until here; we used to be down City Hall monthly, weekly sometimes, but now, I think the last City involvement we had was the Comprehensive Plan which was 1999-2002…and that was the end. (DIC)

There was never the buy in by City Council towards the end of the [Comprehensive Plan] project, or in actually completing the project and I think there is a lot of frustration with that. (ReSTOC)

I think a lot more time was spent on that plan to flesh out implementation projects for more market rate things…low-income people’s interests didn’t get fleshed out…and then the City goes and obliterates its Planning Department. Then it all goes to 3CDC. (OTR PM)

The [Comprehensive] Plan is a really good document with a lot of really good ideas but it was just a vision statement…When the City specifically said ‘we don’t want anything to do with implementing this plan’…there’s got to be…if the City isn’t going to do anything, they’ve just got to facilitate, bring people together because if they aren’t using their position to convene and facilitate, people are just off doing their own thing; it was an opportunity lost. (OTR F).

This points to a concerning shift in City Council practices. A pattern emerges whereby local government increasingly withdraws from engaging directly with Over-the-Rhine’s political organisations and residents. This step has fundamental ramifications for grassroots political mobilisation as a mechanism through which socially just neighbourhood revitalisation may be realised (Elwood 2004, 2002, Fraser 2004). Not only is community planning rejected, but broader
democratic interactions are scaled back, dismissing the community’s input and political voice. Subsequent urban governance rescaling and the devolution of neighbourhood development strategy to 3CDC (see chapter 4.3) all but removes the potential for direct community involvement in the planning process - unless it is explicitly condoned by institutions operating at the wider, Downtown scale.

Cincinnati City Council’s actions reflect the essential paradox at the heart of the neoliberal state; that being the ideological premise for a minimalist state contradicted by the tendency towards new forms of state intervention and societal / class discipline (Hackworth and Moriah 2006, Peck 2003, Gough 2002, Brenner and Theodore 2002, Althusser 1962). In this particular example, we can see what Brenner and Theodore (2002) characterise as creative destruction in the physical and social space of contemporary cities. The stalemate generated by the conflicts between the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement and the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce and its supporters has been bypassed by state restructuring and the devolution and privatisation of functions that the City traditionally controlled. In order to pursue a specific model of development, Cincinnati City Council destroyed both the space of the City’s Planning Department and (effectively) Over-the-Rhine’s neighbourhood institutional infrastructure and in their place created the private body of 3CDC and rescaled the abstract space of the neighbourhood to become a component of ‘Downtown’.

However, it is important to situate these shifts in state practice within the specific context of Over-the-Rhine and wider Cincinnati. Reshaping the administrative structure of the state and shifting the allocation of City funds cannot simply be blamed on a malevolent desire to stimulate inward investment, however ruthlessly this persecutes labour and the urban poor (e.g. Hubbard 2004). As emphasised in Chapter 2, shifts to neoliberal ideology in urban governance are the result of a complex, historically and spatially contextual set of experiences and imperatives applied at a number of geographic and political scales (Dicken 2004, Wilson 2004a, Brenner and Theodore 2002, Peck 2002). Interviewees from the Over-the-Rhine Contact Center and the Drop Inn Center noted Cincinnati City Council’s operating form and function has been shaped by funding cutbacks filtering down from the state level and furthermore, definitional problems such as what it actually means to be homeless (especially the shift in funding imperatives filtering down from the Bush administration to focus on the most extreme cases of homelessness), influence the monies available, and allocated to social service provision.
Yet, combined with the general tendency towards state roll back from social services and market regulation that have been argued as central to the neoliberal spatio-temporal fix (Jessop 2002, 2000, Peck and Tickell 2002), the pursuit of a neoliberal agenda in Over-the-Rhine still focuses a coordinated attack on egalitarian social service providers (see Hackworth and Moriah 2006, also Smith 2002, Peck 2001, Harvey 2000). Interviewees from the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce articulated this concern regarding the number of social service agencies located within the neighbourhood;

We’re in the process currently of doing a count to find out how many social services are actually down here and how effective they are being used because there are so many that are being founded down here…One of the Chamber’s goals is to try to find out what we have, how effective they are and can we use their services. (OTR C of C)

This reflects the wider assault upon the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement and other low-income advocacy organisations which is increasingly naturalised and exacerbated by the logic of inter-locality competition and capital flight which marks the transition from KWNS to SWPR (Jessop 2000, Cox 1993, Cox and Mair 1991, 1988, Harvey 1989a) and the discursive demonisation of poverty in the popular conscience (Wilson 2006).

Political support for the devolution of City authority has come has come from within City Hall, and institutions and companies advocating for market lead development arising largely from the [aforementioned] widespread perception of incompetence in Cincinnati City Council. Paradoxically, the perceived failures of City Hall facilitate the rolling out of their own neoliberal agenda and state minimalism. During interviews with neighbourhood groups on both sides of the class divide, as well as developers and real estate agents dealing in Over-the-Rhine, interviewees pointed to the bureaucracy and incompetence of Cincinnati City Council as a key reason for the lack of progress in the neighbourhood;

It’s just incompetence from one end to the other… there’s a lot of politics and a lot of bureaucracy that gets in the way of progress (Property Developer).
Fortunately City Council is pretty incompetent so even when they have bad ideas, it takes them a long time to do anything about it (OTR CC).

The City of Cincinnati fucks up [sic] just about everything it touches (Realtor 1).

Whist the level and extent of incompetence in City Hall is certainly debatable, housing market expert interviewees claimed Cincinnati was a far more difficult place to do business than other cities in the United States, whilst an employee from the Over-the-Rhine Foundation claimed that City Council lacked the leadership vision and skills to implement the Over-the-Rhine Comprehensive Plan. Rather than calling for a stronger state willing to implement its plans, such perceptions are utilised by market-rate advocates and real estate agents to discredit state regulation and call for cutbacks in bureaucratic restrictions on the market. Following this, such groups hold the image, and to an extent, the reality of a state unable to place Cincinnati within the wider global economy, or ensure economic growth in the era of deindustrialisation, as a significant ideological rationale for implementation of neoliberal policies and political-economic state strategies, as a representative from the Over-the-Rhine Foundation comments;

Over-the-Rhine...needs more attention because it is between our two economic engines; Over-the-Rhine can be a beautiful bohemian neighbourhood rather than a kind of beautiful ghetto. It changes the fortunes of the entire region. (OTR F)

The perceived weaknesses of the City Council supported neoliberal calls for minimal state interference in urban governance and the extension of market law, commodification and competition into the sectors of social service provision. The shift of state function from market regulator to market facilitator (Brenner and Theodore 2002, Jessop 2002, Peck and Tickell 2002) in Cincinnati is naturalised through the inability of City Council to stimulate development and economic growth or effectively regulate social reproduction. This at once discredits the existing institutional infrastructure operating in Over-the-Rhine; namely organisations such as the Drop Inn Center and ReSTOC who become viewed as barriers to development as they concentrate poverty and discourage economic activity in the neighbourhoods marginalised communities, and
reinforces the view that the role of the state in contemporary urban governance regimes lies in its position as convener and facilitator for development projects.

However, I argue this strategy is short-sighted as it overlooks both the spatial and temporal impacts of developing the neighbourhood through establishing an open, competitive real estate market. Despite what I must consider lip-service to the concept of a ‘mixed community’, the intentions of organisations such as the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce need to be critiqued. In their seeming desperation to stimulate capitalist development in the neighbourhood, there is a lack of foresight regarding the regulation of a housing market boom and the preservation of, and provision for, Over-the-Rhine’s existing low-income population. Indeed, in discussing the future of the neighbourhood with neighbourhood organisations and estate agents, there appeared to be little regard paid to how to regulate gentrification or ensure the sustainability of an economically and culturally mixed community after capital investment and competitive markets were established. Interviewees advocating for market-rate development revealed both an apparent desperation, and adherence to neoliberal ideology – that stimulating the real estate market was *the* key to the future of Over-the-Rhine and that everything else would fall into place once these economic conditions were firmly established.

The devolution and privatisation of state authority, and City Council’s increasing role as class disciplinarian and market facilitator is concerning as the democratically elected body in the city has sacrificed the implementation of long-term strategies benefiting the wider populace to the immediate interests of capital. This becomes increasingly problematic as the state continues to roll out repressive regulations governing public space and places for dissent, and democratic access and accountability, including; the folding of Cincinnati’s Planning Department into the City’s Economic Development Unit, the privatisation of Fountain Square and Washington Park through devolution to 3CDC [these moves will be discussed in greater detail in proceeding chapters] and the restructuring of access to City Hall.

**Eroding Democratic Public Space: Restructuring Access to City Council**

As the City withdrew from its role as mediator and market regulator, as well as the loss of funding provision for social support, access to the state also changed in its dynamic. Whereas low-income advocacy groups had been able to lobby City Council effectively during the 1960s and 70s, into the twenty-first century this mode of protest and lobbying has become increasingly
restrictive. I argue that these restrictions starkly reduce the democratic foundations of the City as access and accountability exercised through public forums such as City Hall, have become increasingly re-regulated and controlled. Two low-income advocates from the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement described this process;

City Council…the rules and regulation they’ve put in after the riots have become more restrictive. You used to have issues and speakers for and against where everyone could air their two cents and now they limit the number of speakers, they limit the time to two minutes; I had to go up and talk about an issue and that was the first time I’d heard of the time limit and the issue that I was talking about was not a two minute issue. I got a sound-bite of what I wanted to say and they cut me off after two minutes. There’s no forum now where I can air my two cents and I think some of that is that they don’t want to hear it but some is where they could actually learn something. (DIC)

But I think we have lost a lot, with public spaces and ever since civil unrest happened in April 2001 when Timothy Thomas was shot; you could use to go to City Hall, raise an issue, raise some ruckus really, but after that incident, they really changed. (OTR PM)

The loss of public space, both in terms of access to City Council and the privatisation of, for example, Fountain Square in Cincinnati’s Downtown (another 3CDC project) places public protest in increasingly marginalised spaces (see Mitchell 2005, 1997). The decline in visibility of public gathering and protest serves to undermine access to, and therefore accountability of, the state at the same time as City Council is devolving public accountability in city services through privatisation. The timing of the re-regulation of access in City Hall also appears somewhat problematic. In the aftermath of the civil unrest caused by the shooting of Timothy Thomas, post-April 2001 would appear to by the optimum time to open Cincinnati’s City Hall in order to address the racial and class tension that underpinned the outbreak of violence. Instead of opening governance spaces to democratic intervention, Cincinnati City Council retracted the availability of forums for public protest in the city. Furthermore, a neighbourhood activist from the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement claimed the City has redesigned the physical space of City Hall so that City Councillors are raised on a pedestal above those coming to lobby of voice grievances.
The re-regulation of City Council meetings has forced lobbying into alternative spaces in City Hall; a representative from the Over-the-Rhine Contact Center felt the neighbourhood had been marginalised through City Council’s agenda schedule, often being pushed to the back of proceedings and as such discussed two to three hours after issues had been raised by the speakers. Away from the official meetings, new spaces and practices are produced as lobbyists seek different ways to gain access to Cincinnati’s political elites. The strategy now adopted by low-income advocacy lobbyists involves attempting to gain an audience with Councillors on their way to and from their chambers. However cornering politicians in the corridors of City Hall has mixed results;

I mean, you have to confront people first and start a little bit of conflict and show them that we have power...we try to get meetings with them and if they won’t meet with us, there are other avenues we can pursue. It is difficult to get a lot of City Council members to come back and meet with us. (OTR CC)

In noting this however, Over-the-Rhine neighbourhood organisations on both sides of the class divide highlight the fact that certain councillors are more amenable depending on their own sympathies and politics. Indeed, the representative from the Over-the-Rhine Contact Center I met with claimed that whilst overall access to City Hall has become harder, for them, things have become easier as, over time, more City Council members have become familiar with both the Contact Center’s projects and personnel. Compared to this, the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce was the only organisation in the neighbourhood who felt that they were near the top of the pecking order in terms of consultation with City authorities (in both the public and private spheres) in Over-the-Rhine.

Despite efforts to carve out alternative avenues of access to City politicians and decision makers the retraction of time and availability of City Councillors during official meetings moves Cincinnati’s City government has moved from demand to supply side politics. Such political practices increasingly serve the interests of capital and disenfranchise the urban poor in Over-the-Rhine as the body politic is removed from the everyday neighbourhood community and social service provision (through privatisation) is increasingly swayed by economic interest groups. These shifts in the functioning of the state have become exacerbated with the rescaling of the
governance regime controlling the future direction of development in Over-the-Rhine; particularly with the creation of, and rescaling to, 3CDC that I now turn to.

4.3) Rescaling Over-the-Rhine’s Governance Regime

In July 2003, building on the recommendations of the Cincinnati Economic Development Task Force, Cincinnati City Council formed, and subsequently devolved responsibility for the regeneration of the city’s urban core, to the Cincinnati City Center Development Corporation [3CDC]. Scaling operations at the wider Downtown level, 3CDC has identified three core city centre priorities; the Banks (consisting of the Riverfront between Paul Brown Stadium and the Great American Ball Park), Fountain Square (The geographic and historical heart of Cincinnati’s Downtown), and Over-the-Rhine. Within its geographic area, 3CDC’s primary focus is facilitating development projects through brokering deals with the City and private investors and as such, focusing the overall strategy for the redevelopment of Cincinnati’s Downtown (3CDC 2006a).

Whilst 3CDC’s operating costs are met through private donations from businesses and foundations, their project funding structure is significantly supported with public funds; thus confirming both the devolution of state power and privatisation of future development in the city’s Downtown, including Over-the-Rhine. Capital funding for city centre projects includes an investment by the City over five years, of $100 million from Tax Increment Funding (TIFs) supported by funding available through Empowerment Zones and Community Development Block Grants which Over-the-Rhine is eligible for (3CDC 2006a). Combined with the collapsing of the Cincinnati City Council’s Planning Department, the channelling of funds through 3CDC highlights both the re-regulation of capital and state authority, and the physical infrastructure facilitating the future direction of the area at a number of scales; the production and animation of a new institutional and regulatory landscape and new political logics and imperatives (Peck 2003).

The structuring of private investment in 3CDC’s area of influence also indicates a shift in the position of the state as market regulator to facilitator. The creation of Cincinnati New Market Fund, LLC in 2004 generated $50 million in private capital to assist project funding, but this was also matched in federal tax credits offered to those contributing to the fund. 3CDC also receives further support through the Cincinnati Equity Fund, itself set up in 1997 to meet funding gaps in
city centre development projects (3CDC 2006a). However, the important distinction between these sources of private funding lies in the allocation of tax credits as an incentive to invest in Cincinnati’s Downtown and with this, we can see how increasingly the state is placed in a position of facilitating capitalist accumulation by providing incentives and tax breaks for large capital investment.

3CDC is as a private, non-profit corporation whose administrative structure has brought together CEOs and prominent members of Downtown Cincinnati’s economic lynchpins; many of which are companies listed on the Fortune 500. Indeed 3CDC’s board includes representatives from; Kroger, Cinergy, Fifth Third Bank, Toyota, American Financial and Western Southern Financial Groups as well as representatives from the University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center and the Cincinnati Enquirer, a major city newspaper (3CDC 2006a, 2006b). Spatially, it is interesting to note the location of these companies and institutions as these companies are located either physically Downtown, or Uptown in the University and Hospital District whereas Over-the-Rhine itself acts as a corridor between the two districts in 3CDC’s discourse. The administrative structure of 3CDC then, does not account for interests located within Over-the-Rhine, however, the importance of the neighbourhood lies in its location between the physical economic engines of Cincinnati.

3CDC has scaled its operations to include Over-the-Rhine into their definition of ‘Downtown’; despite an historic distinction between the two districts. 3CDC’s mission statement reveals two important reasons for their interest in Over-the-Rhine;

A landmark Cincinnati neighborhood, Over-the-Rhine (OTR) borders the central business district to the north and boasts one of the country’s largest concentrations of Italianate architecture. Regrettably, hundreds of these structures are now vacant or vandalized and the neighborhood itself suffers from a pronounced lack of investment and one of the City’s lowest rates of homeownership. Working with public- and private-sector partners, 3CDC aims to reverse both of these barriers to growth. Specifically, our objective is to revitalize OTR as a vibrant, economically and racially diverse mixed-use community (3CDC 2006a emphasis added).

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11 During an interview with employees from the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce, the metaphor of the corridor was prominently used to describe Over-the-Rhine’s significance to Cincinnati and will be discussed further in following sections.
Over-the-Rhine’s importance to Cincinnati’s redevelopment then, lies in its built environment and physical location. 3CDC mentions the social space of the neighbourhood only in terms of producing a viable, mixed community rather than pointing to the value of the existing population. Through the absence of reference to the existing community, 3CDC allocates them no value in-and-of themselves, only an auxiliary value in terms of adding the character of diversity to a new, economically valuable neighbourhood. This mission statement reveals the privileging of both urban space over urban society, and the economically active consumer over those who fail to meet this criterion (see Hubbard 2004). Following this, homeownership becomes elevated to a condition of economic and moral value whilst the alternatives – renting, squatting, and homelessness – are constructed as social pariahs.

The scale at which 3CDC operates alienates the neighbourhood community both in terms of size and economic and political strength. The inclusion of Over-the-Rhine within 3CDC’s spatial conception of Cincinnati’s Downtown imposes corporate Downtown’s interests onto the neighbourhood; whether those in the neighbourhood agree with their policies and plans or not. Over-the-Rhine lacks any representation on 3CDC’s board of directors. This problem is further compounded if we look at the composition of 3CDC’s Over-the-Rhine Working Group (Table 4.2) where only one member (from Mercy Housing) represents low-income advocacy – there are no representatives from the neighbourhood’s political infrastructure or resident population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Pichler</td>
<td>The Kroger Co.</td>
<td>Former Chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Connelly</td>
<td>Catholic Healthcare Partners</td>
<td>CEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darrick Dansby</td>
<td>Smart Money Community Services, Inc</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Dixon</td>
<td>Procter and Gamble</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeanne Golliever</td>
<td>Cincinnati Development Fund</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynn Marmer</td>
<td>The Kroger Co.</td>
<td>Group VP Corp. Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rick Williams</td>
<td>Homeownership Center</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Williams</td>
<td>North American Properties</td>
<td>President, LISC Chairperson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dale McGirr</td>
<td>University of Cincinnati</td>
<td>Sr. VP for Planning, Finance, and Community Development, University of Cincinnati President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Lenz</td>
<td>Lenz Planning and Design</td>
<td>Regional Director of Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Shepherd</td>
<td>Mercy Housing</td>
<td>OTR Project Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Des Bracey</td>
<td>3CDC</td>
<td>Development Officer OTR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan MacDonald</td>
<td>3CDC</td>
<td>Intern UC-DAAP School of Planning, MCP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frederik Spittaell</td>
<td>3CDC</td>
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</tbody>
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Table 4.2: 3CDC Over-the-Rhine Working Group
(3CDC 2006b: www.3cdc.org/content.jsp?articleId=123)
Although 3CDC is a non-elected and therefore unaccountable organisation, the devolution and privatisation of City Council provides 3CDC with a seemingly democratic mandate whilst simultaneously usurping neighbourhood residents’ right to self-determination. I argue that this process of governance rescaling reveals the importance of space in implementing neoliberal projects. Extending the spatial limits of ‘Downtown’ redefines the function Over-the-Rhine plays within Cincinnati through usurping those institutions operating at the neighbourhood scale. My research reveals that most organisation and residents (with the notable exceptions of the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce and the housing market experts) concurred; if 3CDC doesn’t come and tell you what is going on – and they usually don’t – then you just don’t know;

Jean-Paul: When 3CDC came in and started on their plans for the neighbourhood, were you consulted?

OTR CC: No; we only found out by doing our own research. No-one was consulted so we didn’t see there plans until they went to City Council – and then people had to actively try to get involved in the process.

[3CDC] are just very disconnected from the community and don’t show any interest in anything that we are doing (OTR F).

I don’t think anyone knows what they are doing…3CDC’s job is not to control or regulate development…basically they’re doing to City’s job…leveraging tax credits and grants and all the mystery money that these large institutions can create (Realtor 1).

Well, I know [3CDC] exist and I know they are the ones with the masterplan, but I don’t know what they are doing (Resident 9).

What is that? I’ve heard of 3CDC but I’ve forgotten what it stands for (Resident 2).

Furthermore, the economic role of the neighbourhood is removed from its everyday, lived social-spatial structures – or at least prioritised above them. The right of Over-the-Rhine residents to the neighbourhood, and to be democratically-involved in its future, is clearly seen as being eroded by the re-categorisation of neighbourhood space and a re-scaling of its urban governance regime.
4.4) Operationalising a Neoliberal Governance Regime: Contextuality, Contingency, Coercion

As I have outlined above, the neoliberal processes of institutional restructuring, state devolution and privatisation and governance rescaling drastically alter the administrative form, political-economic function and ideological imperatives of Over-the-Rhine’s regulatory organisations. Whilst Jamie Gough (2002) points to several oppositional and contradictory modes of socialisation under neoliberalism, and Sarah Elwood (2004, 2002) and Eric Swyngedouw (2005) have engaged with mechanisms of political collaboration and neoliberal ‘governance-beyond-the-state’, I now wish to provide a contextual, place-specific illustration of how neoliberal urban governance is operationalised. In particular, I argue that the re-articulation of Over-the-Rhine’s institutional landscape facilitates the coercion of organisations seeking to resist the rolling out a neoliberal hegemonic project and I emphasis the significance of framing issues of neighbourhood development within the context of neoliberal ideological discourse.

Cincinnati City Council – and through governance rescaling and restructuring, 3CDC – hold a powerful coercive position in relation to Over-the-Rhine. This has been further facilitated by changes in the organisational leadership of the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement. Shifts in organisational leadership have had a profound impact upon the resistance strategies pursued by low-income advocacy organisations, and their approach to interaction with other organisations within Over-the-Rhine’s governance infrastructure. Media reports, and testaments from interviewees from representatives of the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement’s institutions attested to Buddy Gray’s confrontational leadership style and anti-gentrification politics which, despite its effectiveness, made him unpopular in certain governance circles – culminating in a media hate campaign during 1996 (Cincinnati Enquirer 1996a). However, on the 16th November 1996, a mentally unstable resident of one of the People’s Movement’s flats shot Buddy Gray in his office at the Drop Inn homeless shelter (Cincinnati Enquirer 1996b). Gray’s murder and the widespread attempts to discredit his vision for Over-the-Rhine ushered in a new era of leadership and change in direction for several of the institutions of the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement.

A noticeable trend has been the emergence in leadership positions of several white, middle class Xavier University graduates who had worked their way up from time spent volunteering with Buddy Gray as students. Whilst this outside interest in social justice in general,
and in the neighbourhood specifically, is beneficial, it is also concerning as the leadership of the People’s Movement increasingly do not reflect the demographic characteristics of their social base. Several low-income resident interviewees suggested the leadership of low-income advocacy groups in Over-the-Rhine has evolved into a small clique that, whilst well intentioned, is alienated from the population they purport to represent (Residents 1, 6, 7, 8). This at once undermines the legitimacy of these organisations to speak for the neighbourhood’s politically and economically marginalised and reflects a decline in willingness to participate in traditional, collectivised grassroots political mobilisation.

The Race Street Tenants Organisation Cooperative [ReSTOC] highlights a vital instance of state and downtown capital (through 3CDC) coercion, and change in both institutional leadership and direction of low-income advocacy organisations. ReSTOC had come under heavy fire during the media campaign against Buddy Gray; being accused of land-banking and perpetuating a ‘super ghetto’ (Quinlivan 2002, CityBeat 2001a). In an attempt to move past this stigmatisation, the current director of ReSTOC has shifted the institution’s perspective to, as he claims, act “like any other business”. This move to see the capital value of their holdings and cooperation with 3CDC has won him praise from market advocates and at several levels of government, leading him to be dubbed “ReSTOC’s new free-market face” (Cincinnati Business Courier 2003) and “more entrepreneurial” (Jim Tarbell cited in Cincinnati Business Courier 2003). Much like Thatcher welcoming Gorbachev to Downing Street; this is now someone capitalist developers can do business with (Walker 1994). Yet this shift in direction has not been voluntary; nor the only option to move past development stalemate and potential negation through the rescaling of City authority to 3CDC despite its neoliberal ‘there is no alternative’ rationalisation by all parties. In discussing Cincinnati City Council withholding Federal funding promised to ReSTOC for several development projects, a ReSTOC employee explained in our interview;

We did our first sizeable low income tax credit programme and it involved six pretty, vacant historical buildings; we wanted to totally renovate them and turn them into affordable housing…anyway, the whole project was about $4 million and $770,000 came through Federal funds passed through the City. They based a whole lot of strings on the project based on the perception that ReSTOC is part of the problem in Over-the-Rhine and not part of the solution. Some of the strings were; we had to sell some of our properties, we were not allowed to
buy additional properties for 8 years – that we would work in cooperation with the City (ReSTOC).

I contend that ReSTOC’s cooperation with 3CDC and market rate advocates in Over-the-Rhine exemplifies the mechanisms of coercion that support the rolling out of neoliberal hegemony; adding to 3CDC’s legitimacy whilst framing ReSTOC’s political project in the discourse of commodification and competition (see Gramsci 1997, also Brenner and Theodore 2002). Through cooperating with the City, and implicitly 3CDC, ReSTOC appears to consent to 3CDC’s neighbourhood plans yet they have been coerced into this position at the risk of losing their voice at all. Such institutional coercion can be framed in the literature regarding local economic development and inter-locality competition (Gough 2002, Harvey 1989b, Cox and Mair 1988) where the significant of economic development in specific locales outweighs the logic of class interest.

After accepting the City’s terms, ReSTOC was viewed in a more positive light as Cincinnati Mayor Charlie Luken declared;

“[ReSTOC has moved ahead and is doing] much, much better…But they still own way too much property… We had to take them on” (cited in Cincinnati Business Courier 2003 emphasis added).

In addition, neighbourhood market-rate advocacy organisations welcomed this change in ReSTOC’s position in Over-the-Rhine’s power structure;

The Drop Inn Center and some of those other groups, it was like them against the white collar guys down here and they were butting heads all the time but what we’re finding is that in the last couple of years – and I believe it is because personalities have changed – people have started to say that we need to work together now (OTR C of C).

Yet this improved image has come at a price. Luken’s claim regarding the amount of property ReSTOC owns in Over-the-Rhine raises an important spatial concern for low-income advocacy organisations. As several representatives from the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement commented during interviewing, their holdings in the built environment are the only reason why
these groups are at the development table to begin with. This emphasises the significance of controlling both the production of physical and abstract space (Lefebvre 1991, De Certeau 1984); indeed Cincinnati City Council’s attempt to undermine the spatial base of ReSTOC is highly questionable as both an interviewee from ReSTOC and Realtors 1 and 2 suggested approximately half of all Cincinnati’s vacant buildings are located in Over-the-Rhine (also see Table 1.1). This proposition is often cited by market-rate advocates in order to assuage fears of revanchist, displacing gentrification yet, if there is space enough for both market-rate development and affordable housing, why does ReSTOC still control too much property?

The City coerced ReSTOC into collaborating, but it is important to note that ReSTOC could only manage to sell one of the buildings they put up for sale. This clearly contradicts the image of a vibrant real estate market in Over-the-Rhine. While one might conclude that the city simply overestimated demand for real estate, I think this would be too simple a conclusion. Instead, I suggest the restructuring of the neighbourhood’s governance regime and the implementation of neoliberal policies need to be understood as the City’s attempts to prepare the neighbourhood for future gentrification through dispersing the urban poor as a potential political constituency; a move that seeks to weaken local advocacy groups by pre-emptively destroying social and spatial structures that may foster future protest and resistance (see chapters 5 and 6).

4.5) Producing Neoliberal Urban Governance

Following the ontological grounding of regulation approaches to contemporary cities, this chapter has argued that localities’ urban governance infrastructure and the mode of regulation governing capitalist accumulation regimes are of fundamental importance in shaping the spatial and social structures of everyday life. Therefore, assessing the neoliberalisation of Over-the-Rhine institutional landscape is essential to conceptualising the everyday urban experience under the imperatives of ‘actually existing’ neoliberalism (Brenner and Theodore 2002). I have argued that, through the processes of institutional restructuring, devolution of state authority and governance rescaling, the regulatory grounding of a neoliberal project has been successfully rolled out in Over-the-Rhine. These mechanisms have facilitated a powerful, coercive position for the [neoliberal] state and interests of corporate Downtown capital and as such, increasingly – and systematically – marginalise agencies aiming to provide social service support to ensure the
social reproduction of Cincinnati’s most vulnerable inhabitants (Wilson 2006, 2004a, Hackworth and Moriah 2006).

As many scholars have successfully argued recently, neoliberalism is neither a homogenous ideology, nor removed from the concrete and material, and often harsh, repressive realities of the everyday urban experience (Hackworth and Moriah 2006, Larner and Craig 2005, Wilson 2004a, Brenner and Theodore 2002, Peck and Tickell 2002, Jessop 2002, 2000, Gibson-Graham 1996). The rolling back of Keynesian urbanism, and the rolling out of a neoliberal alternative (Peck and Tickell 2002) in Cincinnati, and Over-the-Rhine more specifically, reflects the actions and interests of key individuals in the state, capital and labour as they respond to political and economic imperatives occurring from the global to the local. As the widespread ramifications of the crisis of the KWNS, and the transition to the SPWR are experienced at the scale of the local – the urban – regulatory and governance restructuring is grounded contextually the temporal and spatial uniqueness of Over-the-Rhine as historically specific place (following Brenner and Theodore 2002, also Wilson 2004a, Jessop 2000). My research thus illustrates how epistemological and ontological assumptions become grounded, materially, in the particular case of Over-the-Rhine. To dismiss this as after the fact rationalisation (see Larner and Craig 2005, Larner 2005) is to overlook the coordinated and effective project of gentrification and neoliberalisation being implemented in the neighbourhood by key state and capital interests (Hackworth and Moriah 2006).

Therefore, the neoliberalisation of Over-the-Rhine’s institutional landscape has been decidedly produced – and more so, is continually being renegotiated, contested and re-articulated. In making this assertion, the spaces; physical, representational and abstract, which are being articulated, moulded, contested and formed through the actions, ideologies and imperatives of organisations at work in Over-the-Rhine significantly shape both the material, everyday urban existence and the potential to resist, contest and work towards social justice in contemporary cities (Lefebvre 2004, 1991, 1973, Kipfer 2002, Smith 2002, De Certeau 1984).
This chapter assesses the production of space in Over-the-Rhine, emphasising the significance of space, spatial strategies and the geography of (in)visibility in supporting, naturalising and ultimately legitimising the implementation of neoliberal politics and constructions of society itself. I focus on understanding how neoliberal urbanism is implemented by key state and private institutions as a spatial ideology through utilising Harry Sanabria’s (2000) theoretical conception of the ‘arts of domination’\(^\text{12}\) which facilitate the naturalisation of neoliberal conceptions of urban governance, society and space whilst undermining potential resistance.

Drawing on my in-depth interviews and discourse analysis of local Cincinnati media, I examine three explicitly spatial strategies that facilitate the establishment of neoliberal hegemony over the spatial and social structures of Over-The-Rhine; 1) media and state interpretations of the April 2001 ‘riots’ and their aftermath, emphasising the role of the media in discursively 

producing space, 2) the policing of Over-the-Rhine as a spatialised state practice producing (seemingly) paradoxical and contradictory neighbourhood spaces, and 3) the role of discourse and Over-the-Rhine’s restructured governance regime in legitimising displacement through development surrounding Washington Park, highlighting the importance of a spatial grounding in the city for marginalised urban inhabitants. In analysing the spatiality of domination I seek to emphasise the multiple spatial strategies that facilitate the rolling out of a neoliberal project for Over-the-Rhine and naturalises the hegemony of neoliberal regulation and distribution in the sphere of urban everyday life (Lefebvre 2003).

5.1) April 2001 and the Neoliberal Project in Over-the-Rhine

On 7th April 2001 Cincinnati Police Officer Stephen Roach shot and killed 19-year-old African-American Timothy Thomas at the corner of Republic and 13th Street in Over-the-Rhine. The police shooting exploded the tensions and frustrations of Over-the-Rhine’s African-American, predominantly low-income, community who took to the streets to protest systemic and documented racial police discrimination (CityBeat 2001b, Cincinnati Post 2001a). Cincinnati, in the week of 7th-14th April (the period between Thomas’ death and funeral) witnessed the largest urban unrest in the United States since the Los Angeles riots of 1992, themselves sparked by a moment of racial police violence (see Herbert 1997). After the civil unrest subsided, several interest groups involved in protesting police racial profiling coordinated an economic boycott of Downtown Cincinnati businesses and entertainment which lasted for over a three years.

The creation of conflicting discourses surrounding these events by Cincinnati’s media and government represent a significant moment in the production and contestation of Over-the-Rhine space (D’Arcus 2004). For politicians and market-rate development advocates wishing to promote private investment in Over-the-Rhine, the ‘riots’ provide evidence which supports a discourse which demonises Over-the-Rhine as concentrating of poverty (subsequently blaming the neighbourhood’s low-income, black community and social service infrastructure for the damage done during the riots), thus supporting calls to remove affordable housing and advocacy groups to break the neighbourhood’s cycle of poverty (Wilson 2006). For individuals and organisations sympathising with the ‘rioters’, April 2001 is a moment of political protest – in

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13 The L.A. riots were a response to the acquittal of the three white police officers by a jury of whites, Latinos and an Asian and represent the most extreme outbreak of urban unrest and rioting that also occurred in several other U.S. cities.
public space – utilised to criticise systemic state repression; as both a catalyst, and response, to the ‘civil unrest’. I argue that through analysing the interpretations of April 2001’s ‘rioting / civil unrest’ presented in the local media, the ideological rationales of key interest groups’ reveal the logics behind their specific development strategies – and in articulating who belongs in Over-the-Rhine space.

**Constructing Over-the-Rhine Space and Society through ‘the Riots’**

The first discursive conflict surrounding April 2001 lies in the language through which these events are labelled, discussed and understood. In political and media discourse, this period of civil unrest is mostly referred to as ‘the Cincinnati Riots’, however, individuals sympathising with the ‘rioters’, such as Miami University professor Tom Dutton, offer a different reading; Uprising is a much better name for it than what the media call ‘the riots’…the common discourse is that, if you’re black and you’re young, then you’re a criminal, and that’s what comes with the word ‘riot’…If we call it an insurrection or a rebellion, the connotation is that people aren’t going to take it any more (cited in CityBeat 2006a).

The construction of alternate labels for the events of April 2001 reveals the significant distinction between the political presentations of either explicitly violent, illegal behaviour or legitimate political protest which are forwarded by those condemning and condoning this instance of civil unrest. Likewise, unpacking these discourses beyond the moment of their labelling reveals attempts to quantify the events of April 2001 are politically loaded. The Cincinnati Enquirer portrayed ‘the riots’ as a week of widespread lawlessness during which 837 arrests were made and the estimated cost of the riots six months later was published (in the Cincinnati Enquirer 2001a) at $13.7 million. However, of the arrests, 623 were for nothing more than violations of the curfew imposed by Mayor Luken between the 12th and 16th April. In contrast to the discourse presented in the Cincinnati Enquirer, CityBeat columnist Gregory Flannery claims; “It wasn’t much of a riot, OK? Nobody got killed. That’s no small thing…the fire department estimated

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14 See Wikipedia 2006 for an example of this.
15 This discursive distinction was also born out through my fieldwork interviews; during conversations with representatives from organisations associated with the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement, interviewees predominantly referred to ‘civil unrest’ or ‘the uprising’ whereas, in contrast, interviewees from the Over-the-Chamber of Commerce tended to use the term ‘riot’ when referring to the events of April 2001.
damages at less than $300,000…Only 28 people we indicted for aggravated rioting” (CityBeat 2006a).

Despite Flannery’s tone, acts of violence – by both police and protesters – did occur; people were beaten\(^\text{16}\), residential and commercial properties were vandalised and looted; yet the interpretation of these events have been utilised by those demonising and sympathising with the riots / rebellion, applying the appropriate polemic to support their particular outrages. For example, in Cincinnati’s right-wing media, Timothy Thomas has on occasion been blamed for putting Officer Roach in a position where he felt he had to shoot as Thomas 1) ran from the police as he had a number of [albeit minor] outstanding citations, and 2) pulled something from his pocket which could have been mistaken for a weapon (CityBeat 2006b).

Similarly, the shooting of the 7-year-old girl and teacher from Louisville by police firing bean-bag projectiles into a group of peaceful protesters has been open to varying interpretations (Cincinnati Enquirer 2001b). This hit and run shooting by six Cincinnati SWAT members, and the subsequent failure to prosecute charges against them (Cincinnati Enquirer 2001c, Cincinnati Post 2001b), I submit, represent exactly the type of police action that led to the outbreak of violence in Over-the-Rhine and Downtown Cincinnati. However, much to the consternation of the left in Cincinnati’s media, the Cincinnati Enquirer’s Peter Bronson asserts individual culpability for her own injuries on the Louisville teacher, claiming “she wouldn’t have been hurt if she’d stayed at home where she belonged” (CityBeat 2006c referencing Bronson 2006). Such discourses, as those surrounding the above shootings, emphasise the neoliberal tendency to devolve responsibility to the lowest possible level (see Peck 2006).Asserting the role of the individual transcends the isolated moment of the ‘Cincinnati Riots’ as it at once legitimises the use of repressive penal force (the individual is responsible for not putting themselves in a position to warrant it, see Peck 2006, 2003) and attacks the conception of public streets and parks as spaces for collective protest; thus undermining the right and access for individuals to protest and demonstrate in democratic societies (Mitchell 2005, 1997, see also D’Arcus 2005, 2004).

\(^{16}\) A much cited attack involved a white truck driver being dragged from his cab and beaten but also during interviews with residents 6 and 9, they reported being attacked in their car driving between the University of Cincinnati and their flat on Main Street in Over-the-Rhine during the rioting.
Reclaiming Cincinnati: Commemorating April 2001 and the Damage of the Boycott

Both left and right wing media in Cincinnati have prominently disseminated such conflicting discourses on the five year anniversary of April 2001. CityBeat’s coverage, in the ‘Holding On’ special edition (CityBeat 2006d), adopted a tone of introspection, critiquing the socio-economic problems Cincinnati still faces. In contrast, the Cincinnati Enquirer took a more reserved approach to discussing Thomas’ shooting and the riots (Cincinnati Enquirer 2006a, 2006b), reporting on contemporary Over-the-Rhine’s problems with illegal activity; forwarding a discourse of the neighbourhood as a space of crime and drugs (Cincinnati Enquirer 2006c).

From this perspective, criminal social practices occurring in Over-the-Rhine are presented as a barrier for the growth and economic position of Cincinnati. The ‘riots’ exposed the problems of Cincinnati’s urban core, but for the city’s neoliberal politicians and right-wing businesses – expressed through the media – these were not the problems of the African-American community experiencing police discrimination, but instead the problems of a neighbourhood whose social and spatial structures perpetuate a cycle of poverty, violence and criminality. Through constructing this alternative frame of reference (Keil 2002, see Peck 2006) Cincinnati’s neoliberals argue Over-the-Rhine warrants drastic political, economic and social restructuring. With this, their approach to marking the anniversary of April 2001 reveals a distinct political-economic rationale.

The ‘Downtown Hop Around’

Prominent Downtown17 business and community leaders, and politicians (including Cincinnati’s Mayor and Vice-mayor), coordinating in partnership with Downtown Cincinnati Inc.18 and the Over-the-Rhine Foundation, marked the five-year anniversary of April 2001 by attempting to address the damage caused to Downtown’s image and economy resulting from the Downtown boycott. They coordinated an event attempting to draw Cincinnatians back into Downtown’s bars, restaurants and entertainment – publishing the following invitation on the website advertising the ‘Downtown Hop Around’;

17 Here I refer to the ‘Downtown’ scale forwarded by 3CDC, and used by the organisers, to incorporate both the City Centre and Over-the-Rhine; although in analysing the Hop Around, it is significant to note the discursive production of a wider ‘Downtown’.
18 See Leibovitz and Salmon (1999) for a discussion of the formation and role of Downtown Cincinnati Inc. also see Downtown Cincinnati Inc. (2006)
Friends of Downtown Cincinnati, You are invited to join hundreds of community leaders -- including Cincinnati Mayor Mark Mallory and Vice Mayor Jim Tarbell -- to participate in the Downtown Hop Around Saturday, April 8 [2006]. It's an all-evening spirited affair to show support for ‘Downtown’ Cincinnati.

Why a Downtown Hop Around? To celebrate Downtown's recovery five years after three days of rioting damaged the city's image.

You can give Downtown Cincinnati a positive, "upside" media angle by participating in the Downtown Hop Around April 8. Your sheer presence and participation will encourage reporters, editors and TV-radio producers to cover the story fairly and accurately. The story is about Downtown Cincinnati's future, not its past.

(Downtown Hop Around 2006, original emphasis).

Partially reflecting the complexity and subsequent contradictions of neoliberal discourse, civic development and the lived everyday experience, CityBeat, after their 8-page retrospective critically examining the events of April 2001, joins the calls to support the ‘Downtown Hop Around’ as “the organizers…emphasize the fact that there is no particular corporate affiliation or interest to the event…Downtown Hop Around is presented as an effort to put all the bitching aside and breathe fresh air into Downtown” (CityBeat 2006e).

However, I argue that the ‘Downtown Hop Around’ is problematic in relation to understanding April 2001 and contemporary debates regarding the social and spatial role of Over-the-Rhine from four positions; both discursive, and in terms of the material spatiality of the event. Firstly, as I have alluded to above, City Hall focuses on addressing the impact of the Downtown boycott on Cincinnati’s economy. Whilst this is a significant concern, when marking the impact of April 2001, Cincinnati’s new, African-American Mayor – Mark Mallory’s presence (representing the political will of the City) is seen most clearly associating with Downtown capital rather than addressing the interests of Cincinnati’s marginalised communities whose protests and persecution triggered both the ‘riots’ and the boycott. As such, I posit that the Downtown Hop Around has a political affiliation and motive in emphasising the positive visibility of Cincinnati socially and economically. Yet asserting the visibility of Downtown comes somewhat with the neglect of the social concerns raised by Over-the-Rhine’s marginalised communities during, and after April 2001.
Secondly, following on from this, the spatial location of the Downtown Hop Around – Downtown – affirms the visibility of Cincinnati’s Downtown economy and entertainment. Elevating the impact of the boycott on Cincinnati’s urban core positions Downtown as the space most in need of support and regeneration; the regenerative element of the Downtown Hop Around is therefore focused upon the people and spaces of Downtown capital. Five Over-the-Rhine establishments are incorporated in the Downtown Hop Around [Kaldi’s, Nicola’s, the Courtyard on Main, Alchemize and Mr. Pitiful’s (Downtown Hop Around 2006)]. However, they are located along the gentrified Main Street Entertainment District and as such, the Downtown Hop Around neglects the economically and politically marginalised districts of Over-the-Rhine whilst simultaneously calling for the revitalisation of a wider ‘Downtown’ in which the Over-the-Rhine is a vital component.

Thirdly, the nature of the event largely alienates the lower-income African-American community of Over-the-Rhine. In focusing on the impact of the boycott rather than the civil unrest, the Downtown Hop Around constructs city centre businesses as the victim of April 2001 and its aftermath. This shifts April 2001 away from a frame of reference highlighting the problems of Over-the-Rhine’s low-income, black community and the urban poor (see Peck 2006, Wilson 2006, Keil 2002). This attempted separation of April 2001 from discursive attachment to the problems of Over-the-Rhine is furthered by the promotion of the Downtown Hop Around organisers (particularly Jim Tarbell, a prominent market-rate development advocate and City vice-mayor) as “forward-thinking individuals” (CityBeat 2006e). I argue this produces a binary in which low-income advocacy organisations (such as the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement) are presented as the regressive other to the Hop Around’s progressive attempt to revitalise the urban core.

Fourthly, this binary shows that the organiser’s of the Downtown Hop Around exhibit what Jamie Peck (2006) has pointed to as the victimisation complex of America’s conservative right. In calling for “fair reporting” of the event, the organisers’ build up an implicit defence whereby any negative coverage of the event can be dismissed as anti-Cincinnatian. 19

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19 However, this position overlooks the political support of the event and their portrayal in the media; Laurie Quinlivan (2002) in the documentary Visions of Vine Street declares Jim Tarbell “authority on Over-the-Rhine” for no more reason, according to Diskin and Dutton (2002) than he cycles in the neighbourhood and appears at select events promoting its gentrification. Tarbell’s political affiliation as market-rate development advocate has not been critiqued in the mainstream media [0]although elsewhere, his authority and motives are questioned (Diskin and Dutton 2002).
Although the Downtown Hop Around furthers the interest of capital in Cincinnati at the expense of the city’s marginalised inhabitants, support for the event – both in the media and from those attending – (to an extent) transcends political affiliation as support coalesces around an attempt to get behind and produce a more positive image of Cincinnati within and beyond the city; thus representing the complexities of urban politics and revitalisation. Indeed, whilst I have unpacked the Downtown Hop Around as forwarding an implicit political agenda, other events marking April 2001, such as ‘The Black Fist’ organisation’s protest against police brutality (Cincinnati Enquirer 2006a), represent an equally divisive discourse from an alternative perspective, alienating affluent white Cincinnati from black experiences of April 2001.

Commemorating the events of April 2001 provided the opportunity to socially and culturally bring together the communities of both Downtown and Over-the-Rhine, for example a carnival might have been utilised which involved both resident population and utilised both districts’ spaces. Whilst such an attempt mirrors 3CDC’s development rhetoric (see chapter 4.3), I argue that analysing development discourse reveals that this is not the type of integration 3CDC aims to promote. In coordinating a Downtown Hop Around that only included specifically economic (gentrified) Over-the-Rhine spaces, and focusing on the economic impact of April 2001, the organisers (with explicit support from the City) produce a discourse that diverts attention from Over-the-Rhine’s low-income population and marginalised spaces, removing them from media discourse whilst simultaneously raising the visibility of a (seemingly) successful gentrified, neoliberal, development project.

5.2) The Production of Paradoxical Space? Policing OTR

Policing strategies in the neighbourhood have varied considerably over time (especially in response to the events of April 2001) and these shifts reflect the competing impulses to construct Over-the-Rhine as a warehouse for Cincinnati’s criminal and deviant behaviours\(^{20}\) (Wilson 2006) whilst at the same time, extolling the importance of developing Over-the-Rhine to the wider political-economic and social regeneration of Cincinnati (3CDC 2006a). My analysis, building upon archival research into the policing of Over-the-Rhine combined with evidence from interviews conducted in the field, reveals a complex and contradictory, state produced construction of abstract neighbourhood space (Lefebvre 1991). Yet, I argue, the goals of seemingly paradoxical police strategies prove less than contradictory when assessing the short and long terms ramifications of neighbourhood policing.

**Where Downtown Ends and Over-the-Rhine Begins**

3CDC’s development plans for Over-the-Rhine discursively place the neighbourhood into a wider depiction of ‘Downtown’. In particular the rescaling of authority associated with the creation of 3CDC marks a significant shift in understanding and producing neighbourhood space. Whilst historically Over-the-Rhine and Downtown are distinctly separate districts in Cincinnati, this separation has been blurred with the rescaling and restructuring of Downtown / Over-the-Rhine’s Cincinnati’s urban governance regime. The top-down designation of Over-the-Rhine as part of Downtown, I argue, is a spatial strategy that undermines the social base of grassroots, low-income organisations such as the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement and is enacted on the ground by the interests and actions of middle / upper class residents in Cincinnati’s urban core.

Governance rescaling redefines the Over-the-Rhine / Downtown socio-economic constituency providing the community of gentrifiers and market-rate development advocates with a greater political voice and stake in Over-the-Rhine space. This community is interested in shaping Over-the-Rhine as a residential district for Downtown and in order to improve both their everyday living environment and market conditions to stimulate development and in-migration, incoming gentrifiers and residents are playing an increasing role in campaigning to clean-up\(^{21}\) the neighbourhood. For example, organising in cooperation with the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce, the ‘Downtown Residents Council’ has grown in numbers as middle-class residents

\(^{20}\) Particularly removing activities associated with homelessness, crime, poverty, begging and panhandling from the Downtown urban core (Mitchell 1997, also Fyfe 1998)

\(^{21}\) Both in terms of cleaning-up litter and cleaning-up crime.
are buying into the concept of living ‘Downtown’, identifying with this city district and concept of urban living rather than Over-the-Rhine. A local real estate agent describes the resident population buying into Over-the-Rhine:

You have to understand one thing about people buying in Over-the-Rhine and Downtown – residential homeowners – they have a different mindset to other people. They buy because the loft is cool, that’s true, but they really care about Over-the-Rhine and Downtown; they really care about it…They’re all member of the Downtown Residents Council which is stronger than it’s ever been before (Realtor 2).

However, despite the interests of ‘Downtown residents’, and top-down construction of Over-the-Rhine as a part of Downtown, the districts still reflect extremely divergent social and spatial characteristics and with this, are regulated through significantly different policing

**Policing the Neighbourhood as Over-the-Rhine and Downtown**

Contradicting 3CDC’s discursive construction of Over-The-Rhine as a vital component of Downtown space, actually existing police practices employed by the state appear to reinforce the physical and social division between the two districts. This is highly significant as space, a vital component in the production of social relations and reproduction of class interests, is largely defined, controlled and produced by society’s dominant classes\(^2\) (Lefebvre 2003, 1991, De Certeau 1984). As such the spatial practices of the police, an apparatus of the state, perform a fundamental role in shaping urban space (Herbert 2006, 1997, Dikeç 2002, Fyfe and Bannister 1998, Lees 1998).

To maintain the processes of spatial production, society’s consent is required to perpetuate the hegemonic authority of the dominant classes (Althusser 1962). A key ideological principle of neoliberalism that facilitates this spatial construction is the reification of the utility of the individual (Gough 2002, Larner 2000) and with this, the devolution of personal responsibility to the lowest possible scale, the individual citizen (Peck 2006). For example, homelessness and the displacement of homeless people from public spaces (see Mitchell 2005, 1997, 1995) only become acceptable to society if it is conditioned to believe that homelessness is bad; that is to say

\(^{22}\) Although, through the practices of everyday life, the spaces of dominant power may be resisted and usurped (Lefebvre 1991, De Certeau 1984).
that homeless people are homeless because, under neoliberal rationalisation, individuals have not utilised their own abilities in order to achieve homeownership; therefore, they do not deserve it. Such conceptions are disseminated through society by such ideological apparatuses as the media and religion, and become self-evident truths naturalised in popular discourse (Bourdieu 1998, Althusser 1962). With this, the state has the ideological authority to police space in the manner it deems fit and under neoliberalism, this is often expressed through the repressive strategies of the penal state (May, Cloke and Johnsen 2005, Hubbard 2004, Peck 2003).

Such understandings of contemporary poverty led low-income activists to claim that the state and society victimise certain populations in Over-the-Rhine premised upon ideological class assumptions as a representative from the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement comments;

> People pinpoint the single mother who cheated on welfare or the alcoholic who got picked up and went to jail [yet] people don’t look at how we came to live in the richest country in the world but don’t have enough houses for people to live in…And not to excuse it, but there are so many deeper problems and when we look at the victim of injustice, we’re not looking at the responsibility of the structures that caused that to happen in the first place (OTR PM).

In noting this, the interviewee points to a strategy of targeting the visibility of poverty and capitalist inequality rather than their causes. For the rolling out of a neoliberal project in Over-the-Rhine, the visibility of poverty is problematic as it dissuades investment and infringes on neighbourhood’s perceived quality of life (see Cincinnati Enquirer 2006c, 2006d, CityBeat 2004a, 2001a). As such, the policing of such visible (negative) consequences of capitalism needs to be understood as a spatial strategy that seeks to further market-rate interests by removing and displacing these negative signs. However, in doing so, such policing strategies reveal the complexities and contradictions of producing neoliberal urban space.

Whilst housing market experts view 3CDC are actively forwarding the production of Over-the-Rhine as ‘residential Downtown’, archival research, and many fieldwork interviews with both low-income and private development advocates point to a diametrically opposed policing of Downtown and Over-the-Rhine. Representatives from the Over-the-Rhine Contact Center and Foundation articulate this concern using almost identical rhetoric;
Over-the-Rhine is a release valve so that they try to keep all the homeless people here, all the drug dealing here; **as long as it is not Downtown, it’s fine**…Police resources are centred Downtown to keep homeless people away, keep drug dealers away, but the same resources weren’t being spent to keep the residents and folks in Over-the-Rhine safe and protected (OTR CC).

Well, I know that after the riots, I’ve had police officers explicitly tell me that they stopped arresting people generally; they cut back on arrests and pretty much stopped policing Over-the-Rhine altogether…but even before the riots I could go and buy crack in 50 different places in Over-the-Rhine and I don’t know if it’s really the police not caring (with the institutional history as such) and **as long as drugs are kept in Over-the-Rhine, that’s fine** (OTR F).

Here, Central Parkway marks the symbolic and physical boundary between spaces where deviant and marginalised activities take place and where they are not permitted. Following Don Mitchell (2005, 1997) much of this is premised upon the issue of visibility and the protection of Downtown corporate capital from the negative effects of [neoliberal] capitalism. Cincinnati’s panhandling ordinance (discussed in greater detail in Mitchell 1997 see also chapter 6.3) is viewed by low-income and homeless advocacy groups as a way to make Downtown workers feel more comfortable, and in line with neoliberal solutions to crime, a penal remedy is preferred to social support whether this be through policy implementation or physical removal by police officers.. As a member of the Over-the-Rhine Contact Center comments;

Instead of addressing issues of homelessness, they [the state] cut funding for programmes for homeless people and at the same time, they do all they can to keep them out of Downtown (OTR CC).

The state’s construction of a divide between Over-the-Rhine and Downtown can be seen no more clearly in the moment of crisis generated by the April 2001 ‘riots’.

**Policing the ‘Riots’ and the Separation of Over-the-Rhine and Downtown**

Spatial understandings of the ‘riots’ continue to play a large part in both the production and reproduction of [abstract and physical] neighbourhood space; as well as attempts to
legitimise a new, neoliberal political, economic and socio-cultural alternative for Over-the-Rhine. Initially, and perhaps ironically, the demonstrations of April 2001 linked Over-the-Rhine and Downtown as protests took place between the site of Thomas’ death and City Hall. However, by the 11th April, when a Black Panther organised demonstration began marching down Race Street to Downtown, riot police formed a barrier across Central Parkway (CityBeat 2006a). This police barrier reinforces the perception of divide between Over-the-Rhine and Downtown and although the ‘riots’ can be considered a predominantly racial expression (CityBeat 2001c), the police strategy materially expressed the class divide between the two districts, and the state’s concern in protecting capital investment Downtown.

The following interview segment from my conversation with two white, middle-class employees from the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce highlights this problematic and contradictory nature of the attempted reclamation of the riots for market-rate development ends. This conversation reveals a threefold rationale of the relationship between the riots, the police (as an apparatus of the state) and the spaces of Over-the-Rhine and Downtown. Firstly, the interviewee claims that the rioters must have been from outside of the neighbourhood (see D’Arcus 2004). Secondly, the interviewee follows the assumption that people wouldn’t riot in their own neighbourhood as this causes damage to their own property. Finally, the state is viewed as restricting the spread of the rioting, no matter in what direction. The logic of these arguments denies the actual presence of a catalyst to riot for neighbourhood residents, that the sanctity of private property overrides the desire to (violently) protest and emphasises the devolution of (moral) responsibility – and ultimately blames for the material and psychological damage to the city – to the lowest possible scale; that of the individual (Peck 2006, Gough 2002);

**OTR C of C Interviewee A:** Actually, during the rioting, a lot of the people who were doing the rioting were not from Cincinnati, they were from out of town which is a very sad situation.

**Jean-Paul:** They heard it on the news and came down?

**OTR C of C Interviewee A:** Yeah, they thought there was some injustice going on down here so the people that did the rioting and trashed the neighbourhood were not from around here. The residents, a lot of the residents who lived here were just barricaded in their homes hoping there windows and homes were not going to be broken into, that kind of thing.
OTR C of C Interviewee B: If you look at where these riots were concentrated, they were in the areas where these people actually lived; really, why would you want to destroy anymore, the neighbourhood where you live? I mean, if you wanted to riot and make some noise, you’d go outside of your neighbourhood, you know what I mean?

Jean-Paul: The places where the rioting occurred, do you think that that was in part a consequence of how the riots were being policed?

OTR C of C Interviewee A: Hmmm… Um… Probably, yeah. I don’t want to point any fingers at anybody because I don’t think that anybody knew what to do at the time, nobody in the political office had any experience with this kind of thing before and they were just trying… I think it took a long time for them to do anything or know what to do or how to handle it.

OTR C of C Interviewee B: Also I think the boycott is a really strong symbol of what the riots were about, what they were kind of about and how they were policed. During the riots, they barricaded all of the streets at Central Parkway so that none of the riot… to keep it contained. And Central Parkway is almost like a river through Downtown Cincinnati, you know, and if there is ever any violence in Cincinnati they try to retain it in Over-the-Rhine and really that retention of Central Parkway has some inequitable perceptions of, you know, racial lines where people just have misinterpretations. And so to keep that barrier there, and during the riots they keep that barrier there because they didn’t want this to overflow at all. And so, through the retention, they keep it centralised, kind of isolated those people and so a lot of the stigma that is there from the riots is because of the policing; I mean it’s black people in Over-the-Rhine, not people in Cincinnati.

OTR C of C Interviewee A: But really that’s where it started so what choice would they have had but to retain it in here, they didn’t want it to go any further, no matter in what direction.

Premising the interpretation of the policing strategy with these assumptions is problematic as they ignore the historical-material and racial tensions that have existed between Over-the-Rhine and Downtown, especially in downplaying the attempt of the uprising to target Downtown and City Hall (CityBeat 2006a). In an article seeking to de-bunk the myths of the riots, CityBeat points to the role played by religious and community organisers in attempting to keep the protests from turning violent. This, combined with the purported exaggeration of the scale and cost of the riots, problematises the notion of radical troublemakers and violent thugs flooding the streets (CityBeat 2006b, see D’Arcus 2004). Although violent outbreaks and widespread civil unrest did
occur, to criticise people from outside the neighbourhood, and Cincinnati for coming to Over-the-Rhine to protest undermines the liberal rights of free speech and protest, and the exhibition of empathy beyond the place-specific Thomas killing.

The question of private property neglects the fact that many involved in the ‘riots’ are not homeowners in the neighbourhood, nor have access to capital resulting in part, in their political-economic alienation and discrimination by the police. This leads me to interpret the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce interviewees as asserting what they see as the (legitimate) resident population – barracked in their homes – as being compromised to a large degree by the incoming middle-class and white population. This line of argument seeks to distance the riots from a spatial connection to Over-the-Rhine and in attempting to break this link, it constructs the image of a neighbourhood victimised by delinquents, notably along extreme, racial lines.

Following this, I argue the position articulated by the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce employees supports the neoliberal elevation of the economically active consumer over those politically and economically excluded from the market (see Hubbard 2004). Those with an economic stake in the neighbourhood, through homeownership or capital investment in building development for example, are considered as being more inclined to the responsible control of Over-the-Rhine compared with of the explicitly ‘black’ others inhabiting neighbourhood space. Clearly Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce Interviewee B’s closing comments (above) reflect an argument that if you are black, then you do not belong in Over-the-Rhine space. As such, the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce representatives posit that the neighbourhood should be opened to market-rate investment through developing the neighbourhood as part of Downtown.

**Policing within Over-the-Rhine: Spatial and Temporal Variations**

Whilst the specific policing of the riots at the wider Downtown scale reveals a disjuncture between discursive representations of Over-the-Rhine as part of Downtown and the lived experience of separation between the two districts, the everyday rhythms policing of Over-the-Rhine at the neighbourhood scale reflect significant spatialised class and racial barriers. A middle aged, white female resident of a condo on Central Parkway observes distinct patterns of policing;

> When all the kids from the suburbs come down at the weekends, at the bars and clubs on Main Street, there’s suddenly an extraordinary police
presence but it’s simply to protect the white kids…from the people who live on Vine Street and some of the African-American community…It looks like they don’t have a sustained presence but they do for example at Findlay Market at the weekends when people from the suburbs come down… suddenly there’s police walking the streets when **there’s usually no cops walking the street** at all – they’re all in cars (Resident 3).

Another resident in the gentrified district of Over-the-Rhine concurred with this sentiment as living in the neighbourhood allows residents to observe both the spatial and temporal dynamics of policing in Over-the-Rhine. In particular, he points to a lack of community policing initiatives;

> What I see is…**cops on bikes** – but they look ridiculous, and all they do is cycle round; white young cops on bikes and I don’t see anyway that this can resonate with the street culture…I don’t think that they have any idea what a community oriented approach to policing is (Resident 9).

It is concerning to note that for what the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce sees as a community approach to policing – seeking to remove the atmosphere of mutual distrust between the police and African-American community – officers on bikes and in cars are physically removed the community’s inhabitants. Furthermore, the two quotes above come from two [relatively affluent] whites who moved to Over-the-Rhine after a period of time living in the suburbs. Echoing reports in the local media (e.g. CityBeat 2001c), an affluent male living in the Pendleton district explained during our interview that the ‘riots’ acted as a “wake up call… being a white, middle class resident of the neighbourhood, I don’t know how bad the police can be” (Resident 3). Another young white female resident claimed that much of the mistrust between the police and community arises from suburban officers driving into Over-the-Rhine and not understanding or engaging with the struggles of the neighbourhood’s residents. Noting these problems, a representative of the Over-the-Rhine Foundation put forward the proposition that rather than systematic police neglect, Cincinnati’s policing “just isn’t any good”.

Significantly, these are the views of white residents who have recently moved into Over-the-Rhine’s condos and gentrified housing stock. The spaces they view as being policed are the spaces of investment, events that draw outsiders into Over-the-Rhine and the entertainment district along Main Street. Contemporary policing strategies, combined with longer running mistrust relating both to police discrimination and apathy leave Over-the-Rhine’s lower-income
residents feeling alienated and unprotected. One low-income resident interviewee commented “they offer no protection. They may be protecting someone, but it is certainly not us” (Resident 6, 7, 8). This lack of trust or faith in the police leads to residents not reporting crimes due to both long police response times and fear of recrimination by neighbourhood drug dealers who see officers visiting individuals’ houses. As such, a white, low-income female resident told me that whilst the police in the neighbourhood do a “so-so job”, they do not have an impact on the levels of crime in the neighbourhood (Resident 4).

**Not So Paradoxical After All: The Police and the Production of Over-the-Rhine Space**

The exercise of state power, through the deployment of the City’s police force produces distinct spatialities of regulation that whilst appearing contradictory, actually serve to mutually support the rolling out of neoliberalism in Over-the-Rhine (see Herbert 2006, 1997). The policing strategies in Over-the-Rhine and Downtown are premised upon right-wing neoliberal assumptions in so far as they 1) demonise the urban poor for their position in society, reacting violently in regulating and controlling deviant behaviours (see Peck and the penal state 2003, also Hubbard 2004) and 2) are mobilised to protect spaces of investment and individuals coming into the neighbourhood to engage in economic activity. The complex inter-dynamics of race and class in the American city (Wilson 2006, Squires and Kubrin 2005, Massey and Denton 1996, Wilson 1996, Smith and Feagin 1995, Beauregard 1993) blur the boundaries between socio-cultural racial and economic policing, but I posit that the spatial and temporal police strategies practiced in the neighbourhood reflect most concretely the separation of space along class lines combined with historical and racial structures that led to the black population becoming economically and politically marginalised.

The paradoxical policing barrier produced between Over-the-Rhine and Downtown only appears to be contrary to 3CDC and City Council’s desire to integrate the districts and develop Over-the-Rhine as an up-market residential neighbourhood. Instead, the policing strategies in Over-the-Rhine reveal that the neighbourhood is not socially or economically ready for this rescaling. Forcing criminal and deviant behaviours into Over-the-Rhine from Downtown concentrates the visibility of these practices and, as I have argued, in line with neoliberal doctrine, it is this visibility which legitimises the rolling out of repressive penal policing and state
intervention within Over-the-Rhine and (eventual) displacement of those associated with these behaviours. As such, the contextual grounding of neoliberalism creates the conditions that are then used by neoliberal advocates and politicians to legitimise its implementation.

Internally, the policing of Over-the-Rhine, in regulating specific sites, spaces and events connected with private investment and market-rate development neglects the lower-income districts of the neighbourhood and creates conditions which drive out this resident population. This material practice reflects the neglect of Over-the-Rhine’s low-income community in 3CDC’s development discourse (see chapter 4.3). Not only are residents denied democratic access and accountability in planning the future of the neighbourhood, but furthermore, state policing strategy serves to create an everyday, lived urban experience (deteriorating conditions of living, increased crime) which pressures low-income residents to leave the area. Rather than repressive, violent displacement, the police regulation of space has led to the deterioration of spaces within the neighbourhood so that people want to leave – and the implementation of neoliberal urban housing policies (discussed in detail chapter 6) facilitates the out-migration of Over-the-Rhine’s lower income communities. Commenting on policing in the neighbourhood, an employee from the Drop Inn Center expresses this process;

After the riots, there was a big police slowdown and in 2001 it was like the Wild West in Over-the-Rhine…more than a development factor, it became a safety factor; a lot of people left – people who had been here a long time…[for the police] it was like ‘you protest us, you take care of your own crime’ (DIC).

Therefore the construction of Over-the-Rhine as a warehouse for the Cincinnati’s drugs, crime and homeless by the state, through the police, produces, over time, the conditions whereby the gentrifying rescaling of the neighbourhood can be rolled out without the appearance of physical, hostile and violent displacement, thus facilitating the re-production of Over-the-Rhine as a residential space for Downtown. Despite the initial impression of contradictory policing practices in Over-the-Rhine and Downtown, these spatial and temporal variations serve to facilitate the ultimate long-term goal of integrating the two districts.
5.3) Legitimising Displacement and the Spaces of Development

In the following section, I analyse the neoliberalising roles of the media and Over-the-Rhine’s governance infrastructure to highlight the significance of physical and symbolic space for those rolling out a hegemonic neoliberal project, and those opposing it. My analysis reveals a third spatial ‘art of domination’ employed by the dominant class in Over-the-Rhine’s governance structure. This lies in the spatial diffusion and displacement of low-income, grassroots political organisations, effectively reducing the ability of the institutions of the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement to politically mobilise and furthering the apparent political legitimacy of the neighbourhood’s gentrifiers and market-rate development advocates. I will examine these issues in relation to the development of Washington Park. Located in two blocks between 12th and 14th, and Race and Elm streets, Washington Park is the focus for 3CDC’s development plan in Over-the-Rhine (3CDCa) yet also the spatial locus for the Drop Inn homeless shelter and much of ReSTOC’s affordable housing stock.

The Physical and Symbolic Significance of Washington Park

My research suggests a prevailing sense, in both the institutional and resident communities in Over-the-Rhine, that 3CDC’s commitment to its three development districts is highly unequal. In comparison to Fountain Square and the Banks, the historic processes and intersecting structures of racism, classism and neglect – combined with the complex and evolving institutional infrastructure in Over-the-Rhine – present a more complex urban challenge; socially, politically and culturally. The focus areas 3CDC identifies Downtown have significantly more prestige and a quicker turn around time than Over-the-Rhine and whilst there is still political and economic contestation surrounding both the development process and the plans themselves, the interests of Downtown capital and political will remain relatively homogenous compared the fractured political-economic and social infrastructure of Over-the-Rhine. Noting these fundamental differences, a local real estate agent questions 3CDC’s hiring practices;

I think it is unfortunate that they hire really big name, big money people to do Fountain Square and the Banks and they hire some guy who is a mid-level director at [Washington] D.C. to handle Over-the-Rhine; which is a hell of a lot more complicated…and important to my mind. And I
think it says a lot more, regardless of the lip service, of what 3CDC thinks of Over-the-Rhine (Realtor 1).

This feeling of neglect is compounded with a widespread distrust of 3CDC resulting, to a large degree, of the secrecy surrounding their activities and the removal of democratic access and accountability from the planning process (see chapter 4). Yet within this wider feeling of suspicion and neglect, 3CDC is not tackling the development of Over-the-Rhine as a singular entity. Although this makes sense given the diversity in racial and class composition of the neighbourhood, the focus of 3CDC is highly problematic and reflects the hostile revanchism of neoliberal urbanism and its naturalisation in contemporary urban space and society.

The eastern side of Washington Park is dominated by Music Hall; a significant cultural and architectural landmark of Cincinnati, and key motivation for 3CDC to forward the park as a district for education and the arts. Washington Park elementary school is located in the northernmost block of the park whilst to the south lies the Drop Inn homeless shelter and the transitional housing run by the centre (Figure 5.1). Washington Park’s location, just north of the CBD makes it, in the eyes of Cincinnati’s market-rate development proponents, a potential catalyst for private investment into Over-the-Rhine. Therefore 3CDC have focused on this district of the neighbourhood, acquiring property surrounding the park through auctions and eminent domain.

I argue that there are three major reasons for this focus upon Washington Park; 1) to maintain a physical proximity to Downtown, thus supporting the conception and reality of Over-the-Rhine becoming part of a ‘Greater Downtown’, 2) this proximity facilitates a gentrification frontier pushing crime and deviancy north of Liberty Street, and 3) in order to achieve the first two points, Washington Park is the spatial locus for many institutions of the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement including ReSTOC and the Drop Inn Center – by tactically relocating these institutions and their spatial base, 3CDC is in a position to redefine whose neighbourhood space Over-the-Rhine is. This allows 3CDC to produce spatial and social norms which protect the spaces frequented by suburbanites (such as Music Hall), fostering gentrification and market rate development, whilst alienating the existing, undesirable population.

Controlling the space of Washington Park is therefore fundamentally important in shaping the future of Over-the-Rhine. The park, as a symbolic and physical space reflects, in a
Figure 5.1: Development and Displacement Surrounding Washington Park

A) Current Land-Use Surrounding Washington Park

Development and Displacement Surrounding Washington Park

1. Drop Inn Center
2. Drop Inn Center Transitional Housing
3. Washington Park School
4. ReSTOC Office [Potentially Moved]
5. Cincinnati Music Hall
6. School for the Creative and Performing Arts [SCPA]
7. Findlay Market

B) Potential Future Land-Use Surrounding Washington Park

- Relocation of Building / Institution
- Concentration of ReSTOC / OTR
- People's Movement Controlled Housing
- Area of 3CDC's Washington Park Plan / 3CDC controlled Space
- Washington Park

Direction of Displacement
microcosm, the battle between the neoliberalising elements in Over-the-Rhine’s governance structure and the low-income grassroots organisations advocating on behalf of the existing resident population and their respective articulations of the neighbourhood’s future development.

Stigmatised Communities and the Conflict over Park Space

No other issue highlights the strategies of spatial displacement utilised by the City and 3CDC more clearly than the calls to relocate the Drop Inn Center and its transitional housing\textsuperscript{23} to enable Washington Park’s development. The argument behind this proposed displacement posits that the presence of the homeless in the park inhibits investment in the district and negatively infringes upon [perceptions of] living standards in the area. In contrast to the depiction of the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement as unwilling to cooperate with the neighbourhood’s neoliberals (see chapter 4), an interviewee from the Drop Inn Center offers a compromising stance vis-à-vis the development of Washington Park;

\begin{quote}
Washington Park is where we want to focus our efforts…use it in a positive way rather than battle over whose park it is (DIC).
\end{quote}

However, in contrast, the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce perceives the future of Washington Park in more absolute terms;

\begin{quote}
The School for the Creative and Performing Arts (SCPA) is moving over [to Washington Park]…we have the Drop Inn Center down there and it is going to have to be moved (OTR C of C).
\end{quote}

3CDC’s plans for Washington Park include the creation of an educational and arts cluster in the south of the park and the extension of the parkland to the north, where Washington Park elementary school is currently located. In May 2004, 3CDC released plans to move the SCPA from the Pendleton District to the block south of Washington Park – previously designated by

\textsuperscript{23} This is housing run through the Drop Inn Center in which homeless people are supported back to a position where they can live independently after prolonged periods of homelessness. The transitional housing project seeks to gradually reduce dependency upon social service supports such as the Drop Inn Center’s emergency shelter (DIC).
Cincinnati Public Schools, resident and parents as the site for a new Washington Park elementary school to be built. With the relocation of the SCPA, 3CDC plans to move the new elementary school to Walnut Street (CityBeat 2004a, Cincinnati City Council 2002). In doing this, not only did 3CDC’s undemocratic planning process alienate many neighbourhood residents and activists, it negated much of what was planned in the 2002 Comprehensive Plan. The rescaling of Over-the-Rhine’s governance regime facilitated the bypassing of the community’s attempt at self-determination and the rolling-out of a market led model of development for the neighbourhood. Furthermore, 3CDC’s plans spatial conflict with the Drop Inn Center, calling for the relocation of the shelter and its transitional housing units.

The relocation of the SCPA has stimulated debate in the neighbourhood regarding the safety of children in Over-the-Rhine. Particularly, concern has grown surrounding the move of the school in relation to the presence of sexual offenders living in Over-the-Rhine after they have served their time in prison; again, media representation has been highly significant in framing this discourse. An employee from the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce claims;

> We find that we have a total of four schools down here and one of the things that we’ve found is that sexual predators, who are not allowed to be housed within so many feet from schools; that is being violated and is something we need to work out (OTR C of C).

Institutions, politicians and the local media who are pushing for market-rate development utilise the moral outcry against sex offenders to demonise several organisations of the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement – particularly the Drop Inn Center – as certain activists in these organisations have questioned the violation of individuals’ rights that displacement of this nature generates. A representative from the Drop Inn Center describes this process;

> [the media] say ‘you might be happy that these offenders aren’t near your children’s schools, but these agencies are trying to turn this around’. It’s all backwards, they totally screw it round (DIC).

In the popular and media consciousness, the defence of the rights of the ‘indefensible’ by organisations such as the Drop Inn Center links criminality and social deviancy with homelessness (see Mitchell 1997, 1995). This connection fits with the neoliberal ontological
understanding of poverty as individual responsibility and provides a moral argument for the removal of the Drop Inn Center from its location next to the new SCPA. The power of this discourse transcends racial and class lines as a female low-income resident commented during an interview that sex offenders were more of an issue in the neighbourhood than crime and drugs and therefore “the police should focus on getting these people out” (Resident 4). Her position as a mother makes this argument understandable and reflects the power of this polemic. However, her position also highlights the complexities of everyday urban life for disenfranchised individuals where economic and social marginalisation produce vastly different political and moral dilemmas for neighbourhood residents.

Yet what is particularly problematic about the emergence of the debate surrounding sexual offenders is that it has only developed in relation to the relocation of the SCPA. Interviewees from the Miami University Center for Community Engagement noted this issue when discussing the future of the Washington Park area;

**MU CCE Interviewee A:** There’s been a conversation for quite some time about the SCPA...The park is not seen as a great asset now because of people from the outside just seeing it as where the druggies and drunks go, where the homeless hang out all day...I feel that there is going to be a push for money to “clean up” the park to a version that people outside would like to see...[the SCPA is] not going to put up with a park full of homeless people...that urges them to do something.

**MU CCE Interviewee B:** And I think what’s interesting is that Washington Park School has been IN the park for as long as the Drop Inn Center...It seems a little suspicious to that all of a sudden there is a great concern for child safety...probably because there is a different clientele of kids that are going to be in the area (MU CCE).

With the move of the SCPA, as the above quotes suggest, the new users of Washington Park wish to redefine neighbourhood space and who can use it, significantly premised upon the class of the incoming student population.

The contestation over the development of Washington Park and Over-the-Rhine more generally, I argue must be viewed in through the prism of class. As can be seen in relation to the debate on child safety, shifts in the socio-economic characteristics of users of neighbourhood
space act as a catalyst for the re-regulation and redefinition of social norms and behaviours. An interviewee working at the Drop Inn Center points to the significance of class for both defining space and the regulation of everyday social practices;

With all these regulations and violations (if you can call them that) that [City Council] have laid out [for Washington Park], we need to argue what the community norms are. Get residents at the table, agencies, businesses, and say ok, what can we agree is acceptable and what can we agree is not acceptable? Okay, so; ‘Drinking in the park is unacceptable’. ‘Okay so what does that mean? Does that mean everyone drinking? Does that mean people sipping champagne or wine in the park or doing a 40oz? Is drinking unacceptable across the board?’ – We all need to be agreed that that is the common norm and that needs to be a class neutral norm (DIC).

The interviewee clearly articulates the difficulty of defining public space and its use; in particular, he points to the attempt to regulate spatial practices associated with the homeless in Washington Park – such as alcohol consumption. Many residents of the Drop Inn Center have alcohol (and drug) abuse problems24 but 3CDC and market-rate advocates (an argument raised during my interview with employees of the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce) point to this as a reason to remove them from the park. However, this again is a discourse intertwined with conceptions of class as not only is drinking wine in the park deemed more acceptable, occurrences of alcohol abuse and weekend binge drinking by (predominantly) affluent white suburbanites along the Main Street Entertainment District, as discussed above, is met with protective police intervention.

Attempts to plan and redefine the space of Washington Park – alongside the discourse surrounding both the presence of sex offenders and use of the park by the homeless have placed increased pressure on the physical and symbolic position of the Drop Inn Center (and wider Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement organisations) in the neighbourhood. A representative from ReSTOC describes how the organisation is placed under similar pressures to the Drop Inn Center (also see chapter 4.4);

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24 The Drop Inn Center runs programmes to help addicts break their addictions.
There’s this perception that ReSTOC is part of the problem…the perception is we bought up a lot of this neighbourhood, of Washington Park, and that we’re preventing private investment from taking hold…so the strategy is let’s make ReSTOC get rid of some of their properties…and that will open the floodgates to private investment [but] that’s all perception – we are part of the solution, not the problem (ReSTOC).

With this, there have been growing calls by 3CDC and market-rate development advocates to remove both the Drop Inn Center (OTR C of C) and, in order to clear the way for the SCPA, the shelters transitional housing. A representative from the Drop Inn Center notes that;

[The location of the Drop Inn Center has] become a symbolic issue people are fixating on…If you look at the floor plan of Over-the-Rhine, and all the space you could do something in – it’s huge, and if you look at our space, it’s really small but it’s become this symbolic issue – a polarising issue. Some people have convinced themselves that the Drop Inn Centre has to be moved (DIC).

But with this, the Drop Inn Center claims they will work with 3CDC and look to relocate the Center’s transitional housing north of Liberty Street (see Figure 5.1) and discuss the prospect of moving the shelter from its current location – providing the alternative venue provides and equal or greater accommodation.

**The Drop Inn Center and the Discourse of Displacement**

Despite the above arguments focusing on the importance of struggling to define space, who uses it and what activities are deemed acceptable; the position adopted by the Drop Inn Center towards the development of Washington Park and the relocation of their shelter building and transitional housing is problematic. I argue that if the urban is the setting and stake of class struggle (Lefebvre 1991, see also Kipfer 2002, Keil 2002, Brenner 2001), the physical space of the Drop Inn Center building (as well as those operated by ReSTOC in Over-the-Rhine) is fundamentally significant; as interviews with employees of ReSTOC and the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement have commented, these institution’s buildings are a fundamentally significant reason that they are the planning / development table in the first place;
We certainly are in the minority and the only asset we have is the property (ReSTOC).

As such, relocating the Drop Inn Center and attacking the physical presence of the low-income advocacy groups in Over-the-Rhine are significant steps facilitating the rolling out of neoliberalism and undermining potential resistance movements as a representative from the Drop Inn Center concedes (also see chapter 6);

From [3CDC’s] point of view, yes it is a chipping away [of our position in the neighbourhood]…But then on the other hand I want to protect people’s space to have a space. I don’t want to defend the building; it’s not the building that needs defending - it’s having a space to get your needs met in (DIC).

However I believe this position contradicts the ideas of accessibility and visibility [prominently featured on the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement websites and mission statements (Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement 2005)] that are vital in drawing attention to issues of homelessness. Whilst the physical shelter might be conceived as a merely ‘a building’, this overlooks its material and symbolic presence which at once symbolises the struggles of the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement, visibly highlights the problem of homelessness, and provides a specific, geographically-sensitive service to the vulnerable communities who require it.

The significance of the shelter building – and its geographic setting – is further exemplified when juxtaposed against Music Hall and 3CDC’s proposed redevelopment of Washington Park. A physical, material grounding in space is fundamentally important for meeting the needs of social reproduction and furthermore, in the construction and operating of resistance movements and an anti-neoliberal politics (Harvey 2003, 1996, 1985, Lefebvre 2003, De Certeau 1984) and with this, the visibility of the Drop Inn Center on Washington Park dramatically highlights the failings of a society that produces homelessness – and given the increased numbers of individuals requiring its services – a neoliberal regulatory system that exacerbates this tendency. Moving the Drop Inn Center and its transitional housing from their current location would at once remove services from the spatial locus of the population that needs
them; the homeless (as well as individuals the Drop Inn Center sets up in its transitional housing programmes) often lack access to transportation to reach services and public spaces in which to (for example) panhandle. After prolonged periods of homelessness, individuals assisted by the Drop Inn Center can lack the skills required to live alone and as such, require a localised support community and a concentration of social services. Therefore the Drop Inn Center requires a social and spatial grounding in the central city to meet the needs of this population and raise awareness of their cause.

When discussing this issue, an interviewee from Miami University’s Center for Community Engagement offered an alternative perspective on the place of the Drop Inn Center in Washington Park’s redevelopment;

The question always comes up as there is the state’s second largest homeless shelter opposite Music Hall, what can we do to get this away from Music Hall? Rather than saying ‘holy crap! The state’s second largest homeless shelter! We’ve got to do something about that problem’ (MU CCE).25

However, whilst the Drop Inn Center’s leadership is pursuing such avenues, their standpoint regarding relocation appears somewhat fatalistic, looking at how best to operate in a new governance structure that affords little or no access to positions of power, as was described during our interview;

It used to be that our government was an elected and accountable forum and our politicians were elected to help determine some of these issues like what the rules in parks should be, where bathrooms would be located, the government used to do that but now we have these private forums, there’s no accountability, there’s no link...No forum to renegotiate with this 3CDC group to try to relocate some of out transitional housing to another site because the current site is wanted for one of their current projects. Okay, so we say ‘let’s talk’, we worked for five months and then at the last minute, they pulled the plug. And there’s nothing we can do

25 Also, several interviewees expressed the idea of integrating the Drop Inn Center to the educational and cultural facilities of the park; such as using homeless residents at the Drop Inn Center as ‘Homeless Ambassadors’ to escort people through Washington Park to events at Music Hall as an attempt to destigmatise this population. Other suggestions included bring school children into the Drop Inn Center to engage with homeless people to both gain an understanding of the homeless community and the problems they face, and to assist in volunteering. Both of these ideas attempt to alter perception of homelessness in contrast to the dominant representation in the media and popular discourse that equates homelessness with criminality and deviancy (DIC, ReSTOC, OTR F, MU CCE).
about it because there’s no forum; they weren’t elected. There’s no accountability. There are no rules governing their behaviour… they write the rules and then they can change them (DIC).

Facing the political coercion facilitated through the re-articulation of Over-the-Rhine’s governance regime, the Drop Inn Center does not view what is happening to their spatial position in the neighbourhood as displacement. For the leadership of the Drop Inn Center, displacement occurs when a neighbourhood becomes increasingly attractive to capital, prices rise and the original, lower income population is [violently] removed a replaced by a new, more affluent community but, during our interview, they claimed this is not what is occurring through the mounting pressure to relocate the shelter and transitional housing; out-migration from Over-the-Rhine is caused more from safety concerns than from economic conditions. This rationale has met with criticism within the Drop Inn Center’s own community as a resident of Center’s housing claims – the Drop Inn Center’s leadership is itself implicit in the gentrification of Washington Park as they are cooperating with 3CDC. As a result, he finds himself (and other homeless friends) as being out of place in the new, gentrifying Washington Park.

Over-the-Rhine has witnessed large-scale economic urban displacement; for example, representatives from the Drop Inn Center, Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement and Contact Center described how, during the redevelopment of Main Street and Over-the-Rhine’s entertainment district, numerous members of the Appalachian immigrant community were forcibly removed from their properties to allow for the construction of condos, bars and cafés. However, I argue (in contrast to position of the Drop Inn Center’s leadership) that this is exactly what is happening in relation to the proposed relocation of the Drop Inn Center and its transitional housing. With Washington Park and Music Hall being pushed forward as the centrepieces for a cultural and educational cluster by 3CDC, the land surrounding the Drop Inn Center has increased in value and as a result a certain class of people [who are using the homeless shelter and transitional housing as well as Washington Park itself] are being forced out of place by a predominantly economic rationale. As such, displacing low-income advocacy organisations, and dispersing homeless and other stigmatised communities shifts the political power base – and capacity to produce urban space - towards 3CDC and the imposition of their market-rate development plans for Washington Park.
5.4) Geographies of (In)Visibility: the ‘Arts of Domination’ and Neoliberal Ideology

This chapter has examined several spatial ‘arts of domination’ that serve to ground and legitimise the rolling-out of neoliberal ideology within the specific historical-geographic context of Over-the-Rhine (Brenner and Theodore 2002, see Sanabria 2000). The media representations of Over-the-Rhine offer a particular construction of neighbourhood space to the popular consciousness. Policing in the district illustrates how the spatial and temporal use of repressive state apparatus produces a (seemingly) paradoxical understanding of the function of Over-the-Rhine in contemporary Cincinnati and the development of Washington Park highlights the importance for the removing the visibility and physical presence of poverty from neighbourhood space for the success of the neoliberal project in Over-the-Rhine (Smith 2002). The complicated and contradictory nature of these processes serves to highlight the complexity of implementing a neoliberal hegemonic project into the murkiness of urban politics and everyday life. However, I argue that these spatial practices are operated through discursive and material geographies of (in)visibility. Barriers to economic development, and spaces and social structures that might serve as a focus for potential resistance are attacked by 1) removing them from visibility or 2) if this cannot be sufficiently realised, actively and visibly discredited and demonised. There is a necessity to remove (from visibility) the negative effects of [neoliberal] capitalism (such as poverty, blight, crime, homelessness) in order to ensure the legitimacy of capitalist ideology and a neoliberal development project (Smith 2002, Weber 2002).

The case of Over-the-Rhine emphasises the significance of constructing an ideological myth of utopian capitalism rather than the experienced utopia of unlimited exploitation (see Bourdieu 1998). With this, space is vitally important in maintaining the ideological hegemony of a particular set of dominant beliefs, assumptions and ideals; everything that may contest or undermine this dominant thought and class relation must be removed from purview (Goonewardena 2005 see also Mitchell 2005, 1997, Goonewardena 1998, Engels 1843-4). Therefore, I suggest 3CDC’s plans for Over-the-Rhine (specifically surround Washington Park) attempt to tackle the visibility of crime and poverty26. Furthermore, even the Over-the-Rhine

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26 This argument is indebted to Don Mitchell who discussed these issues at the Miami University Center for Community Engagement (25/03/2005).
Comprehensive Plan notes, the neighbourhood faces the challenge of ‘concentrations of poverty’ (Cincinnati City Council 2002: 1) rather than the challenge of poverty itself.

‘Actually existing’ neoliberalism in Over-the-Rhine is rolled out through attacking the visibility and spatial concentration of poverty (Mitchell 2005, Hubbard 2004, Brenner and Theodore 2002). The production of space and the regulation of social-spatial practice, in turn supports, and is supported by a discourse that make the implementation of an ideology not only appear the best option, but the only option (Peck 2006, Wilson 2006).
Chapter 6

Everyday Life and the Neoliberal Urban Experience

This chapter is concerned with understanding how the new spatialities and modes of regulation discussed in chapters 4 and 5 impact on the everyday urban experience of Over-the-Rhine inhabitants. I argue everyday life and its regulation are fundamentally significant in naturalising [neoliberal] ideological assumptions in contemporary society and with this, producing and legitimising shifts in the structure and functioning of urban governance regimes. Yet this is a dynamic, dialectical relationship and the policies implemented through [urban] governance structures in turn shapes and regulate the practices of everyday life which occur in urban space (Lefebvre 2003, Brenner and Theodore 2002, Keil 2002, Kipfer 2002).

To address the central research question of this chapter I analyse 1) the contextual grounding of urban housing and development policies (introduced into Over-the-Rhine by external agencies and constructed at the national, city and neighbourhood scale) illustrating how they shape the social and political-economic future of Over-the-Rhine, 2) the impact of Over-the-Rhine’s new institutional landscape in coercing support and subsequently, legitimacy from neighbourhood residents and businesses – thus redefining their everyday practices, 3) the
influence of neoliberal ideology in understanding everyday social and spatial practices in Over-the-Rhine (including drug dealing, loitering, and [the lack of] social interaction over class and race divides) to emphasise the complexities and contradictions of both neoliberalism and everyday life, and 4) how neighbourhood residents, through everyday social practices produce potential sites of resistance to perceived negative practices and development.

In presenting this argument, I emphasise both the complexity of everyday life, and the importance of [neoliberal] ideological assumptions surrounding particular neighbourhood activities, the urban poor, and the paradoxical construction of Over-the-Rhine as both vital location for economic investment and dumping ground for Cincinnati’s deviant and marginalised populations (Peck 2006, Wilson 2006). My analysis reveals the reality of the everyday urban experience in Over-the-Rhine as highly complex and contradictory; however, through the contextual embedding of neoliberal doctrine in practice, ‘actually existing’ neoliberalism tends towards the destruction of spaces and social structures that might foster resistance as the ideological primacy of the ‘free’ individual usurps collectivised social organisation and democratic protest (Mitchell 2005, Hubbard 2004, Gough 2002). The implementation of neoliberal political-economic doctrine by Cincinnati and Over-the-Rhine governing elites produces neighbourhood space and society in which democratic access and accountability is eroded. Despite moments of resistance found in the practices of everyday life, the location of structural political-economic power in unaccountable, private organisations (such as 3CDC), and a state functioning as facilitator to the market, the marginalisation of Cincinnati’s already vulnerable communities is dramatically exacerbated.

6.1) Grounding Neoliberalism through Urban Policy: Producing Social and Spatial Structures

In this section, I analyse the rhetoric and reality of several key urban policies implemented at multiple geographic scales to understand how neoliberal hegemony has become grounded in Over-the-Rhine (Table 6.1). These policies regulate Over-the-Rhine’s housing stock and availability – thus shaping the neighbourhood’s built environment. Through attempting to de-concentrate poverty in the inner-city, the policies discussed aim to stimulating economic development and investment, and improve socio-economic living conditions. Such policies, I argue, operate through two processes; firstly by placing hostile restrictions upon the affordable
housing sector and secondly, by freeing low-income residents from their attachment to place. These two strategies are premised upon the paradoxical production of Over-the-Rhine as both a space of investment and development, and a decaying container for Cincinnati’s crime, drugs and homeless. Together, these key policies establish the conditions for roll-out neoliberalism through undermining potential resistance structures and spaces.

### Table 6.1: Key policies shaping Over-the-Rhine’s physical and social structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Rhetoric</th>
<th>Reality under Neoliberalism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Section 8 subsidised housing voucher restructuring (HUD)</td>
<td>Provides individuals with the choice of where to take their Section 8 vouchers, freeing them from ‘warehousing’ units in the urban core.</td>
<td>Results in the out-migration of low-income residents from Over-the-Rhine, reducing both the ability of this class to political mobilise and undermining the legitimacy of low-income advocacy organisations operating in the neighbourhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>The Impaction Ordinance (Cincinnati City Council)</td>
<td>De-concentrates poverty and removes barriers to market-rate investment caused by the concentration of affordable housing and Keynesian social service provision.</td>
<td>Through restricting unit supply, introduces supply-side, market-rate allocation of affordable housing provision, allowing landlords to set criteria as to who can live in the neighbourhood thus socially engineering Over-the-Rhine society. Whilst tax credits ensure housing will be low-income for 30 years, after this, there are no regulations in place to maintain affordability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Historic District Designation (Cincinnati City Council)</td>
<td>Preserving Over-the-Rhine’s historic architecture is vital in attracting investment into Cincinnati’s Downtown. Draws attention to the neighbourhood as a potential site for investment.</td>
<td>Introduces fines for building violations that force low-income residents (significantly low-income homeowners) out of the neighbourhood. Privileges buildings as commodities and sources of accumulations over residents who are demonised for producing Over-the-Rhine’s decay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Most Endangered Historic Place Designation (National Trust)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HUD Section 8 Restructuring (National Scale)

In 2000, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) restructured the allocation of Section 8 housing provision from 20-30 year site-based certificates awarded to landlords to year-to-year contracts awarded to housing recipients (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2005). The Section 8 Housing Program provides federally-funded financial aid for monthly rental payments on behalf of low-income families, so they can live in decent, safe, sanitary, and affordable housing. Participating families pay between 30% and 40% of their annual adjusted income for rent and utilities with the remaining portion of rent paid directly to the landlord through the Section 8 programme (Hamilton County Public Housing Agency 2006).

HUD enacted Section 8 allocation restructuring at the national scale, but its implementation has problematic ramifications at the local scale in Over-the-Rhine. In line with neoliberal rhetoric, the certificate / voucher restructuring frees individuals from the squalor of slum (ware)housing and produces a market for Section 8 vouchers - allowing individuals to seek better quality of housing (if available) – and dispersing poverty from the United States’ urban cores. However a neighbourhood activist from the Over-the-Rhine Contact Center describes a concerning trend in this migration pattern;

Well the shift to individual vouchers makes it possible for you to go to other areas in Cincinnati, so a lot of people who have been able to take their vouchers have gone to North Avondale or other city neighbourhood’s like that…Low-income community leaders who have a little more stability are leaving and going to other neighbourhoods (OTR CC).

Therefore the spatial dispersal caused by this restructuring has had a tremendous impact upon the ability of low-income communities to politically mobilise in place or engage in everyday activities that reproduce their own social and spatial structures, effectively reducing their ability to resist what they perceive as negative change in the neighbourhood.

Over-the-Rhine was the locus for many buildings receiving long-term certificates prior to Section 8 restructuring. The shift of Section 8 certificates from buildings to vouchers for individuals restricted the development of the affordable housing sector in Over-the-Rhine as
several landlords opted out of subsidised housing provision, auctioning much off to market-rate developers (Cincinnati Post 2003). The most prominent case of this involved the partial bankruptcy of Thomas Denhart’s Hart Realty who liquidated much of their affordable and low-income housing stock (Cincinnati Enquirer 2001d). Housing market expert interviewees commented that, as a result of selling off its capital assets, Hart Realty maintained ownership of much of its high-end rental property in Over-the-Rhine and wider Cincinnati area whilst the property auctions allowed 3CDC and their associated private developers the opportunity to purchase many building previously operated as [low quality] subsidised housing.27

During my interviews with low-income residents, several expressed both an affinity with, and desire to stay in Over-the-Rhine. However, when discussing their individual experiences, and those of friends, they claimed there is a widespread desire amongst the low-income community to leave the neighbourhood. This desire originates in the persistence of crime and urban blight in the neighbourhood and leads to the concerns over safety which the Drop Inn Center’s leadership view as the primary factor causing residents to leave Over-the-Rhine (see chapter 5.3)28. The restructuring of Section 8 vouchers provision facilitates and supports this desired out-migration; however, a Drop Inn Center employee noted a concerning trend in the demographic structure of the population leaving Over-the-Rhine, namely that this out-migration predominantly involves the most residentially stable and politically active lower-income residents. As the member of the Over-the-Rhine Contact Center I interviewed comments, this leaves behind a concentration of transient inhabitants;

What has happened most recently is that the most stable low-income families and moderate-income working families are leaving the neighbourhood and the lowest-income, most unstable families are unable to leave (OTR CC).

Furthermore, Section 8 facilitated out-migration has a definitive effect on neighbourhood space as a member of ReSTOC described during our interview;

27 Tom Denhart and Hart Realty failed to return my phone calls requesting an interview with a representative from the company.
28 However, as I have argued in chapter 5, and again will assert in analysing Historic District designation, economic concerns and pressures plays a fundamental (if overlooked) part in displacing low-income residents from Over-the-Rhine.
Oh yeah, there’s no doubt [of the impact of Section 8 restructuring]. Take Pleasant Street, if you walk down that street, probably 90% of it is vacant and a lot…a good number of the units that are there were once subsidised, probably about three years ago [in 2002]. The street is a really good example of opting out of the Section 8 programme (ReSTOC).

Therefore HUD’s restructuring of Section 8 allocation produces social and spatial structures viewed by residents and employees of neighbourhood institutions that I interviewed as more likely to facilitate / be involved with the crime and drug problems that have plagued Over-the-Rhine²⁹.

The ideological rhetoric behind the restructuring of Section 8 provision asserts the utility of the individual in finding accommodation and the expresses the advantages of free choice provided by the introduction a market for subsidised housing. However, I argue that rather than empowering low-income residents, the spatial dispersion of this population which Section 8 restructuring generates, increasingly marginalises Over-the-Rhine’s already vulnerable community and supports the roll out of a neoliberal development plan for the neighbourhood. The impact of the neoliberalisation of Section 8 policy in Over-the-Rhine de-concentrates poverty and in doing so increasingly de-legitimises the political voice of the neighbourhood’s pre-existing political and social service infrastructure through displacing its support and social base; a social base that could potentially improve and develop the neighbourhood through grassroots community action³⁰, as described by a neighbourhood activist;

²⁹ Interviews Residents 1, 6, 7, 8, DIC, OTR CC, OTR C of C, OTR F
³⁰ Furthermore, the free market provision of affordable housing fails to provide better living conditions for voucher recipients. Whilst individuals are allowed to take their vouchers to any Cincinnati neighbourhood many landlords, residents and politicians in more-affluent Cincinnati neighbourhoods are reluctant to accept Section 8 vouchers, refusing to let to low-income classes into their communities. Hamilton County Commissioner Phil Heimlich compared the expansion of subsidised housing eligibility in Hamilton County to Godzilla, declaring “like a monster out of a Japanese horror film, [HUD] goes around swallowing up neighborhoods -- and there's nothing that local officials like me can do to stop it” (Cited in CityBeat 2004b). Combined with this there are significant economic barriers to individual choice in Cincinnati’s housing market and the termination of long-term contracts for subsidised housing places more power in the hands of Cincinnati’s landlords; many of whom threatened to opt out of the Section 8 voucher scheme if the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) went through with proposed reductions in rents. The rent reduction was proposed as a solution to Federal cutbacks to CMHA of $4 million [according to CMHA, HUD placed the reduction at $837,000]. CMHA argued that if the rental cuts were not enacted, it would have to remove Section 8 vouchers from 300 low income families, however, a Cincinnati landlord predicted 20% of units currently accepting vouchers would opt out if the plans went through (Cincinnati Business Courier 2005a, Cincinnati Business Courier 2005b).
Neighbourhood people [have to will to become politically involved in Over-the-Rhine’s future], but I think a lot of people, because of poverty and having moving out of the neighbourhood because of the crime and the violence…and the ones who are left, some are self-destructing on drugs or alcohol or whatever (OTR PM).

Whilst HUD’s national scale restructuring of Section 8 housing allocation seeks to benefit low-income individuals and families, in the specific social and spatial context of Over-the-Rhine, I argue it has served to disenfranchise the marginalised, low-income population it is meant to assist, reflecting the wider treatment of the urban poor under the imperatives of urban neoliberalism, socially constructed as of less value than consumers and homeowners, (Hubbard 2004, Gough 2002) and as such, mobile to facilitate capital accumulation (Smith 2002, Weber 2002, Peck and Tickell 2002 also Peck 2006).

The Impaction Ordinance (City Scale)

Whilst Section 8 restructuring supports Cincinnati City Council’s spatial dispersion of poverty and undesirable residents (see chapter 5), the local state’s strategy becomes even more obvious when considering policies implemented at the city scale such as 2001’s Impaction Ordinance. This legislation blocks the City from awarding any of its $25 million in housing subsidies to low-income projects unless 51% market-rate housing is incorporated (CityBeat 2001a). The Impaction Ordinance prevents the expansion of the affordable housing sector in Over-the-Rhine and in doing so, pinpoints the neighbourhood’s problems as resulting from concentrated poverty and those agencies perceived as perpetuating it.

As such, the Impaction Ordinance is a highly controversial policy. During our interview, a representative from the Over-the-Rhine Contact Center describes the significance of the Impaction Ordinance;

Jean-Paul: What would you say were the main government policies or regulations impacting the lives of Over-the-Rhine inhabitants?

OTR CC: I’d say the Impaction Ordinance which has limited funding for affordable housing in the neighbourhood. The combination of the Ordinance and the bankruptcy of one of the biggest affordable housing owners who opted out of Section 8 housing [see the above discussion],
when he opted out, the Impaction Ordinance made it very difficult for anyone else to get funding for affordable housing projects.

Furthermore, CityBeat reported that neighbourhood activists and realtors on both sides of the neighbourhood’s economic divide have questioned the passing of the Impaction Ordinance as at once a reactionary measure after the April 2001 riots, and a targeted attack against ReSTOC’s position in the neighbourhood (CityBeat 2001a, see chapter 4). However, whilst the Impaction Ordinance has played a significant role in coercing ReSTOC into cooperating with 3CDC and Over-the-Rhine’s new governance regime, it has also opened the possibility for an alternative approach to affordable housing provision in Over-the-Rhine which is gaining support the real estate and development community.

In an attempt to regulate neighbourhood gentrification, several property developers are conceptualising affordable housing as a tool to ensure a mixed-income community in Over-the-Rhine in the future; a local real estate agent claiming; “affordable housing (when it’s done right) is a great blight removal tool” (Realtor 1). This development principle tackles what a member of ReSTOC points to as a key problem facing affordable-housing advocacy groups;

There’s high quality affordable housing and low-quality affordable housing and it’s unfortunate – what gets most attention is the low-quality affordable housing…Most people think government assisted housing [is] a bad thing because the buildings are not managed well, they think the building is chaotic, that it brings down surrounding property values…we’re trying to make the case that it can be done well and that it is actually needed (ReSTOC).

Using quality affordable housing to tackle blight follows the logic that capital for high-end condo development is not going to be invested in derelict and dangerous districts in Over-the-Rhine (see Weber 2002, also Wilson 2006); however, property developers, using tax credits and grants available through preservation funds (see below analysis of Historic District status) and other state funding, will be in a position to instead develop a quality affordable housing product. The importance for private and market-rate development lies in the production of a quality low-income housing stock as this will not drag down surrounding property values – thus providing a level of security for high-end development in the neighbourhood.
Complying with the restrictions of the Impaction Ordinance, the property developer pushing for the infusing of affordable housing elements with market-rate housing does not advocate more affordable housing, but for the renovation of Section 8 and low-income housing units in Over-the-Rhine. He argues that the problems associated with inner city decay lie with the density of poverty and affordable housing and as such, his company seeks to reduce the quantity of units available in Over-the-Rhine, but in doing so, provide a higher quality of housing;

What we’re doing, when we talk about reduction of density, I’m not saying we’ve necessarily got to get people out of OTR, what I’m saying is we’ve got a 79 unit building here and it’s only appropriate for 37 units. So instead of having 79 families in one building, you have 79 families in 5 buildings and that’s the kind of reduction of density. And that does two things; it reduces the blight in that building and because you theoretically, you’re talking people from that building and doing world class jobs on five others, you reduce blight in 6 buildings (Property Developer).

Using Low-Income Tax Credits to renovate properties ensures that for 30 years after full occupancy, the building is restricted for the low-income bracket. This provides low-income housing whose rents cannot increase inline with any future gentrification and growth of property value in the neighbourhood thus establishing the grounds for a mixed income community in Over-the-Rhine.

The property developer claim this affordable housing strategy does two things; 1) it decreases the density of poverty in Over-the-Rhine and 2) it allows a dramatic alteration in tenant selection criteria. Under the old structuring of Section 8, certificates allowed slumlords to warehouse as many people in their buildings as possible, maximising their income but accepting “anything with a pulse…all your felons, all your people with drug and alcohol problems post rehab” (Property Developer). Therefore, the property developer (who also manages his buildings) redefines the selection criteria so that;

You can never have had a felony, you could never have had a drug misdemeanour, you could never have been evicted and you should be gainfully employed – even if this is Section 8 housing, if you have a full time job, then you go to the top of the waiting list. So 100% of people

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31 This supports the displacement of stigmatised communities discussed in chapter 5.3.
who we are leasing to are drug free, or at a minimum, have never been caught, they’ve never had a felony and they’ve never been evicted and they are employed (Property Developer).

In decreasing the supply of affordable housing units in Over-the-Rhine, demand outweighs the availability of apartments allowing the landlord to decide on who can live in Over-the-Rhine. Whilst this approach might provide an attractive solution to ensure Over-the-Rhine can still house low-income families into the future, there is a negative undercurrent to this proposal.

The restructuring of tenant selection criteria socially engineers the population of Over-the-Rhine, defining who is, and who is not allowed a right to live in the neighbourhood. Those who fail to live up to the criteria are denied access to higher-quality housing and as such, are displaced from Over-the-Rhine [if this new housing strategy is adopted widespread] and held in a state of perpetual punishment, denying them access into civil [consumer] society.

Improving the quality of affordable housing in Over-the-Rhine is certainly commendable; however, producing a supply side market for affordable housing facilitates the social engineering of society and space in the neighbourhood. The resulting placement of selection criteria in the hands of landlords contradicts the freedom of choice that the restructuring of Section 8 certificates seeks to provide. In contrast to the emancipatory rhetoric of [neoliberal] housing policy (see Hackworth 2006, Hackworth and Moriah 2006, Newman and Ashton 2004), such policy implementation disenfranchises the low-income and socially marginalised residents of Over-the-Rhine; restricting the range of individual choice and dispersing this population, drastically reducing their ability to politically mobilise.

**Historic District Status / Most Endangered Historic Place (Neighbourhood Scale)**

Whereas the restructuring of Section 8 provision and the Impaction Ordinance lay the groundwork facilitating widespread gentrification in Over-the-Rhine, the neighbourhood’s built environment is itself the commodity at the heart of the drive to gentrify the district. As Over-the-Rhine is host to a plethora of architecturally significant buildings, the neighbourhood has been categorised by bodies from the National Trust to Cincinnati City Council as a historically
Figure 6.1: Historic Resources in Over-the-Rhine

Historic Resources in Over-the-Rhine

- National Register of Historic Places
  - Listed Building, National Historic Landmark,
    - Local Landmark (Cincinnati Music Hall)
- National Register of Historic Places
  - Listed Building, Local Landmark
    - (St Mary's School, Church and Rectory)
- National Register of Historic Places
  - Listed Building
- National Register of Historic Places District:
  - Over-the-Rhine Historic District Boundary
- National Register of Historic Places District:
  - Sycamore-13th Street Grouping

Local Historic District:
- Mohawk-Bellevue NBD Historic District
- Over-the-Rhine (North) Historic District
- Over-the-Rhine (South) Historic District

Local landmark / historic district designated by the City of Cincinnati
Source: Cincinnati City Council (2002: 238)
important district (Figure 6.1). Yet, the 1983 designation of Over-the-Rhine as a Historic District marked, for several low-income advocates, the beginning of a concerted gentrification project in the neighbourhood;

...the [low-income] neighbourhood people organised against this because we knew that that was the beginning of a trend we had seen across the United States; that once a neighbourhood got declared an Historic District, it drew a lot of folks to say ‘oh, lets do this up, make the buildings fancy’...It was almost like the land became valuable to outside interests (OTR PM).

Whilst this feared gentrification has yet to fully take off, housing market experts point to Federal Historic Tax Credits and low-interest grants and loans available through the City as highly significant in facilitating both market-rate and affordable housing development (such as the projects undertaken by the property developed described above). However, Historic District Status is a regulatory designation and the subsequent regulations for housing upkeep and renovations render maintenance of homes exceedingly expensive. This places tremendous financial pressure on low-income homeowners, contributing to their displacement and decisions to leave the neighbourhood, further undermining the political constituency of neighbourhood activists and community organisations.

During our interview, three elderly female resident homeowners claimed the economic pressure of “keeping things the way they were 100 years ago” was driving “elderly residents to the verge of homelessness” (Residents 6, 7, 8). Furthermore, they complained that damage is being caused their properties from deteriorating neighbouring buildings, but they cannot report this as they would be liable to pay fines levied against them for Historic Code violations. Compounding this issue, they lack the financial means to take on Over-the-Rhine’s [absentee] slumlords (as well as the cost of violation fines) and the time and will to bring this matter through to courts. The desire amongst private-development advocates in Over-the-Rhine to promote home-ownership and ‘resident’ investment in the neighbourhood32 appears to miss these low-

32 Interviews with Property Developer, Realtors 1, 2, OTR PM, OTR F, OTR C of C all attested to the significance home-ownership – and the sanctity of private property – both in bringing pride to the neighbourhood, and tackling the perceived problems of loitering, littering and tolerance of criminality in Over-the-Rhine. The assumption that this is based upon is that Over-the-Rhine’s large renting population do not care enough in their own living environment
income homeowners, who are left to feel powerless against landlords whose dilapidated buildings are often responsible for the deterioration of their own homes and living conditions (Residents 6, 7, 8). Hence, Historic District status has exacerbated marginalisation and displacement of already disenfranchised residents.

On the 10th May 2006, The National Trust for Historic Preservation placed Over-the-Rhine on its annual list of the nation's Top 11 Most Endangered Historic Places (Cincinnati Enquirer 2006d). This designation, unlike Historic District Status, does not come with regulatory codes and instead acts to raise awareness of the significance of Over-the-Rhine’s built environment. Rather than coming attached with monies for redevelopment, the National Trust will provide their expert assistance in securing loans and grants. As such, the proposal for ‘Most Endangered Historic Place’ status garnered support throughout the neighbourhood; the director of the Over-the-Rhine Foundation, Marge Hammelrath commented;

Now it is time for people to realize we have a historic treasure that is equal to major battlefields or mountains…This is so important that we are acknowledged nationally (cited in Cincinnati Enquirer 2006d).

For Cincinnati Mayor Mark Mallory, the designation

is acknowledging the great assets we have in this community…It also puts us on notice that we have to take deliberate action to preserve this asset (cited in Cincinnati Enquirer 2006d).

The proposal itself was also drafted in cooperation with the Over-the-Rhine Community Council and [would find] popular support amongst residents (on both sides of the neighbourhood’s class divide) who wish to see improvements to the neighbourhood’s physical infrastructure.34

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33 According to reports in the Cincinnati Enquirer (2006d) the History Channel is set to start airing segments on Over-the-Rhine in June 2006.
34 Interviews with Residents 1, 2, 3, 4, 9 pointed to investment in saving Over-the-Rhine’s buildings as a priority for the future of the neighbourhood.
Placement on the Endangered Historic Places list is certainly preferable to the Historic District Status insofar as it does not introduce regulatory pressures on low-income residents. However, it reflects a worrying trend in the neighbourhood; the elevation of the built environment as a commodity over the users of Over-the-Rhine space (see Weber 2002). As a neighbourhood property developer commented when discussing his hopes for the future development of the neighbourhood:

Well, you know Over-the-Rhine has been here from hundreds of years and it’s never committed a crime; it’s always been the people (Property Developer).

Yet further, a local real estate agent made a passionately condemned Over-the-Rhine’s land-banking property owners for jeopardising the physical infrastructure of the neighbourhood;

I mean, they aren’t doing anything illegal, they’re not like, taking people’s buildings away, but they are...People have to board their buildings up, or re-model it, but they cannot sit on an historic building and let it rot! (Realtor 2)

Such reductionist abstractions of society and space overlook the importance of the neighbourhood’s historical-material social structures in producing Over-the-Rhine’s place in Cincinnati, both historically and contemporarily. Over-the-Rhine’s present residents are reduced in the local media, notably the Cincinnati Enquirer (and subsequently, the popular consciousness) to “a people broken by drug and alcohol abuse who sit along small concrete stoops” (Cincinnati Enquirer 2006d) and clearly such a depiction warrants a revanchist solution against an underclass who have claimed the most significant historical spaces in Cincinnati.

The abstract vision held by market-rate development institutions and advocates, supported historical preservation status and listings, calls back to an imagined Germanic past in Over-the-Rhine – notably a white past – that negates the historical marginalisation of Over-the-Rhine within Cincinnati. Such simulacra imagining neglects to accept that society and space in Over-the-Rhine have changed. An elderly interviewee told me of how a friend had erected a 10-foot fence to stop drug dealers stashing guns and drugs by her house and to stop people urinating in
the street – but was forced to take it down as Historic Codes in the neighbourhood point out that Over-the-Rhine did not have 10-foot fences 100 years ago;

But they didn’t have drug dealers 100 years ago; maybe a few people spitting tobacco but things have changed (Residents 6, 7, 8).

Shaping the Social and Political-Economic Future of Over-the-Rhine

It is significant to note that these policies have all been applied to the neighbourhood from institutions outside the neighbourhood from the national scale (HUD, the National Trust) to the local (Cincinnati City Council). Whilst they cannot be considered purely neoliberal (although I argue both Section 8 restructuring, and certainly the Impaction Ordinance exhibit strong neoliberal rationales), their embedding in the place-specific context of Over-the-Rhine has served to forward market-rate development programmes in the neighbourhood whilst restricting the ability of low-income organisations to act and politically mobilise. Therefore there is an important contradiction between [the rhetoric of] policies aimed at improving the material and lived conditions in American inner-cities (and with the appropriate scale of implementation, Over-the-Rhine specifically) and the realities of increased marginalisation for the residents of these spaces.

I submit that the impact of these policies has served to diminish the political voice of Over-the-Rhine’s low-income community, dispersing this political constituency and restricting its growth in Over-the-Rhine via 1) restricting the expansion of affordable housing in the neighbourhood, 2) displacing residents by placing economic pressure on low-income home-owners, and 3) facilitating out-migration by freeing low-income residents from their spatial ties to the city. Through voluntary (seeking improved living conditions amidst fears over safety) and involuntary (economic pressure) displacement, these processes have a fundamental impact on shaping Over-the-Rhine society and space – producing a resident population that will increasing be constituted by incoming, gentrifying residents as lower-class inhabitants choose, or are forced out of the neighbourhood. This not only supports the political-institutional transitions analysed in chapter 4, but further, the changing demographic trends in Over-the-Rhine’s society (stimulated through the neoliberalised adaptation of housing and social policies) produce alternative uses, and ideological constructions of the practices of everyday life and their regulation.
6.2) Urban Governance, Everyday Life and Resistance

The 13th Street (Pendleton) Barricade

Whilst policies implemented upon Over-the-Rhine from outside have profound impacts in shaping the neighbourhood’s society and space, the restructured internal mechanisms of Over-the-Rhine’s institutional landscape also increasingly regulate and shape the everyday practices (both legal and illegal) conducted in neighbourhood space. In the following, I examine an attempt made by the state and the Pendleton district’s gentrifying residents to control drug dealing along 13th Street, and the wider ramifications on both legal everyday practices (operating a car wash) affected by the anti-drug strategy, and the possibility for neighbourhood community democracy. In doing this, I argue that residents and local businesses are coerced into cooperating with Over-the-Rhine new political-economic institutions, providing their projects with only the veneer of democratic legitimacy. Furthermore, practices of everyday life that are negatively affected by the policies and development strategies implemented by Over-the-Rhine’s market-rate advocacy infrastructure are perceived by these institutions as resisting or opposing positive change in the neighbourhood and therefore are legitimately displaced or adversely impacted.

Interviewees from the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce and the Over-the-Rhine Foundation described Over-the-Rhine’s crime and drug problems as a major barrier to investment and migration into the neighbourhood, and perpetuated depiction of a dangerous and marginalised ghetto space35 (see Wilson 2006, Weber 2002). Whilst some residents living within Over-the-Rhine are involved with drug dealing in the neighbourhood, a substantial amount of this activity, both in terms of supply and demand, comes from outside of Cincinnati’s urban core; as a ReSTOC employee notes;

There is a crime issue in the neighbourhood, there’s a pretty sizable drug market in the neighbourhood. It’s also well known that 80% of the folks committing crime in the neighbourhood don’t live here (ReSTOC).

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35 Interviews with, in particular OTR C of C, OTR F but interviewees OTR PM, OTR F, Residents 1-9 also raised the issue of drug dealing as a major problem facing the neighbourhood.
Community groups working with the Cincinnati police department deem the neighbourhood’s proximity to major trunk roads and Interstates fundamental in producing, what the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce has referred to as “a drugs drive-through” in Over-the-Rhine. License plate checks conducted by the police and neighbourhood groups indicate that many dealers and buyers come to do business in Over-the-Rhine from Cincinnati’s suburbs and northern Kentucky.  

In an attempt to tackle this particular problem, in July 2004, following a request by Pendleton Community Council - and on the recommendation of police and some local residents, Cincinnati police erected a road barricade blocking vehicular access into Over-the-Rhine from Reading Road and Interstate 471 on 13th Street (Figure 6.2). As this route provides an easy way into, and out of the city centre, drug dealing along 13th Street had made this district a highly dangerous area; in 2004 the Pendleton District of Over-the-Rhine witnessed three murders, all

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36 Discussed at the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce’s Safety Sector Community Meeting (29/06/2005), the use of license plates to identify where drug buyers were coming to Over-the-Rhine from provided the logic behind several interesting policing strategies including ‘reverse stings’ as a interviewee from the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce explained “the housewife in Cherry Grove is coming in and buying drugs so the police were selling to these people and yeah, we didn’t keep them arrested for very long because they didn’t have very much on them. And they were actually selling them crushed pecans, I think they said, because they look like these drugs and the people thought they were buying drugs. Then they arrest them on the way out and figure that is kind of embarrassing when you’ve got to call your husband or wife and say ‘I’m in jail for doing drugs’ – It’s a nut sale! So we’re trying to get people from the suburbs to realise that they might get caught buying drugs here” (OTR C of C).
drug related (StreetVibes 2005). Yet the barricade, as a spatial strategy aimed at regulating the use of neighbourhood space, was not introduced without controversy. Ten months after its installation, in May 2005 the barricade was removed amidst claims that it was both undemocratically erected and ineffective in addressing Over-the-Rhine’s wider drug problems.

The Police declared the barricade “was innovative crime reduction tool to disrupt traffic pattern flow of drug buyers entering from Kentucky”\(^{37}\); indeed during the period 13\(^{th}\) Street was blocked, police reported a significant decline in drug trafficking along the thoroughfare (StreetVibes 2005, also data from Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce Safety Sector Community Meeting (15/02/2005)). However, coinciding with this, drug dealers affected by the blockade moved a block in either direction and carried on their business with the ironic consequence of increasing violence in these areas as dealers fought battles over their territory.

In line with the argument laid out in the previous chapter, this method of regulating neighbourhood space focuses on the visibility of the problem. As StreetVibes columnist Jimmy Heath\(^{38}\) comments;

> Blocking a street is not a solution to the drug problem, but it temporarily greases the squeaky wheel – it sends a message to the uneasy upper-class that something is being done to appease the new, more affluent, formerly suburban residents. It superficially addresses the concerns of neighbourhood upscale developers (StreetVibes 2005).

I concur this measure appears superficial; there are many ways into Over-the-Rhine and the neighbourhood’s drug dealers are operating mobile businesses – even if these are highly territorial. The barrier fails to tackle the deeper causes of poverty and crime, exaggerated by the repressive and violent roll out of urban neoliberalism (see the chapter 6.3); but it has served another role – a role that is fundamentally significant in usurping political authority from the Over-the-Rhine Community Council and forwarding the conception of urban life, and a prescription for poverty and deviancy, extolled by the neighbourhood’s market-rate development advocates. The controversy and debate surrounding the 13\(^{th}\) Street barricade reflects the impact of the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce on neighbourhood politics and with this, the

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\(^{37}\) PowerPoint, All Safety Sector Community Meeting (15/02/2005) provided by OTR C of C

\(^{38}\) Jimmy Heath, a former homeless inhabitant turned Over-the-Rhine activist, also runs a community photography programme out of the Peaslee Center and is part of the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement.
The barricade provides an interesting example of how practices of everyday life (both in terms of illegal and legal business activities) have been impacted by the neoliberalisation of urban governance in Over-the-Rhine.

**The Illusion of Democracy: Coercing Residents / Shaping Everyday Life**

The barricade was an idea originating in the Pendleton Community Council, controlled by the affluent white residents of the Pendleton district in Over-the-Rhine. Through community safety sector meetings organised by the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce, the idea of a road blockade appeared to have the backing of local residents and as such, would be a legitimate and democratic method of ‘bottom-up’ crime control. However, reflecting the divide in both the lived experience and governance institutions of Over-the-Rhine’s predominantly wealthy, white and poor, black communities, the barricade represents a hostile colonisation of neighbourhood space. Even before the barricade was installed, several community councillors and local residents complained that the opinions of those affected by the disruption of traffic were not properly consulted (StreetVibes 2005, see Swyngedouw 2005, Brenner and Theodore 2002). To a large degree, this is a result of the lack of interaction between and across Over-the-Rhine’s demographic divide.

The establishment of a new institutional infrastructure, bypassing the neighbourhood’s existing political structures produces difficulties for the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce’s community groups to reach out to the lower-income black population. This lack of communication and outreach raises serious concerns regarding neighbourhood democracy; as reported in *StreetVibes*, Laketa Cole, head of City Council’s neighbourhood committee claimed initially that the police had overwhelming resident support for the barricade, yet a study by the University of Cincinnati indicated that a significant proportion of residents opposed the barrier (StreetVibes 2005).

The owner of ‘Mr Bubbles’, a car wash of 13th Street, was a prominent figure amongst these dissenters. The installation of the 13th Street barrier usurped the space upon which his business depended; clearly a car wash business is going to be detrimentally affected by the restriction of traffic flow outside its premises. However, an employee of the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce reflects differently on ‘Mr Bubble’s’ complaints – asserting that, in carrying on his own everyday business practices, he was resisting the positive change the
barricade produces by not actively engaging with, or in Over-the-Rhine’s new institutional infrastructure;

You think you are getting the word out to everyone and then, when they closed 13th Street; the gentleman who owns Mr Bubbles…it took that for him to get upset and come to the Pendleton meeting. I don’t know if he didn’t have time or…but he was upset because his business was hurt by the street closure. There was little bit going on, you know, that it might be racial or whatever but it totally was not; they tried to notify him, they had documentation that they had passed out fliers to everyone in the area. So I don’t know if he didn’t get one or if he didn’t listen to it or what. But as a result of that, that gentleman has joined the Pendleton group, has become an officer with the Pendleton group…He’s always done a lot good in the neighbourhood; he just hadn’t had the time, or taken the time to come to these meetings that we’ve put on. That’s a success there as a result of something that could have been a disaster; now he understands that they [OTR Chamber’s safety groups] are trying to help (OTR C of C).

Questions surrounding the democratic process involved in raising the barricade, following this logic, rest upon a new understanding citizenship (Elwood 2004, 2002, McCann 2002, Lipietz 1994). Residents must act in proactive participation in the community or they have to accept the implications of a lack of involvement in neighbourhood politics. The ‘success’ story being argued in this narrative lies in a moment of cross-cultural interconnection; the black businessman now cooperates with the governance infrastructure created by the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce and its supporters. The section of the quote I have emphasised reveals a particular conception of community action in which, regardless of the good ‘Mr Bubbles’ has done in the neighbourhood before, it is only once he attends the meetings organised by Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce that he understands. His previous lack of engagement is written off through the black ghetto stereotypes of lethargy or apathy (Wilson 2006). As such, pre-existing spatial practices, both illegal (drug dealing) and legal (operating a car wash) become subordinate to the strategies employed by Over-the-Rhine’s new ‘democratic’ institutional infrastructure (Gough 2002, Cox and Mair 1988).

The implicit support from the state for the barricade legitimises the actions and views of the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce and means that for local residents to be able to access the neighbourhood’s new power structures, it has to be through the spaces defined by market-rate
development advocate groups. ‘Mr Bubbles’, and unknown individuals, residents and businesses, are coerced into acting through the neighbourhood’s new institutional infrastructure just as the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement have been (see chapter 4.4). The ability to act granted through the state (in this case, the police) produces socio-political relations whereby market-rate development advocates’ agenda is going to be pushed through the new institutional governance structure in Over-the-Rhine and for residents and business owners to have any input, they need to cooperate with these new institutions. Whilst such moves bestow a veneer of democracy onto neighbourhood development, they mask the shift of power in Over-the-Rhine to less open and less accountable structures hostile to the neighbourhood’s poor and marginalised communities.

6.3) Constructing and Contesting Practices of Everyday Life

Drug dealing: Neoliberalism and Everyday Spatial Practices

Whilst the installation of the 13th Street barricade represents a top-down strategy to regulate and control social practices in Over-the-Rhine, within the neighbourhood’s wider community, there is a complex, often contradictory relationship between drug dealing, neoliberal constructions of the city and everyday life. Drug trafficking is conspicuous throughout Over-the-Rhine’s public spaces; on every excursion I made into Over-the-Rhine dealers approached me for a sale. However, for the ReSTOC representative I interviewed, the presence of drugs on the neighbourhoods streets presents a different face of Over-the-Rhine to those outside the neighbourhood compared to the neighbourhood’s lived everyday experience;

The folks that we house are good people, and a people who should be the face of Over-the-Rhine – but they are not because they are not out on the street all the time…I think that because folks are doing whatever it is that law-abiding citizens do, they are not the face of Over-the-Rhine because the folk who get the attention, who are represented in the media, are the folks committing the crime (ReSTOC).

Yet the conspicuousness of drug dealing, at all times of day, indicates that this economic – and social – practice is engrained in the social structures of Over-the-Rhine. Anecdotes from several residents claimed that on most occasions, the police would simply drive past deals taking place in

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39 Interactions on the street ranged from the humbly apologetic (a dealer fawningly apologising for mistaking me for someone who “messed wit tha’ rock”) to blasé exhibitionism (upon catching my eye whilst walking along Vine street, a dealer stood on a box, spread his arms and exclaimed; “Hey man! Wanna buy some drugs?!”).
broad daylight. However, for the residents interviewed during this research, drug dealing is neither an acceptable part of everyday life in Over-the-Rhine, nor an illicit practice that needs to be dealt with strictly by a penal state (Peck 2003, Mitchell 1997).

Among my interviewees there was a widespread desire to remove drug dealing from Over-the-Rhine – a sentiment expressed by both those involved with Over-the-Rhine’s political-economic institutions and by its resident population. However, my interviews also reveal an air of sympathy for the dealers; particularly coming from the low-income black community. During a group conversation with three elderly, low-income African-American residents, they stated the neighbourhood’s drug market exists, in part, because there is no other means for people to earn money; “the only industry in Over-the-Rhine is the drug industry” (Residents 6, 7, 8). Furthermore, they asserted that the neighbourhood’s dealers are not bad people, but are forced into the illegal economy as they can not support their families on the wages provided by day labour agencies or through ‘Ohio Works First’ workfare programmes (see Theodore 2003, Brenner and Theodore 2002, Peck 1996). These women spoke about their interactions with the neighbourhood’s dealers and their connections within families and social groups in Over-the-Rhine, quoting a dealer as saying; “being out on the street for 12-14 hours is hard work, dangerous work – but I need to be out there for my kids”. Capital flight and deindustrialisation hit Over-the-Rhine hard and stripped the employment base of the neighbourhood (Peck 2002, Bluestone and Harrison 1982) and aside from the growing numbers of day labour agencies (see Theodore 2003) the neighbourhood offers little by means of viable employment opportunities.

Not only does the lack of economic prospects push low-income individuals into dealing, the sheer everydayness of drug dealing activity in Over-the-Rhine interpolates residents into systems and practices that support these practices in the neighbourhood; reproducing these spaces and social structures through residents’ everyday practices. Residents take part in ‘Chinese Whispers’, calls of “here come the boys” passed down the street to alert dealers that the police are coming. One resident commented she took part in these calls despite the fact that she does not support drug dealing; it is a subconscious act (Residents 6, 7, 8). Low-income residents also

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40 Interviews with Residents 1, 4, 5, 9, also OTR C of C, OTR F.
41 Calls for a repressive state response were prominently forwarded during my interview with representatives from the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce, as well as during the Safety Sector Community Meeting I attended on 29/06/2005.
described how drug-dealers in the neighbourhood also engage in systems of signalling which they referred to as ‘directing traffic’;

If someone sees a guy in the street and he’s waving his hands and they ask ‘what’s that guy doing?’
‘He’s directing traffic…’
‘But I don’t see any cars?’
‘No, they’re directing drug traffic’ (Residents 6, 7, 8).

Whilst the dealers know what they are doing through these signals, the women in the informal focus group claim that both residents and the police also understand these systems; but the residents feel powerless to do anything to stop it and the police appear not to care (Residents 6, 7, 8).42

These practices illustrate both Lefebvre’s (1991) and De Certeau’s (1984) arguments regarding the significance of spatial practices in producing neighbourhood space. Deeply embedded in Over-the-Rhine’s social and space structures, drug dealing is facilitated through practices which incorporate the neighbourhood’s residents; whether they agree with these practices or not. However, these practices are not experienced uniformly across Over-the-Rhine. Interviewees living in the gentrified districts of the neighbourhood did not comment on these practices and my observations suggest that dealing is more prevalent along Vine and Race Streets; away from Broadway and Over-the-Rhine’s upscale condo development projects.43

Over-the-Rhine’s low-income and gentrifying communities experience and understand drug dealing in divergent manners. Drug dealing in Over-the-Rhine occurs both in the spaces and social structures of the poor, black community. This emersion facilitates human understandings of these practices that are highly complex. This reflects the contradictory desire to expel illegal

42 This concern was voiced by several other residents (Residents 3, 4, 9). Although the interviewees note that this is in part due to the police’s desire not to get bogged down with breaking every deal on the street, feeling a more effective strategy is to focus on drugs coming into the neighbourhood. However police reports (Safety Sector Community Meetings 15/02/2006, 29/06/2006) suggest that many drug dealers in Over-the-Rhine do not live in the neighbourhood, but it is their territory. Dealers need a space in which to deal and although the actual location of deals is highly mobile (to avoid the police), it is a highly territorial practice; fights and shootings occur defending dealer’s territory; for drug dealers in Over-the-Rhine, space is so important that they will die defending it. As such, the spaces and spatial practices of drug dealing are highly dangerous and the lack of policing actively seeking to drive drug dealing out perpetuates the production of Over-the-Rhine as a container for Cincinnati’s criminal problems. This supports the argument laid out in chapter 5.2 surrounding the production of (seemingly) paradoxical spaces of crime and investment.

43 Although I must note that drug dealing is highly visible along the Main Street entertainment district at night and during the weekend when suburbanites descend to the neighbourhood’s bars and clubs.
activity, and yet empathise with the economic pressures and lack of employment opportunities in Over-the-Rhine that acts as a catalyst for individuals to engage in acts of criminality. In contrast, the neighbourhood’s gentrifiers lack this personal connection and as such, the four higher-income residents I interviewed claimed to only experience drug dealing when being hassled on the street.

With this, market-rate development advocacy organisations, such as the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce are less sympathetic\(^{44}\), calling for harsher penalties for dealers and strict restrictions on the neighbourhood spaces they use;

> We [at the OTR Chamber of Commerce] are still struggling with the mindset of people; there’s a struggle with the ‘what am I supposed to do? I live down here and that’s the only income in can create to survive’ mentality…It’s not alright for your grandson to be dealing drugs because it helps with the rent; there are other ways you can be getting income…” (OTR C of C).

However a representative from the Over-the-Rhine Contact Center disagrees;

> One of the main misconceptions about Over-the-Rhine is that people don’t work, everyone is on welfare; People say ‘there’s jobs out there – go and work at McDonalds’ but people are working there arses off…at jobs that used to have benefits; now these jobs are going to day labourers who are so desperate given the job situation that they will take whatever they can (OTR CC).

Whilst employment is (to a degree) available in Over-the-Rhine, its re-regulation – the removal of long term contracts and stability by employers – produces a race to the bottom through which workers are forced into a daily competition amongst a large-scale reserve army of labour; this oversupply of labour facilitates employers cutting benefits, furthering the economic marginalisation of Over-the-Rhine’s working class (Theodore 2003, Brenner and Theodore 2002, Peck and Tickell 2002, Jessop 2000, Peck 1996).\(^{45}\) With this, a representative from the Over-the-Rhine

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\(^{44}\) I must note that several more affluent residents interviewed empathised with those forced into drug dealing, but I argue that this arises more from individuals’ liberal politics than through social experience and relationships with this community.

\(^{45}\) This argument is supported through comments made by interviewees from the Over-the-Rhine Contact Center and Drop Inn Center
Rhine Contact Center points to a paradoxical situation facing low-income residents as a result of the inefficiencies of the neoliberal labour market and the workfare state;

The situation is, there is a glass ceiling so that when you advance in your job, you make a little more money and then you don’t qualify for the welfare cheque – you don’t qualify for as many benefits even though the increase in wages from a promotion doesn’t cover everything (OTR CC).

Although the economic and social marginalisation of the neighbourhood has for a long time supported spaces of illegal economic activity in Over-the-Rhine (Wilson 2006, Weber 2002, Miller and Tucker 1998), the restrictions placed on welfare benefits through the neoliberalisation of Ohio’s welfare system exacerbates the coercion of residents into the informal and illegal economies in order to earn enough to stay alive.

Therefore the relationship between the neoliberal mode of regulation and drug dealing is contradictory in that restructuring the wage relation and capital labour bargaining (see Cox 2004, Brenner and Theodore 2002, Jessop 2000, Bluestone and Harrison 1982) produces and exacerbates illegal, criminal spaces and social practices (through removing social support nets) whilst at the same time, neoliberal approaches to poverty and crime (Peck 2006, 2003, Wilson 2006, Mitchell 1997) call for stricter, penal punishments, and the removal of visible deviancy from public space (Mitchell 2005, 1995, also see chapter 5). For neighbourhood residents living within these spaces of drug dealing and crime, these process produces complex and conflicting experiences as Over-the-Rhine’s low-income, black community expresses both a sympathy and understanding with the drug trade and its causes, whilst at the same time, they are victimised by both having their everyday spaces controlled by drug dealers and being subject to repressive state response or police neglect.

**Living the Divide**

Despite the calls to produce a ‘mixed economic and cultural community’ which were expressed in interviews with low-income, and market-rate development advocacy organisations\(^\text{46}\) and articulated in both the Community Comprehensive Plan (Cincinnati City Council 2002) and

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\(^{46}\) Interviews OTR PM, DIC, OTR F, OTR C of C, MU CCE, ReSTOC, Realtor 1, Property Developer
3CDC’s mission statement (3CDC 2006a), the ‘mix’ – the social interaction required to produce a stable, function community – appears a distant utopia. This situation arises partially through the mistrust in Over-the-Rhine’s governance structures and political institutions and partially through the fear of otherness and cultural differences between the neighbourhood’s resident communities. The separation of the lived worlds of Over-the-Rhine residents arises in the conflicting experiences and understandings of everyday social-spatial practices – beyond the specific case of drug dealing in the neighbourhood. As such, the reality of the urban experience under neoliberalism in Over-the-Rhine is one of division, framed through competing ideological understandings of the economy, society and social provision and lived out through complex spatialities and understandings of everyday life.

For residents on both sides of Over-the-Rhine’s socio-economic divide, the spaces produced by, and for the ‘other’ do not provide for their own social, cultural and economic needs. For Over-Rhine’s incoming affluent population, the stigma and reality of the neighbourhood’s socially constructed ghetto draws a distinct line (coinciding with the gentrification frontier; see Figure 1.3) beyond which they feel out of place;

[West of Walnut] I feel out of my place; I feel like I don’t belong…I don’t think I fit the profile of people over there and I just feel tension and the possibility of violence breaking out over there (Resident 5).

The gentrified frontier is Main Street although it is moving west. Nobody goes west of Main towards Vine because that’s a dangerous area; there’s an invisible line there (Resident 9).

**Resident 2:** I don’t want to oversell it but [the Pendleton District] is a bit utopian actually because there is an extraordinary diversity; Section 8 housing next to the most expensive house in Over-the-Rhine.

**Jean-Paul:** *Do you all interact?*

**Resident 2:** Well no, it’s not utopian to the extent that everyone knows or cares about each other equally (Resident 2).
This divide is further revealed though residents views of the services in the neighbourhood. All four higher-income residents claimed that the facilities for grocery shopping in Over-the-Rhine were inadequate, in contrast to lower-income residents who claimed this service provision was satisfactory. In particular higher-income residents view the neighbourhood supermarket as providing for a different population;

There’s a poor selection and they cater towards what they think the poor people want…there’s a beer selection. It’s crap (sic). They don’t have a good selection, they don’t have any produce and the prices are twice as high as they are at the other stores…There’s a huge frozen food and snack area – they’re hitting the target area that people who go in there buy (Resident 5).

Yet a local real estate agent finds this perception of a lack of shopping provision unbelievable;

People come up to me and ask to stupidest question – ‘when are you going to get a grocery store?’ Well excuse me! Findlay Market is open seven days a week now, how large do you want to get a grocery store! It’s huge! What do they want?! Are they just so used to going to the [supermarket]? People who live Downtown don’t say that, it’s people who don’t live Downtown thinking that others are saying that (Realtor 2).

In stark contrast to this position though, a self described ‘Downtown resident’ offers a conflicting opinion;

There’s a way to go…as far as services go, I shop at Findlay Market every week but you need things other than fresh fruit from time to time! (Resident 3).

These views represent a conflict between the spaces and services provided for Over-the-Rhine residents but furthermore, they highlight a distinction between the everyday lived experiences of the neighbourhood’s incoming, more affluent, population and the image of urban life that is being

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47 N.B. Realtor 2 constructs Over-the-Rhine as Downtown, and the neighbourhood providing services for this larger ‘Downtown’.
produced by housing market experts. This is a concerning trend to note and supports the privileging of the physical [and abstracted] neighbourhood space over the urban experience local residents actively engage in.

Similarly, low-income residents experience this neighbourhood divide through the services and activities practiced across Over-the-Rhine. The low-income residents interviewed claim the gentrified neighbourhood districts – the Main Street entertainment district and arts events, such as the Final Friday gallery walks – hold very little of interest; therefore, these residents do not use these spaces.

Combined with the spatial segregation of amenities providing for the distinct socio-economic communities in Over-the-Rhine, the neighbourhood’s social and family structures perpetuate the divide ensuring little interaction occurs between residents as the space that would engender a ‘mixed’ community do not exist. The logic behind this lived divide can be revealed through examining the differing perceptions of the seemingly mundane social practice of ‘loitering’ in Over-the-Rhine’s public spaces.

Loitering?

Walking through Over-the-Rhine on a summer’s day, the streets are a-throb with a diverse range of activities ranging from impromptu street barbecues and children having water fights to the homeless sleeping on benches and groups of youths hanging out on street corners. It could be argued, as Jane Jacobs (1961) and Iris Young (1990) have; that this is what a city should be – the encounters with, and tolerance of, difference that the intensity of interaction found within urban space may provide. However, rather than the positive interaction over cultural and economic divides Over-the-Rhine’s spatial and social structures reflect the polarisation and atomisation of capitalist society (see Young 1990) and the complex relationship between race and class in the American city (see Squires and Kubrin 2005, Wilson 1996, Massey and Denton 1996).

The historical construction of race and class in the United States leads individuals to interpret the activities of everyday life in Over-the-Rhine in particular ways. A German resident who has lived in Cincinnati for three years (and in an apartment on Main Street since September 2003), offered the perspective of a foreigner (used to an alternative concept of race and class) but

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48 Even events aimed at the mutual improvement of the neighbourhood such as ‘The Great American Clean-Up’ (an organised litter pick (Over-the-Rhine Foundation 2005), as described by Resident 5 and 9, operates in such a manner as residents involved stick to cleaning up their own respective neighbourhood areas.
also, as a middle-class, white resident enjoying class and race privilege, on the dynamics of race and class through coding people on the street;

Learning the code of race in this country was pretty frustrating. To walk down the street and to realise you are thinking ‘oh my good, there’s a black person coming’ – I exaggerate – but to profile like that, using the race category was pretty frustrating; and to realise that you are doing that (Resident 9).

He went on further observing;

There’s a lot class connected to [race] so you use race as an indicator of class; but of course you always get a little bit wary when you see white trash walking around. It’s basically the same thing but you can’t code it that easily and with black people also; you see a black person and they’re well dressed you have the image of the drug dealer or pimp who has money (Resident 9).

His observations reflect in part the image of urban, African-American street culture as represented in popular culture but further, the insecurities and tensions that cultural and economic integration can produce. The spaces of the new, gentrified neighbourhood and the old, ghettoised community polarise understanding of social and behavioural norms and as such, represent a clash of ontological conceptions of class and race in capitalist societies. Many residents moving into Over-the-Rhine’s high-end condo developments [and the general target gentrifying population] come from suburban areas where homogenous social groups rarely interact with the urban poor and economically marginalised (Squires and Kubrin 2005); with this, encountering people asking for money, hanging out in parks and on street corners opens them to visible, visceral poverty.

The cultural differences between street life in the suburbs and inner city illustrate socio-economic groups conflicting understandings and use of public space. The image and reality of these inner city interactions and experiences are often alien and intimidating; problems that were explicit concerns of the two female higher-income residents interviewed. With this, what might seem to be a mundane, everyday activity – loitering – becomes a significant obstacle in stimulating the interest of middle and high class migration – and investment – into Cincinnati city
centre. When questioned about what activities she viewed as problematic in Over-the-Rhine, a male representative from the Chamber of Commerce commented;

Loitering is a problem you’ll never get rid of; if you live in a suburb or somewhere with a house, you have a house to loiter in (OTR C of C).

Similarly, a female resident of a flat on Main Street tried to articulate the point;

Loitering, well not necessarily loitering because that’s not a bad thing… just the lack of respect…causing mayhem where they stand (Resident 5).

Both of these responses point to the problem loitering poses; that it is not necessarily a negative social behaviour and given the nature of housing and public space in Over-the-Rhine, the street or neighbourhood parks act as the only spaces that can facilitate social gathering and interaction. Whilst groups of [predominantly] black males loitering in Over-the-Rhine’s public spaces are not necessarily engaged in illegal activities, or would be prone to harassment or violence, that such events do occur on occasion makes loitering an intimidating activity, for the female body in particular (see Hubbard 2004), in negotiating the neighbourhood’s streets; several interviewees claimed that large groups of males loitering in Over-the-Rhine was a significant concern and impacted upon the spaces of the neighbourhood where they felt comfortable49.

The problem that loitering represents leads to its repressive regulation through revanchist state policy and policing strategies in a similar vein to prostitution (Hubbard 2004) and homelessness (Mitchell 2005, 1997, 1995, May, Cloke and Johnsen 2005). Neoliberal rationale and policies implication aggressively penalises such groups for their “fail[ing] to live up to the eligibility criteria of the consumer society” (Hubbard 2004: 666) and following from this, the ideological solution for social problems produced by the social stratification and new forms of inequality created by the urbanisation of neoliberalism lies in the violent exercise of penal state power (Hubbard 2004, Peck 2003, see also Brenner and Theodore 2002).

49 This is true for both affluent and poor users of neighbourhood space. Female interviews commented about sexual harassment and cat-calls whilst walking down the street and anecdotal reports of begging, violence, muggings and assaults were a significant concern for both male and female interviews (Interviews with Residents 2, 4, 5, 9, OTR C of C).
Initially, it would seem that loitering is an activity whose regulation is highly problematic to justify; in itself loitering is not an illegal activity. However, as Mitchell (2005) argues liberal rationale is increasingly being utilised but contemporary urban governance regimes to regulate the use of public space; freedom of speech (in acts of pan-handling etc) is trumped through policies seeking to ensure the freedom of the individual not to be hassled walking down the street. In analysing the erosion of [public] space by law, Mitchell (1997) highlights Cincinnati’s Pan-handling Ordinance as a key example of how the use of public space is rearticulated through the persecution of the city’s homeless and marginalised population.

Regulations controlling street behaviours at the national and local scale have become increasingly restrictive; indeed to such an extent that the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless publishes a leaflet, *Know Your Rights*, providing [chiefly] the homeless with guidelines on the illegalities of street behaviour and how to interact with the police. Cincinnati’s Pan-handling Ordinance prohibits aggressive pan-handling which amongst other regulations, impedes travel of a person or vehicle, occurs within 20 feet in any direction of an ATM, bank entrance, or crosswalk, on public transportation or by bus stops, following people, touching people, making false or misleading statements or soliciting in a way that would “alarm, intimidate, threaten, menace, harass, or coerce a reasonable person” (Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless 2005). An irony of this lies in the fact that *Know Your Rights* is advertised in *StreetVibes*, itself prohibited from sale in the Fountain Square district of Downtown – a prime location for panhandling.

The implications of the ordinance are discussed in greater detail by Mitchell (1997) who provides an excellent account of it implications for democracy, public space and acts of resistance, but what is significant here for my argument is the extension of this policing strategy so that people “may be arrested for disorderly conduct for standing in a group on the sidewalk if other people cannot get past” (Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless 2005). Standing in a group on city pavements becomes conceived as ‘loitering’ and in turn, associated with deviancy and criminality in line with neoliberal rationalisations of poverty. Of course, race and class have a fundamental impact upon how these regulations are enforced and who is being policed. On several intersections along Vine Street in Over-the-Rhine, it is commonplace to see groups of
black, male youths periodically dispersed by the police whilst the groups of drunken white youths who descend onto Main Street on the weekend are not targeted in such a way.  

‘Loitering’ is by-enlarge a concern for the affluent population moving into Over-the-Rhine and what the restrictions placed upon this particular everyday social activity reveals is the privileging of one set of social norms and values over another, pre-existing set of practices. Although ‘loitering’ can be an intimidating problem for people walking and driving through the neighbourhood (as I experienced myself on occasion), it is also a socially and economically historically-produced behaviour that is culturally engrained in Over-the-Rhine’s social and spatial structures. Its stigmatisation and repressive regulation, I argue (agreeing in particular with Mitchell), reflects the city’s attempts to assert the right of Over-the-Rhine’s middle-class population to neighbourhood space. Loitering is viewed through the negative lens of neoliberal (and moral conservative) ideology and with this, the connotations associated with criminality and poverty necessitates its removal from visibility. Therefore, in order to live their own everyday lives in the cultural manner the majority of society deems appropriate, the rights of the valued, economically active and affluent consumer trump negate the right of Over-the-Rhine’s marginalised citizens to make use of the neighbourhood’s public spaces.

6.4) Reclaiming Neighbourhood Space

Despite the trend towards increased marginalisation and spatial dispersion for Over-the-Rhine’s low-come community, the spatial practices in which these residents and users of neighbourhood space engage still actively produce a fundamental component of the urban experience (Lefebvre 2003, 1991, De Certeau 1984). With this, the spaces produced through the everyday practices of Over-the-Rhine inhabitants offer the potential for resisting behaviours and development projects which they view as negative. In the following I highlight two such

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50 During my interview at the Miami University Center for Community Engagement, we witnessed police moving a group of black youths along through the windows of the center. The interviewees claimed that this was a common occurrence when African-American youths gathered outside the shops on the corner of Vine and 12th Streets.

51 However, it is interesting to also note the glamour of crime for Over-the-Rhine’s affluent residents. Being a victim of crime allows some residents of the neighbourhood to feel that they belong in the community. I overheard one group of young, white males boasted about having their stereo stolen at Finlay Market, whilst Resident 2 claimed walking along streets lined with prostitutes and drug dealers empowered him with a sense of connection and interaction with the whole population of Over-the-Rhine. Although not explicitly interacting with these groups, the proximity of crime and the urban poor provided a sense of the city as envisaged by Jacobs (1961). Being a victim of petty crime appears somewhat appealing to incoming residents; asserting their own braveness and cosmopolitanism in choosing to live in an environment perceived in the popular consciousness of most Cincinnatians (indeed Americans) as a dangerous, marginalised ghetto space.

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moments of spatial production by neighbourhood residents; firstly, the raising of an anti-drug banner on the intersection of 12th and Republic Street and secondly, the changing use of Findlay Park in the wake of a neighbourhood shooting (see Figure 6.3). Yet, in analysing these practices of everyday life and the spaces they produce, I emphasise that whilst these spaces appear emancipatory, their presence is undermined by shifting power relations in the neighbourhood and the rolling out of the hegemonic neoliberal project 3CDC and their supports are currently implementing in Over-the-Rhine.

**Tender Mercies’ Banner**

At the intersection of 12th and Republic Street, local non-profit organisation Tender Mercies erected a banner across the street reading ‘DO NOT BUY OR SELL DRUGS HERE’. Interviewees from the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce described how, combined with the banner itself, workers and volunteers from Tender Mercies run coffee and doughnut sales on the street designed to interrupt drug dealing patterns in the neighbourhood. Furthermore, they have walked out of their offices, seen drug deals taking places and confronted the dealers by point to the banner and asking that drugs not be dealt there; and the drug dealers have responded ‘okay’ and left.52

This strategy is premised upon social interaction with those dealing drugs in the neighbourhood; an engagement facilitated through a grassroots organisational strategy. Whilst the banner does not address the problem of drug dealing, the combination of producing physical space (in the form of the banner) and social space (active social practices that seek to disrupt illegal activity in the neighbourhood) utilised by Tender Mercies illustrates a continual resistance towards criminality and violence in Over-the-Rhine, and an attempt to reclaim neighbourhood space from drug dealers and gangs.

**New Findlay Playground and Teresa Hill’s Shooting**

On the 11th June 2005, whilst playing cards with friends in New Findlay Playground and with her young son nearby, 23 year-old Teresa Renee Hill was hit by a stray bullet fired by Jason Baker. Hill was the 5th bystander to be fatally wounded by gunshots in Cincinnati during 2005 (Cincinnati Enquirer 2006e). For my argument, what is significant about this shooting is the

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52 Tender Mercies’ strategies were also discussed at the Safety Sector Community Meeting (29/06/2005)
Figure 6.3: (top) Tender Mercies’ anti-drug dealing banner, 12th and Republic Street (bottom) Findlay Street / New Findlay Playground 19 days after Teresa Hill was gunned down in the same location 30/06/2005 (photos by author)
reclamation of neighbourhood space by local residents in the wake of Hill’s death. I first learned of Hill’s shooting driving up Vine Street approximately 2 hours after the incident occurred. The block surrounding Findlay Street had been cordoned off by the police and there were still several emergency vehicles in attendance. The scene reflects the popular conception of over the Rhine as “one of Cincinnati’s most blighted, crime-infested communities” (Cincinnati Enquirer 2006f). Certainly the neighbourhood’s drug culture and gangland violence produces many more spaces like this (such as the problems associated with the 13th Street Barricade); however, several days after the shooting occurred – and for many days afterwards, local residents moved into the space in what I submit, was an act of both mourning and defiance.

Local residents turned the park’s space into a continual, day-long gathering, with a barbeque, people talking and playing games and banners of remembrance hung along the playground fence on Findlay Street. When I had previously walked past New Findlay Playground on my way into Over-the-Rhine, the space had been used, but was largely with a few small groups of men sitting at the tables smoking weed; with the occasional drug deal taking place. The ‘occupation’ of the park by families, children, the elderly, simultaneously displaced deviant activity whilst producing a space of community and social bonding.

**Resistance Tactics and the Production of Neighbourhood Space**

Spatial practices constitute an equally significant conception of space as the abstract and lived worlds of planning and everyday experience (Perry 1995, Lefebvre 1991, De Certeau 1984). Whilst the state and dominant classes in both Over-the-Rhine and Cincinnati are in a powerful position to articulate and produce neighbourhood space (as I have argued in chapter 5), the spatial practices of everyday users of the neighbourhood reveal the historical-material production of [urban] space – and the power structures prevalent in society. Far from the “obscure background of social activity”, the spatial practices of everyday life form the mode of operating, consuming, communicating and interacting with the totality of physical environment and society through which the users of space express their place in the world (see De Certeau 1984: xi). The ‘reclaimed’ neighbourhood spaces described above reflect the lived experience of Over-the-Rhine, produced by the practices of everyday life as residents create and articulate their claim to city space.
However, whilst both these moments reclaim and produce the spaces of everyday life, they are temporal; occurring in the complex and paradoxical wider spaces of investment (the recently renovated Findlay Playground) and neglect (blight and vacancy along 12th Street). Whilst anecdotal evidence from my interview with employees from the Over-the-Rhine Chamber of Commerce, and the Safety Sector Community Meeting (attended 29/06/2005) suggests that Tender Mercies’ resistance practices are successful, they occur within the space of 3CDC’s Washington Park development plan.\footnote{This can be seen in surrounding buildings whose windows are covered with white boards – reportedly an indication that 3CDC has gained control of the property (according to Realtor 1).} The displacement caused by the implementation of this plan (and wider low-income population exodus discussed above) suggests to me that the space Tender Mercies occupies will soon be annexed by 3CDC; removing drug dealing in the area, but also displacing the low-income advocacy organisation itself. The spaces produced in the reclamation of Findlay Park, as a reaction to a specific event, had disappeared when I returned to the site two months later.

Therefore, the resistance practices engaged in by Over-the-Rhine’s low-income residents, and the spaces they produce constitute, what De Certeau (1984: 29-42) constructs as resistance tactics. In distinguishing between strategies (power relations that can occur when a subject can be isolated and thus posited in place) and tactics (an action determined by the absence of a proper spatial locus) De Certeau highlights strategies as the mechanism of the strong. Governance restructuring (see chapter 4), and the grounding of neoliberal ideological assumptions in the wider social consciousness (see chapter 5), place 3CDC and Over-the-Rhine’s market-rate development advocacy institutions in an apparently democratic-legitimate position to shape the neighbourhood; with this, the authority to produce of urban space is scaled up to unaccountable private institutions, whilst the responsibility for the decline of Over-the-Rhine space and society remains with its everyday inhabitants (Peck and Tickell 2002). Acts of resistance, such as the spaces of protest represented by Tender Mercies’ banner and Findlay Playground as these must be viewed as temporal mechanisms operating in “space of others” (De Certeau 1984: 36-37). Therefore neoliberalisation of Over-the-Rhine can be seen as the ‘triumph of space [the ability of those in power to produce space – such as 3CDC] over time’ [the temporal ability of neighbourhood inhabitants to shape space and society] (De Certeau 1984).
As the ability of resistance tactics to form in space is restricted by the rolling out of 3CDC’s neololiberalised neighbourhood development plans (with the continual reproduction of neighbourhood space as both focus of investment and marginalisation), and the (in)voluntary displacement of low-income residents communities increases, I claim the right of Cincinnati’s marginalised inhabitants to Over-the-Rhine space will be further eroded – both in their physical presence in neighbourhood space, and access to democratic political structures. As such, I concur with De Certeau’s assertion (1984: 29-42), that in order to maintain a position in Over-the-Rhine, low-income residents and advocates must move from temporal resistance tactics (such as those described above) towards resistance strategies. To challenge the ideological and material roll-out of neoliberalism as the only way to develop the neighbourhood, such strategies must be grounded in an urban experience which can reproduce spaces and social practices that re-articulate Over-the-Rhine from the inside – not as a ghettoised, marginalised community, but a viable urban space for low-income residents.

6.5) Everyday Life and Neighbourhood Development: Future Trends

As a result of the complex and contradictory nature of both neoliberal urbanism and everyday life, the future development of the Over-the-Rhine is uncertain for both low-income advocacy organisations, and market-rate developers. Many of the real estate agents and developers involved in Over-the-Rhine are concerned as to whether the condo market will hold out; interviews with housing market experts claimed that no-one knows the size and depth of demand and previous condo ‘housing-bubbles’ have burst leaving property owners and developers with refurbished units they are struggling to sell.

The persistence of Over-the-Rhine as a ghetto space and the uneven introduction of investment and regulatory practices means the low-income community feels pressed to leave the neighbourhood, despite of their attachment to the place. With the growth of such sentiments, the neoliberal housing policies discussed above facilitate displacement from the urban core by the carrot (of potentially better living conditions in other neighbourhoods), rather than the stick (of forced evictions and pressures of rent increases). The decreasing numbers of low-income residents who constitute the social base of the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement undermines such advocacy groups’ political position in the neighbourhood’s governance structure, as well as
the ability of the practices of everyday life adopted by the neighbourhood’s low-income population to produce and reproduce their lived spaces. As such, this increasingly legitimises the rolling-out of private investment and market-rate development programmes introduced by 3CDC.

The Property Developer interviewed for the research project paints a bleak picture of Over-the-Rhine’s future which at once points to the [perceived] failings of ReSTOC as a significant cause of criminality in the neighbourhood, but also points towards the paradoxical production of space which 3CDC’s project entails – thus undermining the spatial and structural integrity of a distinct ‘Over-the-Rhine’ district;

My concern is that right now, the whole Elm Street corridor; that where ReSTOC has all there properties and it’s just a crime haven. Nobody lives in those buildings but there is a drug deal a minute, there is prostitution and all these bad things and that whole corridor is all a complete mess and where are these people going to go? **I think I can guarantee you with 3CDC’s muscle behind that district, crime is not going to stay there**, it’s going to leave there as it doesn’t disappear, it doesn’t evaporate. My suspicion is… because you’ve got all these great areas; you’ve got Main Street, Pendleton, you’ve got the Art Academy, SCPA, Washington Park – where are all those places located? There are all south of Liberty. **So I think if you look at Over-the-Rhine in 10 years, you’re going to have this cool, funky, artist neighbourhood called ‘Southern Over-the-Rhine’ or ‘Downtown North’ and then all the problems that were formally associated with Over-the-Rhine are now going to be concentrated in this little basin between I-75, Mount Auburn, Clifton and Liberty and that’s bad for the Brewery District and that’s bad for Findlay Market. Those are two very important areas for north Over-the-Rhine and I don’t know what the solutions could be (Property Developer).**

Over-the-Rhine’s continual construction as a ghetto space defined by crime, violence and urban blight deters capital investment, but it also generates everyday-lived conditions which the neighbourhood’s low-income community increasingly do not want to struggle through. The housing market experts I interviewed argue that large scale investment in Over-the-Rhine’s property market needs to hold off for 5-10 years. I submit that this is in order to wait for a tipping point whereby the social and political support base for low-income advocacy groups such as the Over-the-Rhine People’s Movement have been undermined to the extent that resistance to the gentrification of the neighbourhood either cannot mobilise or lacks [apparent] political-democratic legitimacy.
In this chapter, I have argued that this point is realised through several concurrent processes; the demonisation of particular socio-cultural practices of everyday life and the urban ‘underclass’, voluntary and involuntary displacement of the urban poor arising from the deterioration of the social and physical environment and facilitated by the contextual embedding of urban housing and development policies, and the regressive regulatory restrictions placed upon the development of affordable housing in the neighbourhood. These processes support the shifting power relations in Over-the-Rhine’s governance structure and the ‘right’ to the city of the middle and upper classes legitimising the gentrification of Over-the-Rhine and usurping any claims to oppose it.
Chapter 7

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have critically analysed an instance of ‘actually existing’ neoliberalism as the imperatives of privatised, market-oriented political-institutional re-regulation have been contextually grounded in the specific space and society of Over-the-Rhine, Cincinnati (after Brenner and Theodore 2002, also Peck 2004, Wilson 2004a, Antipode Special Edition 2002). My research shows that the implementation of a neoliberal mode of regulation, governance restructuring and policy application within Over-the-Rhine (and the political-economic institutions at various scales that govern the neighbourhood) are at once contradictory and paradoxical, yet produce a set of tendencies that increasingly marginalise already disenfranchised communities and spaces. Furthermore, the spaces and social structures emerging from the contextual embedding of neoliberalism within the specific place of Over-the-Rhine produce the social, political and economic conditions which facilitate and legitimise the rolling out of a neoliberal [gentrified (following Smith 2002)] development project (Peck and Tickell 2002, Weber 2002).
Yet beyond the tensions inherent in the neoliberal re-articulation of Over-the-Rhine – and wider Cincinnati’s – political-economic infrastructure, the contextual embedding of urban neoliberalism introduces complex spatialities and social practices which are produced through a dialectical relationship with the murky, often contradictory structures and spaces of the everyday urban experience (Lefebvre 2003, 1991, De Certeau 1984). This dialectical relationship, however, is not equal. Power is increasingly located within non-democratic, unaccountable governance organisations and the devolution of state authority to institutions such as 3CDC legitimises the usurping of the political and lived spaces and social structures of Over-the-Rhine’s low-income inhabitants.

Establishing and Legitimising Neoliberalism in Over-the-Rhine

The establishment of neoliberal urbanism in Over-the-Rhine has occurred through the highly-spatialised strategies of institutional restructuring, the rescaling of urban governance and policy implementation, and becomes grounded via the dialectical relationships between these processes, the production of urban space and the practices of everyday life. Whilst the rhetoric of neoliberal ideology exclaims individual utility and freedom of choice – positing the solution to the neighbourhood’s problems in the opening of market competition in housing and social service provision (Wilson 2006, Gough 2002, Jessop 2002) – the reality of contextual grounding neoliberalism in Over-the-Rhine serves to regressive punish the politically and economically marginalised, detaching them from their material grounding in place.

This is more than a disparity between ideology and practice; it is a distinct spatial strategy that undermines the democratic rights of society’s most vulnerable citizens. Neoliberalised re-articulations of urban space destroy physical and symbolic places that may act as loci for resistance, and spatially disperse disenfranchised populations, thus usurping the ability of social support to advocate on their behalf. Place specific neoliberal institutional restructuring, policy implementation and discursive constructions of space and social practices, as I have shown, produce spatial and social structures that diffuse the political and economic concerns of the marginalised and disenfranchised, as such removing them from visibility.

Urban Neoliberalism and Everyday Urban Experience

The visibility of everyday life practices – and of poverty in particular – presents the most significant obstacle for those seeking to implement market-rate development projects in Over-
the-Rhine. The complexities and contradictions of everyday life complicate the reduction of abstract space, such as 3CDC’s plans for developing Washington Park and Over-the-Rhine more generally. The visibility of poverty, crime, urban blight and spaces / structures of resistance highlight the disparities between both neoliberal doctrine and its material implementation, and the divergence between abstract and lived spaces (Lefebvre 1991, see Mitchell 2005, 1997).

However, the neoliberalised regulation of space, society and social practices produces paradoxical constructions of Over-the-Rhine that at once complement and compete with each other. Neoliberal regulatory mechanisms produce Over-the-Rhine as both a ghettoised and marginalised urban space, and as a site for capital investment and accumulation. Yet it is the persistence of crime and disinvestment in the neighbourhood that legitimises the ideological and discursive elevation of market-rate development and the implementation of stricter penal regulations on marginalised political and economic inhabitants of Over-the-Rhine. As such, it is the paradoxical production of space which in turn provides the conditions neoliberal politicians and advocates use to legitimise the implementation of their doctrine, practices and policies.

Public spaces, such as Washington Park, emerge as ideological battlegrounds rather than spaces of compromise. Gentrifying residents and private investment advocates fear the violence and antagonism associated with everyday life in ghetto space while the low-income community mistrusts the intent of market-rate advocates and the regulations in place to prevent the wholesale gentrification of the neighbourhood. Attempts to neoliberalise the social and spatial structures of Over-the-Rhine represent a clash of two socio-economic communities, their economic and socio-cultural worldviews, and their practices of everyday life. The spatial incompatibility of these material philosophies validates Lefebvre’s concept of the urban, especially urban space, as setting and stake of class struggle (2003, 1991, see also Keil 2002, Kipfer 2002).

**Implications for Future Research**

Brenner and Theodore’s (2002) theorisation of ‘actually existing’ neoliberalism provides a complex and politically-loaded theoretical understanding of contemporary capitalism, political-economic governance and urbanism. Yet despite the benefits of this theorisation, ‘actually existing’ neoliberalism actually affects the lived experiences of actually existing urban inhabitants. Beyond illuminating the institutionalised configurations and constellations of socio-political power, the destructive and contradictory character of neoliberal policies and exposing
the systematic misrepresentations of such policies (Brenner and Theodore 2002), the most tangible impacts of re-articulating the institutional-regulatory mechanisms of capitalism are expressed within and upon the everyday lived experiences of individuals.

Through the adoption of a qualitative approach to the study of ‘actually existing’ neoliberalism, this thesis opens a more complex perspective on the implications of political-economic regulatory restructuring on urban space and society. Exploring the complexities and contradictions of neoliberal ideology and the practices of everyday life – by engaging with those experiencing and living them – provides not only a deeper understanding of contemporary urbanism, but also of material and discursive ways for disenfranchised communities to contest their marginalisation and displacement from urban space and civil society. With this, I argue future research into the spatialities and temporalities of neoliberal urbanism, as well as actual resistance movements, need to engage with the multiple ways in which neoliberal policies create new spatialities that further the coercion and socialisation of low-income advocacy institutions into collaboration with capital, and that create non-accountable political structures.

As capitalism operates through processes of spatially uneven development (Smith 1984), the production of varying urban neoliberalisms will be constructed and contested differently in alternative historical-material settings (Brenner and Theodore 2002, also Wilson 2004a, Peck 2004). The variations of both neoliberal ideology and the everyday urban experience analysed through this thesis reveal the complexity of political-economic regulation and restructuring (rather than a post-fact rationalisation: see Larner 2005, Larner and Criag 2005); and with this, the importance of geographic analysis. Therefore, I assert that future studies of urban neoliberalism should engage with place-based studies to explore the place-specific articulations of neoliberal urbanism. By paying attention to the ways that neoliberalism is spatially grounded, reproduced and contested in particular spatial contexts, we may actually open new understandings of how to undermine neoliberal governance and produce more socially just urbanisms through the spatial re-articulation of resistance strategies.
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