I, Maria G Bergh, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Community Planning in Community Planning.

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Community Ecology: Social Capital in Public Space

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Community Ecology: Social Capital in Public Space

A thesis submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Cincinnati in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Community Planning

in the School of Planning of the College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning

by

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Gentrification and social capital are loaded terms.

Both promise increasing value through tenure by rehabilitating existing, sustainable communities. Both concepts have failings. Gentrification offers revitalization by relinquishing the existing population as a priority. Social capital, on the other hand, suggests that neighborhood assets such as relationships and vacant space are inherently valuable, though this may develop from exclusion and insularity. The individual failings of gentrification and social capital are supplementary, opening opportunities between separated classes.

Communities’ attitude towards this change can be described as resistive, redemptive, or transformative. These qualitative, subjective adjectives emerged from an analysis of the Price Hill group of neighborhoods in Cincinnati, referenced against successful methods of participatory design work from across the United States. Understanding a community’s attitude positions partnering professionals to empathize with the roots of concern and conflict. Following the precedent of successful practitioners provides a roadmap for engagement, easing the process of coming to understand a community’s needs. When common goals unite the professional and residents, social capital can be built alongside the physical project.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>abstract</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>literature review</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sanoff</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cox</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>krunholz</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hood</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hester</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cruz</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>methodology</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>site</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>history</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>analysis</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>site s.w.o.t.</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practitioners</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conclusion</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>references</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appendix 1</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>site sketches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appendix 2</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>additional demographic mapping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appendix 3</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supplemental methodology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table</td>
<td>figures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nelson ronsheim, fairview</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>otr gentrification</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rent gap</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gentrification sequence</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practitioner table 1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sanoff</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cox</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hood</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hester</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cruz</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public space socialization</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>site map close</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>site map context</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sketch context maps</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demographic maps</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community situation</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practitioner table 2</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taxonomy of interventions</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eighth street lit view</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community map</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>views to downtown</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>existing community</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>potential interventions</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social and community space</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th &amp; state streetscape</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>additional demographic maps</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>additional demographic maps</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>additional demographic maps</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

This thesis seeks to address the problem of gentrification. This urban process displaces residents, closes sidewalks, and shifts social spaces in pursuit of new residents. Great pains are taken to enforce security, privacy, and anonymity despite the potential for integration that proximity suggests (Krase 2005). This conflict is most virulent where new populations view the activities of longtime residents (particularly drinking or barbequing in public) as vulgar (Krase 2005, Freeman 2006, Patillo 2007). This can tangibly illustrate the power divide between new and old residents, as the police are often involved.

Community choice and voice are fundamental and simple objectives for planners, developers, and architects (Qu & Hasselaar 2011). The right for individuals to choose and influence ongoing change in their neighborhood is fundamental to the theory of the planning profession, and yet is rarely realized (AICP 2009, Qu & Hasselaar 2011). Too often a group of individuals speaks “in the name of” the community without truly representing their neighbors. This lack of voice is consonant with a central tenet of asset-based community development (also known as social capital) that suggests aid derived from needs instills dependence (Arefi 2008). In neighborhoods lacking traditional or political capital, it is difficult to convince residents that involvement and participation can make a difference.

Gentrification produces passive communities, by emphasizing “the primacy of consumption over production” (Smith & Williams 1981). “More destructively, marginal social groups and political activity have been quietly excluded from what now passes for the public domain, and monoclass, monoform, and decidedly monotonous hermetic archipelagos have been created—all in the name of escaping the blazing summer sun or the blustering winter wind. Under the guise of convenience, we are imposing a middle-class tyranny on the last urban realm of refuge for other modes of life, other values: downtown streets” (Boddy 1992, 150).
This quote refers to the shift from a blue- to a white-collar population, which subsequently alters the social context from building community to one of buying into culture. Because social capital theory posits that active use of connections create value, these passive associations with place and community are valueless (Arefi 2008). Intentional intervention by planners may be necessary to instigate change.

Social capital and gentrification are intertwined in today’s city. Though gentrification literature rarely identifies social capital by name the conditions that delay displacement (organization around assets, active community life, and advocacy) define asset-based community development (Shaw 2005, Freeman 2006). Where gentrification takes hold, public spaces are often redesigned to minimize contact, further reducing social capital (Hood 1997, Waldheim 2006). This loss of commonality in public space makes change and integration difficult.

“Bridging” social capital, capacity built with allies beyond the community limits, is theoretically developed in shared public spaces. Bridging capital allows communities to access further resources, including the professional contacts necessary to undertake work. Professionals who invest in community development without community buy-in and initiation reduce their impact to place-development with little effect on the people implicated in these places; the subsequent displacement is commonly termed gentrification. If gentrification limits the creation of social capital, the converse states that building social capital slows gentrification. The intersection of affluent and impoverished populations during redevelopment creates the opportunity for age community-led
As gentrification becomes more widespread in smaller cities seeking to attract young professionals it is increasingly imperative that design professionals understand how to solve problems of decline in place. Current methods of urban redevelopment do not fully consider the costs of relocating impoverished urban populations to areas ill-suited to support their needs. There is an increasing body of transformative work with at-risk populations that results in long-term stability and livability in communities over the long term; in these neighborhoods social capital is a demonstrable fact. These themes are expanded in the following five sections: (i) a literature review, (ii) methodology, (iii) Cincinnati-based case study, (iv) analysis and (v) conclusion, considering implications and potential for future research.

Literature Review
Over time cities alter, in part to mitigate conflicts; yet minimizing contradiction does not relieve underlying inequality. Today, “at the root of the problems are the massive economic shifts that have marked the last two decades. Hundreds of thousands of jobs have either disappeared or moved away from the central city and...the jobs created there are different form those that once sustained neighborhoods” (Kretzmann & McKnight 1993, 1). From America, these jobs have moved overseas and to the nation’s south where labor is relatively cheap. Increasingly sophisticated transportation and communication technology decreases the reliance on a center, changing the pattern of urban development in a way that significantly affects society.

This can be illustrated through the bid-rent theory of urbanization. Traditionally, commercial uses demanded the highest rent (and were thus able to command the most desirable land) followed by industrial and residential uses. The center city excluded non-commercial uses, creating a dense and efficient zone for business in close proximity to related firms and services (O'Sullivan 2007). The next-most desirable land, just beyond the commercial sector, sold or let at rates just lower than the central land to industrial concerns. The peripheral or otherwise unsuitable land developed as housing or farming and other low-intensity uses.

This model altered as suburbs and transportation technology increased in prominence and sophistication. The center of business and industry shifted away from traditional rail or river nodes to peripheries highway crossroads (Brasington 2001). Industry moved here, and workers followed. This polycentric model of development raised the value of land at the periphery, and at all points between the old city and the new suburban centers. Improving communications technologies drew offices closer to workers rather than in proximity with each other (a new pattern of agglomeration economies formerly related to urban density).
changing demand for land in the american city over time; demand decreases to white

This describes the limiting case of the bid-rent model, which states that development is predicated on delivering the highest long-term return to the landowner (Brasington 2001). Despite this, because value was not created so much as relocated, the edge city’s value is the center city’s loss.

Initially the development of highways, automobiles and real estate as major industries encouraged the cheap development of rural land. The real estate industry took advantage of the rent gap, or the difference in value between urban and suburban or rural land. One could purchase vacant rural land, develop it, and sell or rent it at or below the going rates in the city for a handsome profit. As rural demand began to exceed supply prices rose; commensurate urban vacancy lowered city prices, narrowing the gap on both sides until, in the 1980s, it began to reverse. Federal policy contributed to this economic situation by linking place and race requirements to the issuance of insured mortgages (Schwartz 2010). This process, known as redlining, made buying or rehabilitating homes in diverse inner city neighborhoods financially impossible; by the time this policy was reversed the social and structural condition of the community and its housing stock made change nearly infeasible (Jackson 1985, 197-218) (Kunstler 1993, 102). Today’s return to the city romanticizes the forms of the buildings, and the origin of the neighborhoods, erasing this contentious and discriminatory period.

Urban renewal is a process of slum clearance (government investment) and public rebuilding projects (governmental investment) with few opportunities for private intervention (Knox & McCarthy 2005). Today, redevelopment tends to be more multilateral and commercial. While there are many ways that old neighborhoods become new again, the perceived process is from pioneers (do-it-yourself owner-occupants) to commercial developers toward institutionalized change (government investment) (Shaw 2005). Four dimensions tend to affect the speed of intervention: (a) building types (b) building tenure (c) community involvement, and (d) government involvement (Shaw...
Specifically, districts characterized by ornate or identifiable styles (a), indirect (rental) tenure (b), and low community (c) and government involvement (d) tend to redevelop at higher speed than those lacking these inducements. Other inputs (such as crime and building condition) affect this equation to a lesser degree. Redevelopment that is focused on building quality without regard for the community of occupants is often termed gentrification.

Gentrification

The root “gentry” recalls class favoritism supposedly inimical to modern egalitarian society (Smith & Williams 1986). Redevelopers have been described as pioneers conquering “native” wilds to robber-baron commercial developers, adding baggage to an already burdened term (Smith & Williams 1986). Because urban development is a cyclical process that leads some areas to upgrade while others decline gentrification has frequently been misapplied to label any up-scaling or redevelopment effort (Smith & Williams 1986). Lack of precision leads makes identifying possible positive outcomes of projects based on different philosophies more difficult.

To be clear, throughout this paper the term gentrification refers to the conveyance of community ownership from existing low-income residents with insecure tenure to more secure potential residents, whether by a first or third party. The role of “conveyance of ownership” requires disambiguation. Most often this is related to the physical displacement of community members from units due to renovation or its associated increase in cost-of-living. However, the relocation or rededication of space, retail, taste/aesthetics, and political representation are all critical. Similarly, the intent and actors involved have a great deal of power over the outcome.

While literature argues the inevitability of physical displacement due to gentrification, there is no ambiguity over the shift in place-based culture (Smith & Williams 1986, Freeman 2006, Miller & Tucker 1998, Krase 2005). In other words, gentrification is identified with the shift in community ownership, language, and image toward population even if the original group is still in residence. “We can think of gentrification then as a shift in semiotics or the meaning of space/place changes as opposed to merely the social alteration of the space/place” (Krase 2005, 187). This change is visible in changing police targets, and retail types. Even the presence of window shoppers or other cultural crowds can hint that the primary audience of a neighborhood is in flux.

The first situation, the accommodation of resurging interest in urban living by forced relocation of marginal populations, deprives those without options of their home to provide more options to those with many. Vulnerable populations are exposed to the high social and economic costs of relocation, often to less affordable

2 It is possible that community involvement is a liability as well as an asset, particularly when it takes on a tone of resistance, that is, forbids change without creating a tangible and achievable alternative. This is the case in Over-the-Rhine today, as gentrification takes place despite long-standing community resistance (Miller & Tucker 1998).
or decentralized locales, without resolution of the root causes of their disadvantage (Kretzman & McKnight 1993, Varady & Walker 2003). The lack of significant change resulting from the planned relocation activities of Gautreaux and Moving to Opportunity (as interpreted by Varady and Walker) offer insight into the detriment of unplanned, unregulated and even unintended private efforts. And yet, since dispersal is a valid and promising public purpose for housing policy in the U.S. today there is a possibility that partnering with developers could exploit gentrification’s apparently negative effects towards social change.

There is an element of desirability to this turnover because neighborhoods vulnerable to this type of transition are also in great need of change (Shaw 2005). And yet the shortened spatial distance between upper and lower income communities facilitated by gentrification has almost no effect on the resulting social distance (Knox 2005). In fact, physical proximity in many ways necessitates an increase in social distance that may be termed ‘walling-out,’ a process “as much a reflection of the instability of underlying relationships as the strength of the division within them” (Marcuse 1997 cited in Marcuse 2005). Gentrification is one of the few urban processes today contributing to socio-economic integration, a great opportunity for the creation of social capital in pursuit of increasing equity, even as division so often defines the term.

**social capital**

Social capital is the sense that relationships build capacity, and is thus related to gentrification through the concept that community vitality can resist turnover and redevelopment (Kretzmann & McKnight 1993, Shaw 2005). There are two primary “types” of capacity that connections create: bonding capital which prevails between those struggling to get by, and bridging capital that is common among persons seeking the means to move beyond (Arefi 2008, Kretzmann & McKnight 1993). Bonding capital is abundant in low-income neighborhoods, reflecting the interdependence necessary for impoverished communities to survive. Bridging capital often goes hand in hand with traditional capital as it is more common among the well-to-do who use business contacts to secure funding, interviews, jobs, and is thus more diverse, shallow, and open-minded (Kretzmann & McKnight 1993, Arefi 2008). Many theorists offer more critical views, particularly of bonding capital, stating that “bonding social capital is shaped by social ties fostering the pursuit of narrow—sometimes sectarian and contrasting with communities well being—interests, and hampering the diffusion of knowledge and information...[while] Bridging social capital is composed of weak ties, building bridges and connections between different types of networks, therefore fostering knowledge diffusion and socio-economic progress” (Sebatini 2007, 89). There is potential and caution required attendant in applying any form of social capital as a basis for practice.
Social capital, like many theories, is both positive and normative, explaining an existing condition and suggesting how that could or should be, ideally. These two capacities of social capital are explained by Xavier de Souza Briggs as first

...an analytic lens that helps clarify cause and effect relationships that link race [and class] to space and both to persistent patterns of social inequality. Social capital enriches economic and other perspectives on the city that rely too exclusively on individual choice and calculus to explain spatial and other patterns of inequality. Second, social capital is a deployable asset, if not often an easily measured or easily directed one, through which particular agents seek to accomplish purposes that matter to them, at least some of which also matter to the wider society. The first purpose helps us take stock of the second and, if we are lucky as well as wise, make better decisions about the types of social capital worth cultivating and where and how to deploy that capital.

(de Souza Briggs 2005, 81-2)

In other words, the positive element of social capital helps us to identify and apply its normative component. This last point, deploying social capital, is the Achilles heel of the theory. While even bonding capital can erupt into bridging capital as a result of fruitful partnerships, application of social capital theory by planners and other professionals is almost as rare as community access to and awareness of the full range of skills and potentials offered by designers and planners:

People don’t think ‘Oh my gosh, we need a designer.’ They think about all the other technical professional skills that might be needed to respond. They don’t think of it as a design problem. Our challenge is to show them what we have to offer is an ability to look at things holistically and make connections...We need to be in the places where problems exist. We have to be in the room when the decisions are being made to be able to voice our opinions. Then our talents will be exploited. That’s how you get design to be important. Designers need to be engaged, to be civic leaders, to be in the right place at the right time.

(Cox 2006, 163)

This perspective suggests that designers have something to gain from initiating bridging capital. While much of the literature considers the deployment of social capital an uphill battle for low-income communities, Cox here reveals that professionals also gain from this interaction. For example, some professionals seek a diversity of projects, others pursue social equity, and still others seek to serve the communities in which they find themselves. Different motivations, skills, and worldviews lead to different methods and outcomes of practice. One of the most important of de Souza Briggs’ (2005) dual view of social capital is that it can be deployed to select productive means of implementation and improve outcomes of professional practice in improving existing urban processes.

Productive outcomes of redevelopment must include gains to the residents of a community. While gentrification has been defined as the “conveyance of ownership,” conveyance is justifiable
where a transaction is mutually beneficial to all parties. According to social capital theory, project owners and initiators accrue value, including communities who take on development roles. External development (welfare) does not truly benefit current residents and is not, therefore, mutually beneficial (Kretzman & McKnight 1993). The professional role in this context is to catalyze community-driven change to build ownership and minimize exclusion. The outcomes of planning and architecture are particularly suited to announcing and reinforcing this message of ownership and pride. Ultimately, if the goal is to bring diverse groups together as equals in space, the process should itself achieve the outcome.

**participatory design typologies**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sanoff</td>
<td><strong>Participatory</strong></td>
<td>Hood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cox</td>
<td><strong>Community-Led</strong></td>
<td>Hester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krumholz</td>
<td><strong>Paradigm-Changing</strong></td>
<td>Cruz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: various philosophies of engagement*

Many professionals pursue capacity building through their practice. Six notable cases (Henry Sanoff, Maurice Cox, Norman Krumholz, Walter Hood, Randolph Hester and Teddy Cruz) are outlined here to illustrate the various dimensions that differentiate approaches to social practice. Each exemplifies a slightly different approach and brings a balance of participation, community leadership, and efforts to change the way work is done in the city, as well as a unique blend of literal and theoretical concepts. This approach can also be called their practice or methodology, all three are used here.

“Literal” here is used to denote implementation that directly translates the participant’s stated desires into built form without editorialization; this practice is almost always based on direct and extensive community consultation. “Theoretical” work, on the other hand, is based on community requests and needs, and may be stimulated or commissioned through profound intimacy with community needs, but which imagines a program and realization beyond the didactic requests of participants. In other words, literal professionals make community expectations physical while theoretical practitioners extend the basic brief into something more. This may apprehend growing or changing needs, critique the generating societal condition, or offer poetry and dignity to traditionally downtrodden or ignored populations. Examining the work side by side will verify the breadth of social practice and identify methods which are uniquely suited to particular conditions.
Henry Sanoff is the name most closely linked with participatory design. His experience fills volumes focusing on every aspect of design with communities, from worksheets and surveys to visual analysis and CAD, and continuing on through analysis and production (Sanoff 2000, 1991, & 1979). Sanoff’s unique contribution throughout these texts is a prolific series of worksheets and other materials (surveys, collages, maps, models, etc.) for use in public meetings.

These visuals offer communities opportunities to see clearly the effects of redevelopment (education) and solicit preferred responses (participation). These client-generated images and requirements are then refined into a final design that represents community consensus. This process is compelling because it communicates to the participants something of the conflicts and conundrums of the designer, and gives the design team explicit mandates in a visual/spatial form. The ideal, in fact, is that the community’s models and images will be detailed and built with minimal modifications.

To suggest that there is something lacking in the quality of these community-created plans seems counter to the spirit of participation that infuses Sanoff’s work. Some critics claim that formal education in architecture (and planning) is critiqued for emphasizing striking spaces and experimental processes over simple quality and utility; the language by which designers seek to “communicate” are said to lack meaning to the layperson. Sanoff, seemingly in response, minimizes the architects’ technical work in favor of a larger role as educator. The disempowerment associated with conferral is here limited to the refinement of community schematics into technical construction documents. Yet this literal translation stunts the ability of the design professional to transcend limitations. A community should not have to reinvent TIF financing green roofs, or green streets. While these could be introduced in the education phase of the project, it seems that this literal-participatory model limits the professional to flatter the community, rather than establishing a true partnership.
Maurice Cox advocates working with communities as leaders. A community leader from Bayview engaged Cox for design services while attending a third community’s design charrette (c0x 2006). Although the community had no way to pay for design, let alone the buildings, they drove the design process for Bayview Rural Village, choosing the central buildings to demolish and erect, where to build, phasing, and almost everything else. Despite this, the architects did the design work itself, serving the community consensus as though it were a typical paying client. Communities that are empowered to partner with a designer as an equal do not require the level of involvement in the process to convince both sides that there has been no sleight of hand.

This can be termed empowerment. “The lack of a clear definition of empowerment allows just about anyone, representing any political persuasion, to use the term and allow others, no matter what their persuasion, to agree” (Peterman 1998, 50). A conservative perspective may target “eliminating dependency and restoring pride.... In this individualistic notion of empowerment, community organization is seen only as a mechanism for attaining individual achievement” (Peterman 1998, 51). In contrast, liberals emphasize “citizen involvement and participation.... empowerment thus means bringing residents into the system and giving them a voice in making decisions about the present and planning for the future” (Peterman 1998, 51). This ultimately implies a partnership or conferral of power from an authority to “worthy” community members. Finally,

*Progressives equate empowerment with the notion of community organization and control. To them, the community, not individuals is the focus of empowerment....Progressives reject the notion that form of tenure (whether a household owns or rents) constitutes a primary determinant of social status....Since who has power and who is in control are key issues for progressives, they are skeptical about any form of partnership or dual management.*

(Peterman 1998, 52)

According to Peterman, the difference between the liberal and progressive empowerment is systemic. Liberals seek to include
participants in existing formalized power structures while progressives seek to formalize existing social structures by conferring power to out-groups. The liberal view too often ends in tokenistic public meetings where attendance is interpreted as acquiescence. The latter, progressive, stance supports alternative government systems and thereby more completely describes the term “empowerment” as used in this paper, despite the clear undertones of resentment. Cox’s work with the Bayview Rural Village project exemplifies how the progressive definition can be expanded to include partnership, by recognizing (and trusting) the strengths of all actors to reach partners and support far beyond the community itself.

The final product, however, questioned very few social norms. The community asked for “public housing without stigma,” here interpreted as indistinguishable from surrounding vacation homes. The stylistic threads seem to be a hybrid between a plantation “Big House,” a free black home, and a typical suburban dwelling realized in vinyl siding on large, mowed lots. Each of these elements reflects traditional symbols of success, with few long-term criticisms offered for “typical” success, or the long-term sustainability of an isolated community in a vulnerable ecosystem. Because of this, Cox’s approach here can be termed community-led literal, reflecting the more prominent role of the community, and the subordinate role of design in deference to emergent independence.

**Norman Krumholz**

The career of Norman Krumholz, a professional planner, offers a contrast to the practice of both Sanoff and Cox. Krumholz is an equity planner notable for his work in Cleveland where he used his practice to address equity issues in the city (Krumholz 1982). Openly questioning and even opposing politically popular proposals distinguishes Krumholz’s practice from that of previously discussed projects. His priority was promoting the livelihoods of fragile demographic groups, not necessarily interacting with them. He used policy and politics to raise awareness of the implications of actions on the poor, but based in analysis, not design or engagement. Despite this, the professional distance Krumholz maintained lent perspective to understand distant connections and a technocratic, credible air to his call for social justice. If his advocacy were limited to issues submitted by community members, or encompassed by distressed census tracts the outcomes would not be notable.

There are two serious critiques to Krumholz’s method. The first is that his practice relies on political support from city administration. If the mayor or city council had been less receptive to Krumholz’s critiques and proposals he would have been quickly replaced or silenced. The second concern is the modernist bent of reliance on technology as a reliable predictor of program outcomes.
Architecture recognizes the end of modernist reliance on technical dominance in the 1970s with the fall of Pruitt Igoe. Too often, the theories and estimates of planners and engineers fail to materialize. The models seem not to be good enough to capture complex, changing sociological problems. Despite this, Krumholz’s career testifies to the power of critical professional practice to make clear (literal) alterations to the urban paradigm.

**Walter Hood**

Walter Hood is a landscape architect in Oakland, California. He observes the people of his neighborhood (a distressed area of Oakland) and considers the populations who struggle there, without criticizing those people’s needs or ways of life. He then proposes designs that seek to encourage healthier alternatives, honoring the dignity of each person who enters. These designs are accompanied by a series of diary entries in which each day describes a separate user and his or her needs alongside an iconic and stripped-down programmatic element that responds to those needs. All of these have targeted those occupying the existing dysfunctional park spaces of Oakland.

Hood’s process is both reflective and radical, offering drive-in stalls for prostitutes to protect their dignity and that of the families that live nearby, complete with contraceptive vending machines (Hood 1997). He offers gardens next to places to quietly get drunk in public. He wonders why the corner store carries only two brands of soap but infinite varieties of convenience food and alcohol, yet seeks to make the life of those who buy those items easier. His recycling center is meant to encourage re-collection by the street people who turn these items in for a refund. As a resident of the neighborhood in which he works he seeks to include perspectives and people honestly in his work, and yet he doesn’t ask them what they want. Instead he follows his own ideology into a theoretical space that draws attention to the humanity of the informal street society that sustains marginalized populations. Whether or not these spaces would ultimately function in the way he predicts depends, it would seem, on the community’s perception.

A further note on that point. Hood is listed as a participatory designer in as much as he undertakes participant-observer style research (Yin 2009). He informs and is informed each day as he walks out the door. He talks to his neighbors, photographs them, doodles his ideas. Like the trash picker who keeps the park clean or the street vendor who offers something for sale, Hood enters into this community as one of many, offering his special skill (design) as his participation and contribution in the community heartbeat. Is it authentic? Yes. Does it represent a way of empowering the people of that community? Perhaps. The more direct change is to the professional viewpoint, challenging designers to consider prostitution as a design problem, and one that deserves dignity. Because empowerment is offered to classes this work is identified as theoretical, yet participatory.
Randolph Hester is a landscape architect who teaches and practices in Berkeley, California. His work embraces communities on the ecological as well as human level, and considers the political dimensions of urbanization (Hester 2006). His work follows a mapping process that parallels Sanoff’s deference to community preferences and participation. The divergence between these two practitioners lies in the criticality of Hester’s work.

Criticality is a theoretical lens that guides Hester’s mapping exercises with (and beyond) the community, if necessary, to reveal the underlying pressures and politics. These exercises identify the locus of power, key locations of anxiety or concern, assets and risks, and thereby make known what must be preserved or amended and who must be addressed to free the design process. This clarity of purpose and deep understanding of community overcomes superficial solutions while increasing the community’s knowledge of itself and cohesion around core values. At times the outcome is a design project led by Hester himself, at other times he hands off the project to the community to realize.

Hester’s work is overwhelmingly positive, broad, and affirming. His works are often in low-income communities or on degraded sites on the east and west coasts where the pressurized real estate market offers easy access to physical social capital (trading on vacant land, views, proximity, livability, etc) which may not be realistic in other, less speculative, regions of the country. Despite this, the design principles and methods Hester espouses are applicable for all communities. Even as he illustrates his points with projects positioned on beautiful views or critical environmental landscapes it is clear that each of these locations was unremarkable before the community and the project built attention and appreciation for the potential of interweaving social and environmental assets. Hester’s success stems from his combination of theory and community leadership.

Community leadership, as with Cox, is community initiated. Hester’s work as a facilitator is to understand what underlies or moves the community. Then, together, they articulate and define that goal in such a way that it can be negotiated from the existing economic, environmental, political, and social reality. Hester is never the primary mover and shaker, and his interest is in adding to the poetry, meaning, and authenticity of the community’s desire through efficient and attentive implementation. In other words, Hester supports the clients’ content. This becomes theoretical where Hester ventures into the realm of the abstract. He presents unusual forms and seemingly unusable spaces, such as a rebuilt mountain called Reseda Ridge. Despite the apparent naturalness, flat areas for soccer and celebration were planned and used by many different human as well as native animal populations. This suggests that theoretical practice is also practical and acceptable to general audiences.
Teddy Cruz is an artist and architect pursuing justice and livability for immigrants to San Diego as well as those who remain in Tijuana. Cruz leverages the eloquent dichotomy of the borderland in art as well as architecture and planning. His work with inclusionary zoning addresses the increase of density of social interactions. This is not as scientific as density itself, but reminds us that density is desirable because of the relationships and lifestyles built upon it. Cruz’s work presupposes cultural interdependency and centrality in a geography and nation that is largely a-centric and insular.

Cruz also teaches, advocating blurred practices to the next generation of academics and practitioners. Cruz’s work is not aesthetically conservative, which may affront the immigrants he seeks to serve. In the remainder of his time he writes and pursues direct change. This mix seems to offer a good balance of global and local activism and influence, bringing the notoriety necessary to achieve prominence in a city, but still holding on to the roots and familiarity needed to make sensitive change.

It is also clear that while he partners with Casa Familiar, a housing non-profit, each works independently. Despite this, (or perhaps because of it) each party is enabled to embrace the problems and solutions that are appealing, broadening the tools and resources available for problem solving. This equality is unusual between high and low cultures, where both seek poetic yet practical built, cultural, and justice outcomes. Cruz may be criticized for pursuing global exposure at the cost of local impact, but both scales are necessary to resolve transnational border policy and culture into a new paradigm of inclusion and liminality.

This practice exemplifies theoretical paradigm changing through its search for models that shift the existing planning practice to permit new uses and densities, as well as to offer to the public ambiguous spaces that may have illegal uses (residential units in a church, markets in a park, mixed-use zoning where it is officially not permitted). Architecture in tacit violation of zoning is provocation for planning to recognize its failure to protect the health safety
and wellness of marginal populations. Cruz illustrates what could be done with a proposal for a new zoning mechanism designed to standardize safe vernacular responses by the immigrant community to the financial, cultural and environmental reality. Because of this, the work can be said to change paradigms, uniting the vernacular with the artistic with the political and then translating that into policy. But because this is done with community needs first and foremost yet without seeking to serve their aesthetics or formal preferences first, the work becomes theoretical. Indeed, Cruz’s work is exhibited at MoMA and published internationally and so the audience and case are clearly larger than the immediate good. While the solutions sought are discrete and largely non-systemic, Cruz’s overall arch is to change the way development is perceived, undertaken, and measured, to build in flexibility for and attention to marginal markets.

Despite the six U.S. practitioners above, global attention is focusing on the problem of involving residents and users in design. Design competitions have begun to mandate teams of mixed membership between developing and developed nations, housing administrations are delving more and more into social services as the solution to housing, and practitioners are quantifying equity, design, and community (Architecture for Humanity 2012, Schwartz 2010). A number of groups are emerging to identify best practices and publicize (and evaluate) this work, including Global Village, the Seed Network/Public Interest Design, Architecture for Humanity, and Engineers without Borders (“Mission and Values” 2012, “SEED” 2012, Public Interest Design 2012, Architecture for Humanity 2012, “Our Story” 2012). Despite this, even equity-based enquiries into participatory models find that the most explicit examples of occupant-driven-design are conventional private single-use developments where the owner-resident has financial control of the project and all decisions therein (Qu & Hasselaar 2011). Public and informal projects instead rely on the aims and means of other organizations, limiting the empowerment and ingenuity of any given project. If the peculiar mix of upper- and lower- classes generated by gentrification and social capital were as robust as theory suggests one would expect project ownership (and subsequent empowerment) to leverage greater urban change.

While the field of social sustainability has not yet emerged as a popular culture phenomenon like the environmental movement there are growing indications that it is developing towards that eventuality. The individual success of each practitioner, and the growing membership of each organization, suggests that each methodology (community-led, participatory, and paradigm changing) as well as each framework or viewpoint (literal or theoretical) has appropriate and productive applications. Doubtless there are further methodologies and viewpoints that will develop from cross-pollination. Unpacking these existing practical structures as academic theory can identify shared ground to create dialog around the application of individual practitioners.
Methodology

The development of this thesis sprawled over a large body of literature, beginning with gentrification, followed by urban or regional economics and subsequently social capital, history, and sustainability. Yet all this extensive literature review did not answer, alone, the question of how to increase community participation in redevelopment as a remedy to disinvestment and eventual gentrification. While each of the practitioners included in the review above provides a solution to this situation, there is no continuity. Further, the explosion of this variety of work is unusually insular, with little discourse between practitioners. Finally, the theoretical bent of literature-based research is difficult to translate to practice. To fill this gap a single case study of an extreme or defining condition, a physically disconnected urban neighborhood, is provided as a stand-in for the general situation of disconnection across the urban community (Yin 2009). The methods of analysis include literature review, participant observation, informal interviewing, and mapping. Together these “triangulate” spatial, social, and theoretical issues to define common community characteristics.

Structured research began in the summer of 2011 through a study of sociology texts related to spatial discrimination and exploration of urban spaces (Patillo 2007, Duneier 1999, Wilson 1987, Freire 1993). This compared written descriptions of behavior in space with actual local spaces testing theory against local climate and demography (see graphics below). While this analysis did not explore the methodologies underlying the design work, it did reveal the way public space can work to unite or exclude populations. Additionally, this form of analysis offers ready precedents or design benchmarks for synthetic design work. One might almost call this a pilot project, as it revealed the key components of interest.

3 Recall that gentrification is purely about conveyance of power; much upgrading is not gentrification.

4 This methodology was sufficient to provide a series of provocative truisms, however due to time constraints this methodology lacks the necessary hard data necessary to triangulate and replicate the case. See appendix 3 for suggested further study.
addressed by the later work: marginality versus centrality, program as a point of connection, and participation.

The next stage consisted of site reconnaissance carried out through a series of mapping exercises both digitally (via Social Explorer) and on site. These sought to establish a thorough understanding of the physical characteristics of the community and its relationship to downtown, as well as housing tenure and resident demography to establish the potential of the community to undertake physical development.

Demographics alone do not tell the whole story, however, so visits were made to community council meetings in Lower, East and West Price Hill to sample the style of participation in neighborhood governance, what concerns were shared and what differences existed. Shared reports at the West and Lower Price Hill meetings offered an opportunity to directly compare the concerns of each community. Unfortunately, East Price Hill was holding an election in November. Interviews with Tom & Mary Croft, the 2011 King and Queen of Price Hill, as well as Lower Price Hill’s Santa Maria Center were used to corroborate facts and impressions from the community council meeting.

S.W.O.T. analysis was deployed to articulate the potential for physical redevelopment in the community. An assessment of strengths and opportunities (assets) addresses social capital’s concern that assistance be based not on needs but on opportunities, while weaknesses and threats identify targets to address with community capital (Kretzman & McKnight 1993). S.W.O.T. is used to establish the attitude of the community in its context (not a plan for redevelopment, as might be expected). To understand a community’s attitude it is necessary to account for possibilities and constraints that frustrate or forward neighborhood goals. This must include the perceptions of the community as well as developers and politicians. This thorough understanding of community attitude is then referenced with the existing models of practice to derive constants to assist professionals in community engagement.

research limitations

This project is not data driven, and is qualitative in nature. The findings of this research draw heavily on the literature review, for corroboration. While evidence gathered from the community council meetings, interviews, observation, and other experience is compelling and produced interesting findings, this does not provide a replicable or verifiable research model; the methodology provides insufficient hard data (newspaper articles, direct quotes, quantified revocations, and other public record information). This is largely due to the time limitations experienced by the researcher. Appendix Three contains a sample methodology for the expansion of this “pilot” study into a formal report that is verifiable, publishable, and provides strong guidelines for responsible application of the research to future cases.
Site

The terms identified in the pilot (programmed connection, marginality vs. centrality, and participation) define qualities of public space (and communities) that stimulate interaction. To select a site these adjectives were translated into characteristic criteria. These are:

1. Historic and urban
2. Location illustrates socio-spatial inequality
3. Established
4. Relatively undisturbed

These four criteria define a community that may be at risk of gentrification but has not experienced it. The physical assets have real value, but have yet to be capitalized; this offers the community an opportunity to develop, accruing capital to enrich their neighborhood and reinforce their tenure. “Historic” status signifies aesthetic value and durability, both of which create value. Urban denotes centrality, promising demand and access to transit and services. Social-spatial inequality is not uncommon in central spaces that lack basic services and amenities, illustrating the marginality-centrality dichotomy. This pattern of ghetto-enclave development creates a platform for poetic interventions that critique their neighbors while improving the life of residents (Cruz 2007, Hester 2006, Hood 1996, Brown 2011). When participatory design culminates in a functional and poetic work its message spreads far beyond the community to provoke change.

An established community offers a context of existing social capital, particularly when it is “undisturbed,” that is, retaining ownership of its generative neighborhood. A physically undisturbed site is also generally preferable, as renovation can maintain character and security with less up-front capital than ground-up reconstruction of
vacant lots. The other component of an “undisturbed site” is to find a
eighborhood that has not been subjected to an overwhelming quantity
of academic examination without visible change, which creates in the
minds of residents, academics, politicians, and entrepreneurs a sense of
stigma and hopelessness (Kretzman & McKnight 1993). This can be hard
to gauge; while Over-the-Rhine may be the textbook case of a disturbed
and over-studied site (other examples might include the South Side of
Chicago or Harlem in New York City) many other communities, including
Lower Price Hill, perceive that they are the subject of too much study
despite the apparently modest amount of research available.

Lower Price Hill fit all of the above criteria. It is a community built at the
western fringe of downtown between the railroads and a hill. Originally
called Eighth and State (the major crossroads of the neighborhood) it is
the contemporary of Over-the-Rhine and has similar, if slightly simplified,
aromatic styling, fulfilling the first criterion (historic and urban).
Lower Price Hill is located at the base of a 350-foot bluff that separates
poverty from prosperity, a bluff that was once transversed by an inclined
plane railroad. The incline’s removal heightened the existing tension
of adjacent upper- and lower- income communities; lower-income
residents of East Price Hill (at the summit) were not able to afford private
car transportation to their jobs, while those in Lower Price Hill could no
longer justify heading up hill for a night out. Social stratification is a clear
marker of the second criterion, socio-spatial inequality.
Lower Price Hill fulfills the third criterion as evidenced by the historic
blue-collar occupation of the neighborhood since its construction,
and the long-time intensive use of public space as a social asset. The
community gathers on Neave, a dead-end street that functions as a
public square. This area is almost unceasingly inhabited, and whether
the convenience store is the attractor of this occupation or only an
excuse for interaction is unclear. The centrality of social life to the
community suggests heavy investment in bonding social capital that
would be devastated by gentrification if, indeed, displacement could
overcome the constant human presence.

Finally, while the quantity of public works projects (see opposite page)
surrounding Lower Price Hill at this time suggest that the neighborhood
is entering a period of transition; both the building fabric and the
community’s sense of territory are in tact (fulfilling the fourth criterion,
relatively undisturbed community character). These projects include
modernizing existing industrial uses to minimize odors and pollution,
adding or improving parks on the riverfront and restaurants on the
hilltop, improving traffic infrastructure, and the historic preservation
of St Michael’s Church complex for and by a community association.
Despite this, focus of commercial redevelopment for now rests on
developing the hilltop with its superior views and air quality.

Lower Price Hill appeared to be overlooked by the academic
community; after three month’s research I realized that the
neighborhood’s political leadership disagreed. They believed
there had been an unreasonable number of studies, particularly
as none of the previous academic operations had resulted in an appreciable benefit to the community (Lower Price Hill Community Council). As research went on, this compromised fourth criterion (physically undisturbed, but socially compromised) posed a problem in how to proceed. In the future, more clear communication and participation in common community events would likely have overcome this barrier. Alternatively, another community could have been selected and research continued in a new context. Because

the community attitude towards research was not understood until November; after the project had been underway for a significant time, the study proceeded within Lower Price Hill with caution.

**history**
The broad plain at the Mill Creek and Ohio River confluence provided an ideal location for early settlement. Urbanization spread from the river northward. Development to the west was largely agriculture and agricultural processing reliant on the Mill Creek for power and sewerage. The creek’s corridor also provided a clear, flat route north. Some housing was common amid the industrial corridor.

The hilltops were originally agricultural as well, necessitating roads on which to drive pigs (live) and corn (dried) to market. Mechanized construction equipment was not yet readily available, so paths were laid to exploit existing streambeds and depressions wherever possible, terracing the hillside for stability. Topographic maps depict the stepped cut-and-fill structure clearly, while historic photographs expose hillsides denuded following construction.

Not long after this, the upper class found they could afford to live at a greater distance from downtown and its associated smog, cholera, manure, and meatpacking. Trajectories for roads were never questioned as these first suburbanites and their servants settled the hilltops, commuting in carriages, horse cars, and along stairways. Development was rare on the steep slopes themselves.

Horse cars were the preferred conveyances over flat ground, but even the least humane drivers conceded that horses had to be rested several times when scaling the most shallow of Cincinnati’s hillside routes (White
Without a practical, cheap, and quick means to climb the hills only the leisure class and their retainers could afford to relocate. Trips to school or church in the basin required descending and ascending the prodigious stair network.

In the 1800s the Miami-Erie Canal was constructed to connect the Ohio River to the Great Lakes, creating a shipping channel that reached from the Northeast to the Gulf of Mexico. In Cincinnati its route ran through downtown, along today’s Eggleston and Central Parkway, then north through the Mill Creek Valley. The early 1900s found the Canal disused, replaced by parallel railroad tracks; the Canal itself was filled in to serve as an interurban Cincinnati-to-Erie Railroad and, shortly thereafter, a road that became I-75. This quick succession of infrastructure investments anchored industry in the valley as energy advancements might have dispersed development.

Downtown development spread to fill the valley including land west of the Mill Creek, owned and sold by General Evan Price and his son Rees. Physically divided from downtown by the Mill Creek, two miles of flood plain mud and a new railroad, this outpost mixed residential and industrial properties in the Italianate and Queen Anne styles typically attributed to Over-the-Rhine (“Lower Price Hill Historic District”). Rees Price introduced an Incline to bolster sale of his hilltop land (and the products of his lumber and brick operations) (White 2001). The air and water were cleaner on the summit, reinforcing the comparative undesirability of Eighth and State, today known as Lower Price Hill.

The Incline came to Mt Auburn first, copying an innovation first seen in Pittsburg (White 2001). The quick, cheap, dependable route up the hill expanded the feasibility of living on Cincinnati’s bluffs to the middle and working class. Price’s railroad was built second, followed by three others which led to Clifton, Fairview, and Mt Adams. Initially streetcars were loaded onto the incline platform, necessitating a three-minute transfer that undercut profits. The streetcar companies developed direct routes up the hill, rendering the Incline obsolete (White 2001). At any time other than the Second World War, efforts to retain either the Mt Adam’s Incline (with service to Eden Park and the Zoo) or the much-beloved Price Hill Incline might have succeeded (White 2011). On the tails of the Great
Depression such concessions to posterity seemed wasteful.

The Incline was an innovation worth noting. It reduced environmental impact as compared to roads. Apart from the well at the foot of the hill and head house at the peak (which accommodate gearing and other mechanical and power-generating apparatus) the rails rest on individual footings, reducing the severity of grading, deforestation, and altered hydrology necessary for construction.

Secondly, the Incline operated efficiently in partially counterweighted pairs. Operating out of traffic along a straight path, the Incline smoothly accelerated and decelerated, offering safe and efficient power use in all weather. Finally, the Price Hill Incline was the only line to convert to electric power (from coal), reducing particulate, heat and carbon emissions.

Finally, the Incline offered a culture of recreational social mixing that was not common before or after this era. The structures and their ornate head houses were constant advertisements of the views and amenities available in each of the five neighborhoods served by Inclines at the turn of the century. Low fares (and often free transfers to streetcars) encouraged exploration. The platform rose slowly and silently above rooftops, making comprehensible the grid, the curve of the river, and the lights and smoke of the living metropolis (Kramer 2009). Entertainment venues at the top encouraged mingling and inter-city tourism, the foundation of our much touted “city of neighborhoods” which has today eroded into something more akin to a series of neighboring cities, divided against each other despite their interdependence.

While the Inclines and stairs seem outdated today, they are not so different from the prevalence of ferries alongside, and in some cases instead of, bridges in cities such as Seattle and New York. The Incline, like a ferry, can be timed to make transit connections and offers an opportunity for reverie, considering the relationship of nature and culture in the landscape.

Eighth and State was known as the transfer point to the Price Hill Incline, growing into a frontier-like community that today houses a variety of immigrant populations, including Appalachians and latinos. This residential district remains south of Eighth Street and north of River Road, bounded on the east by Burns Street and by Price Hill to the west. Eighth Street was once a major thoroughfare offering bars, shops, and saloons to entice workers at lunch and after work as they queued up for the Incline ride home (“Price Hill Incline,” Cincinnati Views). Today’s bus commuters find its storefronts vacant. A second commercial district lined State Road, which runs north south, and the bones of a community shopping strip that once lined Neave Street, one block east of State, is today converted almost entirely to rental residential units.

Notable buildings include a bank in traditional white marble Greek Revival at Eighth and State. St Michael Street’s namesake is a substantial red brick Gothic Revival Catholic Church built in 1847 for early German Catholic residents, along with an adjacent brick rectory and Italianate school.
A little north in the block bounded by Staebler, Hatmaker, and Burns Streets and Peggy Lane is Oyler School. This Italianate building, erected in the 1930s, has a warm stone-faced first floor surmounted by brick with stone trim, friezes, and glazed pottery grotesques depicting students. The peripheries of this district mix industry with housing, particularly along Burns and St Michael’s Streets, while residential fabric extends north as Italianate and Queen Anne two to four story buildings along the western side of State Street. The land east of State is a mix of eras of industrial (and appropriated-for-industrial-use) buildings, many of which are of architectural interest in their own right.

The late 19th and early 20th century brought the viaduct to Lower Price Hill. Until this time roads ran at grade, bumping over railroads and bridges. The Eighth Street viaduct was first to be built, and was rebuilt featuring experimental and nearly unusable on- and off-ramps (now removed—second image from the bottom). The road was built so close to existing buildings that connections were made to upper floor windows, fitted with doors. The Waldvogel (or Sixth Street) Viaduct connects Price Hill, downtown, and the freeways and it considered ill-signed, and insufficiently lit.

Within the neighborhood there are several key social areas. The first (and dominant) is Neave Street. This street receives minimal vehicular traffic and functions as a public square, with a police car (governance) at one end and a corner store (market) at the other. The center point of Neave is an intersection with Storrs Street, called “the Four Corners,” a notorious drug and crime intersection. The intersection with St Michael’s is the chief social spot surrounding Henry’s Market and the stoops opposite, which serve as people-watching platforms. There are two sub-hotspots visible from this location. To the west, at the corner of State and St Michael’s is the teenage boy bike hangout, where chicken and football are played, often in traffic. To the east is St Michael’s church itself, a soup kitchen, homeless ministry hall, school and social space. There is a secondary social corner adjacent to Meiser’s Market on State at Pardee, and across the street where a group of old men tend to sit and drink in the pleasant early evening. The last major community space is Oyler School and its adjacent playground. The playground is lightly used throughout the day and evening by young mothers and children, while young adults and teens cut-through to the bus stop, and older kids perform community service by cleaning up trash. Because Oyler is currently under renovation information about the particular nuances of socialization around the school is not presently available.

These “insider” social spaces are indicated in red on the following page; the red dot on Eighth Street is a bus layover and transfer point. West-bound transit ridership generates a similar amount of traffic congregating at or near the corner of Eighth and State. Despite inclement weather and apparently lengthy layovers here, riders do not seem to stray far from these designated stops. In fact, east-bound riders rarely stray as far as the nearest bench, contained within the park between Eighth and Pardee Alley. Those travelling west-bound will pack the lone bench provided and
stand close-in behind it; neither stop offers any shelter from the elements, maps, or significant signage, and there are no facilities that cater to commuters nearby. The other chief “outsider” social space is the alcohol establishment north of (below, on the map at right) Eighth Street. This is a private club owned by the Cincinnati Highwaymen, an offshoot of the notorious Detroit motorcycle gang. This establishment is a concern for the police, particularly as a potential outlet for prostitution and narcotics.

**Price Hill**

Price Hill is today a community comprised of three distinct neighborhoods: West Price Hill, East Price Hill and Lower Price Hill. The differences are geographic: West Price Hill is almost in Delhi, and has a suburban character, while East Price Hill contains the contradictions of a country retreat for the wealthy infilled with affordable apartment housing through the 1950s. Lower Price Hill is, in contrast, very much an urban neighborhood in miniature, despite the lack of a “downtown.” Lower Price Hill had been a vibrant, self-contained Appalachian community up through the 1970s and 80s. The population supported churches, shops, and institutions. In the last thirty years it has experienced serious decline as the community pulled out, churches and shops closed, and drug dealing became a noted, regular occurrence. Parked cars line the streets of the community but there is no sense in moving them to travel internally; because as many as five bus lines service the neighborhood there is little reliance on automobiles.

West Price Hill is still inhabited by the ethnic white families and groups that founded it, but has an increasing black population. It is automobile-based in scale and organization. East Price Hill has been mixed for a long time, and is today seeking to regain its former affluence. This extends to the character and massing of the community—it is most easily traversed in an automobile, but much of the population walks or takes public transit and the retail and cultural centers are aligned in such a way that this is functional.

While there are a number of informal groups in each of the Price Hill neighborhoods, the community councils provide a constant mission for comparison. These groups are ostensibly uniform civic boards that address administrative business in the community, seeking to ensure the health, safety and welfare. In this capacity, community councils also hear grievances, give advice and information on public services, and dispel rumors. The Lower Price Hill Community Council bears that conventional name, while East Price Hill terms its Community Council the “East Price Hill Improvement Association,” (EPHIA) and West Price Hill is represented by the “Price Hill Civic Club.”

In the case of Lower Price Hill, in particular there has been one president of the Community Council for years. Thus, this body is not representative of the community at large. Despite this, because the council commands power it steers the physical development and policy for the community, and is thus operative in understanding the politics and progress that is made in development. In an ideal case, the council would hold a much smaller role in the research.
further the success of the community, with a focus on providing social events (Mersch 2008). The East Price Hill Improvement Association was a reaction against the loss of the incline in 1943 (“A Rich History”).

These names also offer implied mission statements which affect who is involved, how their actions and communications are perceived by other community actors, including investors, governmental officials, professionals, and new residents. For example, EPHIA suggests that it is a development corporation pursuing upward mobility. The Civic Club conjures up images of the 1950s established upper and upper-middle class that preexisted the community council structure, pursuing a mission of maintaining existing value. Community Council suggests instead a congress of elders and perhaps a few eager young people debating and deliberating in the public interest. While the last is certainly the most democratic image, it is important to recognize that the other two nomenclatures carry an air of establishment, efficiency and mission. These caricatures, jotted down before observing the community councils in session, were surprisingly accurate.

Lower Price Hill’s community is governed by a community council called just that, run by three longtime resident non-natives and one native recently returned from the Navy. Meetings deliberate current proposals in the light of past experience, often suspicious of projects that appear similar to earlier failures. This attitude of resistance is an attempt to capture control -- that is to say, achieve social capital. Every victory on this count is celebrated.

For example, Doctor Nick Newman was present from Children’s Hospital to ask if there were any public health issues for which he could provide literature. He stated he was aware lead was an issue, but he was thinking there might be other issues. The editor of the community newsletter had a story of her grandson’s false-positive and the trauma and concern it created in her life. Degano replied, with great volume and anger, “So it is a false, unscientific test!” which spurred Dr Newman and another public health volunteer in the room, to explain the utility of sensitive screening tests.

After the Doctor repeated his request for further issues Degano referred him to the local health clinic. Eileen Gallagher, the secretary, articulated that the clinic was unacceptable because of its lack of involvement in the council. Her face colored and her volume increased as she stated with derision that they had told her “they felt uncomfortable” and announced at a shout that “someone from that clinic needs to be involved” emphasizing her point by pounding repeatedly on the table in front of her (Lower Price Hill Community Council Meeting).

At this point H.A. Musser, the CEO of Santa Maria Community Services, entered the conversation to state that lead poisoning and public health were a concern of his because of the developmental effects these issues had on children that impacted academic achievement over the long term, and to encourage the community to share their concerns honestly. Musser suggested air quality concerns, particularly asthma, related to diesel fumes and construction dust. After some further deliberation on air quality
above: 40-60% do not hold a high school diploma,

median age is listed as “<24 years”

most of price hill is 60-75% white

15-20% of housing is owner occupied (eph is 30-60%)

15-20% are unemployed / 2007 estimates socialexplorer.com

60-75% are under the poverty line/ socialexplorer.com

75-90% under the age of 18 live in poverty/ socialexplorer.com

20-30% receive public assistance/ socialexplorer.com
concerns by the larger attendance (including Tony, the final member of the council), Degano and Gallagher insist that the dust from Oyler is “just dust” and of no concern because of its temporary nature (Lower Price Hill Community Council). With great delight they recounted their victory over the barge terminal proposal as solving the problem of diesel fumes.

Degano brought this section of the meeting to an end by entering a long monolog about the history of misapplication of research dollars for grants that failed to create change in the community. He became very animated in the course of this discussion, shouting and gesturing, but wound down to a more sober finish, stating “Frankly I am scared that people are taking advantage of us to make money on us! And frankly it has happened before and I don’t want it to happen again.” (Lower Price Hill Community Council).

There are a number of important points in this exchange. First, the council leadership insists all is fine with existing conditions, overlooking a metal coating company adjacent to the school, the lack of dust control on the site, the existing train yard and industrial traffic. The “real” danger that Degano, Gallagher, and Gooding are willing to fight tooth and nail is the fear of their environment (via lead poisoning screenings, online property assessments, and other research) assessed and reported by outsiders (Lower Price Hill Community Council). The common link between these attitudes is that someone outside the community suggests a change which might blame, indict, or inconvenience a community member (even if that community member is a trucker or corporation).

This thesis was subsequently called to present a brief description of the work to be undertaken. The definition given at the time was a study of the existing situation and ongoing projects with an eye to enhancing the public space towards connecting the neighborhood with its assets and adjacent communities. Questioning arose surrounding potential project elements, in particular a pilot proposal that included a modern “Incline” replacement. This was carefully dismantled, addressing concerns about the maintenance cost burden this amenity would incur on the city.

Overall, Lower Price Hill can be characterized as a traditional disinvested community rich in bonded capital, to the point of blocking
outside bridges and possibilities for growth (Sebatini 2007). This can be seen in the community’s resistance to hear or accept outside assessments that could have crucial positive impacts. H.A. Musser, CEO, and Kayla Camp-Warner, head of the Lower Price Hill Santa Maria Community Services office, reinforced this impression. Both were very familiar with the Council and the community itself, and both found the remarkable violence of interchanges at the meeting unusually vehement for community council meetings, but typical of the Lower Price Hill council (Musser & Camp-Warner). They confirmed that this leadership had been in place for a number of years and typically ran unopposed as the majority of the community’s residents were uninterested in the administration, or were unwilling to oppose the existing authority. Both Musser and Camp-Warner had concerns as to the long-term effect of this, particularly as there had been a detailed look into zoning changes to improve livability and health undertaken by Xavier University a few years prior. While the Community Council had authorized and assisted in the research, the final outcome of the work was scrapped and ignored by Degano and his council, wasting a large amount of effort but, more seriously, ignoring possible positive approaches to improving health, safety and wellness for the neighborhood (Musser & Camp-Warner). This longitudinal assessment of the community leadership built upon my impression of the community as a physical and social entity.

While West Price Hill followed the same meeting format: call to order, police report, city-wide reports, Oyler School report, concluding with by social or special-interest discussion topics, the tone was very different. Of particular note is the way the leadership behaved itself. Both council leaders sat at a table at the front of the room facing their constituents. In Lower Price Hill, this table was on the long side of a large rectangular cafeteria filled with tables and chairs. The President, Vice President and Treasurer sat, slouched or paced in the front informally, while the secretary sat at the rear left. West Price Hill’s rectangular room was smaller and held far more people, without tables. The leadership sat at a table on a stage at the head of the short end of the rectangle, in a formal and attentive manner. The President was the only member who talked after the initial introductions were made, and he only offered minor facilitation. The secretary, again, sat at the rear left, partially minding a check-in table. It was clear that the three men that headed this group were concerned with moving the meeting along while extracting any pertinent action items in a business-like fashion.

The crime reports at both meetings aroused a significant amount of curiosity. While the Lower Price Hill leadership was quick to applaud a good report, though skeptical of increased surveillance, the West Price Hill congregation pushed hard at the report that crime was down. Several residents insisted they had experienced an increase in gunshots and crime (Price Hill Civic Club). They were also concerned at the lack of enforcement of laws, particularly surrounding cars parked in the yard. The police addressed this as an area of city, not police.

This is enhanced by the Appalachian culture of the community which organizes around kin and clan.
enforcement. The police also suggested this could be a viable tactic against rising car theft. Two community members raised a community watch/vigilante crime concern, one surrounding a house suspected of prostitution which was entering prosecution, and the other a church under renovation by teens over a court injunction. The primary concern of this secondary case seemed to be one of noise and race; the woman reporting her concerns represented the church as a front for a recording and dance studio as well as basketball court for young blacks. Her report that the young men had used derogatory terms to describe her stimulated the previous concerned citizen to advise her in setting up vigilante surveillance to bring this case to justice, while the community council president stirred himself to denounce the slur on “homeowners;” and announce that this was not to be tolerated. When the homeowner continued to voice her concern, highlighting the level of noise a basketball court would produce for her street which was of a nice, prosperous character she was assured by the President that this would simply not happen (Price Hill Civic Club).

The other two repeated elements of the meetings included a report from the city on a recycling contest focused on increasing participation and a report from Oyler School. There was deviation in the school report as the principal handled Monday’s meeting in Lower Price Hill while the vice principal handled Tuesday’s meeting (the day immediately following) in West Price Hill. The first report, by Craig Hockenberry, focused on the recent football season and the pride it instilled in the neighborhood and the school. With some pressing, Hockenberry also discussed the coming graduating class and the expected class for next year, both of whom were working with graduation coaches to keep the students on track and help guide them into their next steps (Lower Price Hill Community Council). This sports-emphasis may have been guided by talk before the meeting with Tony, a member of the council, whose nephew was a star player on the team with a possible scholarship to the College of Mt. St. Joseph riding on his skill on the field. Dr. Sally Thurman, the vice principal, focused on the condition at the temporary school site in East Price Hill, the interaction of the student body in the community, and their eventual return to the newly renovated school in Lower Price Hill. Traffic and accessibility to the school at various times of day were of concern to some members of the community. This was a brief report, and she ducked out immediately following this portion of the meeting (as did Hockenberry the night before). The difference in issues here is clear. It is also important to note that the school was more a point of pride and active concern to the council in Lower Price Hill, whereas in West Price Hill it seemed to be a minor issue, easily set aside.

The recycling report differed in two main ways between meetings. The first is that the Lower Price Hill building was not outfitted with a laptop, projector, screen or wifi, so the woman had to give her presentation from her print out of slides, without visual accompaniment. The West Price Hill meeting accommodated her with a laptop and screen, though the lack of wifi was raised in discussion at another point in the night.
The second point of departure was the main thrust of questioning. Lower Price Hill leaders pursued the issue of how this competition could bring money back to the community as a whole through participation, while in West Price Hill the discussion veered quite quickly away from issues of communal concern to explaining how the Green Umbrella/Recycle Bank program worked for individuals, and why no one had seen rebates in the mail yet (Lower Price Hill Community Council, Price Hill Civic Club). This would seem to suggest that Lower Price Hill is more communal-minded (bonding capital based) while West Price Hill is more individual- or family-oriented (bridging capital based). Both were seeking to forward their economic interests, but the focus was very different. Overall, West Price Hill gave off an aura of maintaining pride of place in the city, keeping up standards and imposing expectations.

The East Price Hill Improvement Association meeting was unexpectedly an election rather than a true meeting. Instead of the usual structure of reports the leadership met briefly prior to the ordinary meeting time and the membership was treated to a sub sandwich and fried chicken dinner as the votes were cast and tallied. During this time I was able to discuss with Mary Croft, an East Price Hill resident and Lower Price Hill native, some of her memories and concerns. She was tight-lipped in anger and fear over the possibility of increased crime via vacancy or, from her perspective, Section 8 residency, in the neighborhood (Croft). When pressed she said vacancy was better than Section 8, because she associated Section 8 with drugs and crime. She was impressed with a number of ideas to draw attention to her neighborhood and motivated to work with the political machinery of the greater city to bring amenities like the Incline back to Price Hill. With her husband as the chair of the housing and development committee of EPHIA for 2012 and the pair of them voted the King and Queen of the Price Hill Thanksgiving Day Parade 2011, she is well placed to realize her vision (Croft).

Overall, the East Price Hill meeting was interesting because it had three key groups. The first was that of the outgoing and incoming leadership, which seemed to be fairly well-connected and dedicated to a seamless transition. There did not seem to be much competition, but rather cooperation, involved in forming and approving the tickets. The second group were community old-timers, both black and white (but primarily white) that came out to vote and for the free meal and conversation. This group was relatively modest and seemingly minded their own matters. The third group was a small cluster of young adults in their late teens through late twenties. These constituents commandeered their own table in the far back of the room and hung out on it, seemingly tied together by some tie stronger than their affiliation to the larger community (East Price Hill Improvement Association). Overall, while there were many concerns about the condition of the neighborhood and how things had been accomplished in the past, the attitude of the night was one of early retirees who were accustomed to corporate life and accomplishing tasks in large or small business and found now, in their “free time,” that their community was a new project to complete.7

7 Of interest to the author was the location of the meetings. Each one was held in a Roman Catholic-affiliated building. While this is not of obvious direct import (these
Analysis
These three communities provided three different approaches to a changing urban environment. Lower Price Hill expresses a desire to control and limit change to internal power brokers only; external assessments are revoked, denied, and resisted. This last adjective, resistance, seemed operative. West Price Hill, in contrast, seemed belligerent but not especially concerned with external perception or threats. Overall it was inwardly focused, but primarily on individual gain and potential. The residents had communal concerns about maintaining and enhancing their chosen lifestyle. The problems were less to do with gaining power, and more to do with improving life. This correlated with Krase’s (2005) tastes of necessity versus tastes of luxury, and the arc of gentrification in the literature. Because this process seemed to be either interested in avoiding or humanizing decay or gentrification it can be referred to as redemption, the act of bringing back life from the brink. Finally, the East Price Hill community seemed to be fragmented. There was almost no minority or young adult representation at the election, and so it seems likely that there is a complicated social structure here with levels and groups of different persuasions. The current empowered leadership team has a direct and change-oriented stance focused on increasing livability and prestige for the area as a whole. Because this group could afford to leave, their focus is less on maintaining the existing base lifestyle so much as attracting the services they desire from elsewhere to this location. While this may eventually result in the displacement of some residents, this is not the main thrust of the drive towards change. Instead, the term “transformation” seems appropriate: creating a change that relocates the neighborhood in the city’s social structure. This invites new uses to the community to stimulate a social space to serve existing and prospective residents to enrich, but not replace, the existing physical and communal fabric.

The following physical analysis of Lower Price Hill offers a view into the factors informing the community’s attitudes, particularly external and internal pressures. Ideally such a process would be
undertaken with the community leadership and ordinary residents to help form an understanding of the self-image of the community and the differences between different groups’ perceptions (similar in purpose to Hester’s strategy of mapping power and sacred space) (Hester 2006). However, even an external exercise of cataloging strengths and opportunities for an ostensibly downtrodden area repositions the problem as potential (Kretzman & McKnight 1993). This, in or with the community, is accomplished via a series of conversations structured around leveraging assets, liabilities, and plans. After this structure was developed its similarity in content and organization to S.W.O.T. analysis became an apparent strength. Since this framework is widely known, the terms strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were adopted instead. The logic of the conversation remains the same: beginning with internal strengths appeals to communities rich in bonding capital. The move from strengths (comfortable territory) to weaknesses is challenging, but opens the community to considering the limitations of disconnection and opens the discussion to possible partnerships. A discussion of external opportunities reinforces the benefits of bridging, easing into a conversation about external threats that offers realism framed in such a way that responses can be appropriate and collaborative. Without such care to construe the situation of resources and needs in a positive and communal fashion, responses to external threats from all types of communities tend to be reactive and heavy handed. While this process could productively be applied to any of the Price Hill sub-neighborhoods, it is here explored in the context of Lower Price Hill alone, as that is the community of focus for this study.

This alternative to traditional association-based social capital analysis is necessary because Lower Price Hill today has few organizations that are internally led and organized. Most of the community associations are parts of larger chains. The Urban Appalachian Council, for example, aims to increase awareness of Appalachian culture predominately in schools and businesses throughout the region, and so only incidentally operates out of its storefront location in Lower Price Hill. The Health Clinic is similarly one outlet of a standard local government service. Both of these organizations are situated as outsiders today because of their non-participation (and partial disagreement) with the community council (Lower Price Hill Community Council). The local school (Oyler) and Santa Maria Community Services serve the whole of Price Hill and are thus popular with residents, but are not led by neighbors (the school is more accepted in all neighborhoods than Santa Maria, despite the positive and concerted efforts of both groups). The churches that operate here are mission outreach projects of other churches, so too the kids club (BLOC Outreach) that hosts child night play inside at Old St Michael’s (BLOC Ministries). Finally, the one “authentic” community-founded association, the Community School, an ESOL/GED program, is now run in a professional fashion with a staff and board of directors headed by
Sister Kathryn Connelly, SC (Community School).

Because these neighborhood associations are almost entirely run by non-residents they do not accurately depict the situation of social capital. Personal friendships and street corner societies abound, but quietly, surrounding food and kids meeting at the corner of St Michael’s and Neave, where Henry’s Market supplies the community with convenience food and beer. These personal social relationships are well beyond the scope of this thesis. Social capital theory suggests the assessment of assets instead of needs, as assets are enabling, which suggests a thorough exploration of physical, rather than relational, principle (Arefi 2008, Kretzman & McKnight 1993). The outcome of this step will help prioritize interventions, and identify traits and opportunities for professional involvement, particularly when compared (triangulated) against the existing models of practice explored in the literature review.

**site s.w.o.t.**

Lower Price Hill faces a series of opportunities and threats, and is imbued with a variety of strengths and weaknesses. Strengths include proximity to jobs, youth, and historic architectural character. Weaknesses include crime, wavering educational attainment, old buildings, vacancy, a parochial outlook, and environmental hazards. New development nearby offers both opportunities and threats to this fragile and often marginalized urban community. Similarly, the community’s existing leadership, expressed through its community council, is both an asset and a liability.

**strengths**

The first strength is proximity to industrial jobs. The importance of an industrial presence today cannot be overemphasized. Industry offers semi-skilled, management, technical, and engineering training through employment. Domestic production shortens supply lines and increases innovation opportunities through dynamic process and product testing. Cincinnati’s industrial corridor is well placed to take advantage of the CSX shipping corridor. This potential seems to be underutilized today.

A second asset of Lower Price Hill is youth. Many of the Plan Cincinnati initiatives target increasing the appeal of the city to young professionals, seeking to retain and attract young minds. Price Hill and Western Hills do not see as strong a “graying” effect as other parts of the city family and community ties (bonding social capital) are stronger than the dispersing effects of mobility correlated with high educational attainment. Lower Price Hill is a community with a median age under 24 years old, an anomaly in the city. Despite this concentration of youth, the neighborhood represents a population without choice, and thus from the city’s perspective their success at retaining young adults is not positive. If this population were to be fostered with vocational training in the industrial and service industries they are already overwhelmingly
employed in there is potential for an industrial arts, crafts, and research and development community to emerge here. This innovation could attract small to medium research and prototyping firms, as well as enhance the image and reputation of the city as an arts center (similar to Seattle and glass artists) (Florida 2005). Arts and industry are synergistic, producing markets, spin-offs, and collaborations.

Oyler High School originally offered a heavy battery of arts and crafts facilities and courses which were gutted to accommodate primary grade level classrooms when the school consolidated. Reinstating occupational training in adjacent industrial buildings rehabilitated as shared studio workrooms with artist-in-residence mentors teaching skills like carpentry, metalworking and mechanics would lead to skilled jobs, college education, or commission-based practice, as well as retaining student interest by offering the potential for work-study and a clear expectation of after-school employment or further study to fulfill curiosity in the problems faced at the studio. Live-work situations are particularly appealing as they offer low-capital self-employment.

The historic architectural fabric, storied history as an ethnic frontier town, and legacy of transportation innovation in Lower Price Hill offers a dangerously appealing combination to developers should demand and environmental clean up align (Lower Price Hill Historic District). The community is two miles from downtown on five bus lines; the building stock is composed of one-to-four story multi-unit well-detailed apartments refurbished recently or ready to be converted to condos or single-family homes. Unusual single-story and first floor flush-entry dwellings could support aging in place. Neave Street’s first-floor cast-iron storefronts could easily revert to a local shopping district with space for a true grocery, salon/barber, cafe, bar, bicycle shop and urban general store a la Park + Vine. State Ave and Eighth Street offer more vacant storefronts and lots for new construction, appealing for the higher visibility along larger streets. Two pocket parks, two community gardens, a playfield and a future riverfront trail connection rounds out the list.

10 Lower Price Hill is a historic district for distinctive architecture & contributions to Cincinnati transportation history.
of amenities which point towards profitable redevelopment for the young or the old, the affluent or those of modest means, depending on the developer, the community, and the market.

weaknesses
Despite this, Lower Price Hill has lost ground in the last forty years. Crime, prostitution, and drugs are serious concerns. Violence, related to drug use, is not uncommon. The severity of concern by the city for this situation can be seen in the constant presence of a police car on Neave Street near Hatmaker, observing activity and presumably to intervene in violence, public drunkenness, and drug dealing. This vantage offers a good perspective on the full length of Neave, the four corners, and clear exits. A highly decorated VW bus usually parks almost directly in front of the officer; whether to act as interference or out of habit is unclear. An adjacent stairway that once offered the last direct pedestrian connection from Lower Price Hill to Warsaw was closed recently because of drug running along its length and deferred maintenance, a problem for most of the stairways that scale the hills (“Hillside Steps Inventory 2006-2009,” 2010).

Oyler School, while in many was an asset and an increasingly successful school, has faced serious struggles with achievement and attendance over the years. In 2010-2011 Oyler graduated 48.2% of its class, including 68.8% of disadvantaged students (which comprise 85% of the student body) (“Oyler School Report Card.” 2011. Ohio Department of Education). Despite this, violence and poverty in the community, as well as student involvement with drugs and crime make completing high school, let alone college, a challenge.

The building stock, though attractive, is hardly efficient, easy to maintain, or safe from lead paint, VOCs, radon, and mold. All of the current stock was submerged up to the second floor in the Flood of 1937. Where lead paint has been eradicated from the inside, it may still flake off and collect on the outside, or be contacted during work or play on adjacent brownfield sites (Whiston Spirn 1984). While homes today are spacious and open, historic floor plans tend to be compact and private with few, small bathrooms, kitchens, and closets. Major renovation would be necessary to meet most modern household expectations; there are some historic garages in the neighborhood, but few if any that would accommodate today’s vehicles.

Vacancy is particularly troubling, because vibrant street life is the community’s best defense against crime. It also reduces the neighborhood’s limited purchasing power; which supports two small convenience groceries: Henry’s Market at St Michael’s and Neave, and Meiser’s Market at Hatmaker and State Avenue. These offer slightly more than typical gas station food. Of the two, Henry’s is more trafficked by community members who stand socializing, smoking, drinking, and eating in Neave Street. As a result Neave
Street's sidewalks become plastered with plastic and foil wrappers, bottles, and bags dropped midblock by the street corner societies. The community council asks residents to spend time picking up this trash occasionally, reminding residents that the community’s appearance is important in maintaining morale (Lower Price Hill Community Council). In this and other ways, the existing residents are at times a liability to themselves.

Lower Price Hill is associated in many city residents minds with foul odors from neighboring pollution sourced at the MSD, Mill Creek, and industrial concerns dodging Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards. EPA restrictions have ended odors arising from combined and open sewers at the Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) Gest Street facility, with hundreds of millions of dollars in additional modernization projects to come (“Lower Price Hill.” Project Groundwork). The other notorious polluter in the neighborhood, Queen City Barrel, burned to the ground in 2004; remaining industrial properties were purchased and demolished by the city in the interim, and the site, though listed as a brownfield online, has since been declared safe by the EPA (Edwards & Prendergast 2004, Weathers 2004).

Finally, the adjacent transportation infrastructure, including the rail yard and viaducts, represent real and unavoidable point and linear sources of noise and particulate insulation. The Eighth Street Viaduct facelift and the Waldvogel Viaduct replacement project will not increase air quality (despite the bike lanes established on Eighth Street). Plantings and buffer zones between occupied areas and roadways could be established to reduce exposure to particulates and toxins, but the community’s stance that their defeat of the proposed barge terminal on the former Hilltop concrete site has affected a substantial gain in air quality (Lower Price Hill Community Council). While a riverfront trail easement is included in the Waldvogel plans, its location suggests that a terminal could still operate at this location. Even if the terminal is not located here the river-rail connection will be serviced by trucks or trains, adding to the diesel and other particulates in the air.

opportunities + threats

Lower Price Hill is surrounded by a surprising number of projects. All serve community objectives, but only one originated in the community. The last, a motion to upgrade Old St Michael’s School with Ohio historic preservation tax credits won approval this December, ushered by the community council, board, and director of the Community School that now occupies the building (“Four Hamilton County projects receive $3.4M in tax credits.” Business Courier).

The most obvious project within Lower Price Hill is the renovation of Oyler School. The skin will remain, but the interior has been gutted, the top-floor gymnasium converted to classrooms, libraries
altered to accommodate technology, and a gymnasium added on an asphalt lot south of the school once used as a playground. The project, like all Ohio schools, must be LEED Silver or better.

Construction grading has begun on the Waldvogel Viaduct Replacement Project. The viaduct has been in need of repair since 1989 and has operated with a loading capacity of 16 tons, forty percent of its designed loading limit, since 1993 (Truong 2004 “Sixth Street Viaduct in dire need of overhaul”). Netting underneath its deck protects drivers on River Road from falling concrete, evidenced by exposed and rusting rebar. These two arterials will be merged by the project into an extension of the Sixth Street Expressway on raised berms, not piers or columns (“Waldvogel Viaduct Preferred Alternative.” City of Cincinnati). Instead of the current tall picket fence-like condition between Lower Price Hill and the Ohio River the new “viaduct” will be a low but solid earthen wall. There will be two access points from north of the viaduct to the river: one at Evans Street, servicing the industrial district below the Eighth Street Viaduct, and one at State Avenue to serve local traffic. The traffic triangle interchange from State road to Warsaw Avenue will be eliminated to clear visual obstructions.

An externality of this plan is the elimination of vehicular access to the Hilltop Concrete site. Hilltop planned to sell this site to developers of a barge terminal. Existing rail lines and proximity to Queensgate and the highways support this use but the community does not. A lawsuit awarded damages to Hilltop equivalent to the property value for this loss but the city has avoided moving forward. The Waldvogel Replacement plan includes a 25’ wide hike/bike trail easement is placed such that it offers little riverfront access, suggesting that a barge terminal may still be in the works (“Waldvogel Viaduct Preferred Alternative.” City of Cincinnati).

The Eighth Street Viaduct was recently updated with little community input. The structure is visually pleasing and very serviceable, including a bike lane and raised/protected pedestrian sidewalk in both directions. As the viaduct bridges the Mill Creek the lamps and protective fencing change to mark the natural element below. Building facades within inches of the viaduct remain, but upper-level entrances from the viaduct have been sealed.

A vast vacant space under the Eighth Street Viaduct is the relic of the Queen City Barrel (QCB) factory and its neighbors, demolished following a 2004 holocaust. The city purchased the site for new light industrial development north and south of Eighth Street. Their plans for “MetroWest” belie language celebrating street-oriented development and minimal shared parking in the masterplan (Kinzelman Kline Gossman 2003).¹¹ Despite signage that announces this project to be completed in 2009, today it remains vacant and is currently in use as the staging area for Waldvogel reconstruction.

¹¹ This plan displays excellent principles, but is not well reflected in implementation.
It seems unlikely that action will be taken towards redevelopment in the near future.

The MSD occupies a full third of Lower Price Hill by area, and is situated just north of MetroWest. Its extensive project queue will continue to improve sewage flow and processing, modernizing existing administrative buildings, increasing the outflow at the Mill Creek to reduce wet-weather backups and overflows, building a sewage storage tunnel below the mill creek to eliminate combined sewage overflows (CSOs), and upgrading the power plant that supports processing (Lower Price Hill,” Project Groundwork). While technically proficient to today’s standards, these efforts do not seem to address a growing awareness of the reductions in capacity possible with smart demand management.

The Incline Square project in East Price Hill is also worth noting. A series of condos, restaurants, and health offices (high and low-rise) are planned for the vicinity of the Queen’s Tower apartments and radio tower that bookend Olden View Park. Early renderings depict improved overlooks and illuminated parkscaping, suggesting intentions for evening entertainment. To spur progress, the community secured state “Entertainment District” status, dropping the price and increasing the availability of liquor licenses. While most locals shop and recreate elsewhere, the return of a neighborhood center has appeal. The condominium project underway bears no resemblance to the rendering. Olden View Park is slated for sidewalk repair and landscaping work, but current plans suggest that it will remain substantially unchanged. The deviation from the rendering on both counts calls into question the ability of developers to achieve stylistic cohesion, a minimum level of quality required to attract outside business.

practitioners

Three mindsets or attitudes emerged from the above analysis. The first was Resistance. While it became clear that social capital would not be easily quantifiable through community associations or leaders following my initial interviews there was an overwhelming attitude of will to control among the leaders of Lower Price Hill, reinforced by the testimony of local social agencies. This paralleled the longitudinal study of Miller and Tucker (1998) in Over-the-Rhine, which concluded that after decades of suppression and disempowerment the community wanted to see their own choices enacted more than any other policy or program.

The second is redemption. West Price Hill, more efficient and empowered, knowing they controlled their community within reasonable limits and bounds, models this attitude. The concern is improvement. This is much more familiar, much more middle-class. The problems were less to do with gaining power, and more to do with improving life.
These two alternatives produced a third, rare condition that transcends both. While East Price Hill approximates transformation, the name best fits many of the examples surveyed in the literature review. Henry Sanoff and Walter Hood seemed to target communities for this sort of change from the bottom-up, outside established power structures, as in Peterman’s (1998) definition of “progressive” empowerment. There are glimpses of this in Over-the-Rhine, where community gardeners are taught the trade through Findlay Market or in Northside where gentrification has been a slow and controlled operation that has left no one, not even the gang members, behind. Perhaps the most inspiring stories of transformation, however, were told by Randolph Hester and Maurice Cox. The inspiration here is primarily that these communities began their lives as resistive locales, seeking to gain control and stop development. In reaching beyond their borders for assistance, they started the path towards transformation that was fulfilled cooperatively with their professional partners. This link between resistance and transformation is key and will be elaborated below.

These sketch typologies are offered as caricatures, not absolutes, to assist professionals in understanding community attitudes and productive intervention strategies. Further, none of these attitudes are universally appropriate or inappropriate. There are situations, as described above and below, when seemingly negative attitudes affect incredible positive change. This can be explained through the oversimplification that exclusionary bonding capital can eventually leverage bridging capital. In other words, a turn inward may seem exclusionary in pursuit of an eventual exogenous result. The first mindset, resistance, is reactive behavior of residents who sense they are losing control over their space. Slum clearance, proposed private development, ongoing public projects, the presence of obvious outsiders and other external actions can raise these concerns. Resistance is associated with community-led projects (recall this is depicted in the work of Cox and Hester), because the sharp and obvious external pressure offers an excellent cause to react against, catalyzing community bonding. For example Bayview, the community that approached Cox, grew together by fighting off a proposed prison. After this success Bayview residents realized their potential, and became more transformative in attitude. Similarly, most of Randolph Hester’s partners were resistive, notably Reseda Ridge in California which sought to avoid

12  While there are parallels between Arnstein’s conceptual model of participation as an eight-step ladder (1. Denial 2. Neglect 3. Informing 4. Consideration 5. Cooperation 6. Partnership 7. Delegated Power 8. Citizen Control) in which the first four steps are opportunities for choice whereas the last four conditions are opportunities to articulate a voice capable of changing the system. “Rungs” three through six can be seen as token participation, while true participation begins at stage six and continues through to the final stage. This is a key model for understanding participation’s role in politics and policy, but is not the issue of concern here. Instead of gauging the political availability of participation, the model described herein begins with the people’s own attitude to their situation and moves forward from there, seeking to discover the appropriate partnership styles available to expand and improve their vision (Qu & Hasselaar 2011). A graphical accounting of the effects of specific policies and connection to community attitude can be found at right.
the demolition of a mountain (Hester 2006). The community was divided against itself and its representatives. Hester asked the residents to draw a power map, showing who was for what and what influenced them, which made visible the large economic interest that had applied pressure from the outside. After this was clear, the community could become a locus of honest change, a transformative attitude.

Lower Price Hill has an attitude of resistance. This tends to slow or stop positive social bridging beyond the community. This is clear from the November Community Council meeting (2011) in which potential professional allies were blamed and accused. Despite this, as with the other projects, there are signs that the internal focus is bearing productive fruit. In Lower Price Hill, this is the preservation of the St Michael's Complex. This effort is run by a non-profit that grew out of the efforts of community mothers and grandmothers, and has attained success by reaching out to policy makers and professionals. The attitude can change; as Cox and Hester’s cases suggest, success with one project can yield the confidence necessary to bring in professional consultants, shifting towards a transformative stance. It is also possible that this success could continue to fuel the braggadocio of the community as it stands. There are few examples to suggest that resistance could become redemption.

The second attitude, redemption, is developed from the sense that things must get better. This could describe the sense that the character is missing in gentrified communities, evicted with the prior residents. While that is a situation of redemption, it is not the most common. This is, instead, the community that identifies a problem and works to make a change that offers improvement without drastic alteration. For example, Teddy Cruz works with Casa Familiar to legalize the existing patterns of illegal development, to extend density, livability and security. This does not change the social reality of the residents, nor does it force integration or take control of political power. What it does do is protect tenure and offer legal channels for home expansions to accommodate extended families. Davidoff pursued a similar strategy, tackling policy objectives that had the potential to make life much worse or much better for at-risk populations. There is no shame in redemption, it is a valid attitude and a practical approach to many community concerns. In the case of Davidoff, as an individual working to oversee a large political system, transformation was impossible and resistance too emotionally involved. Redemptive work was the best-possible scenario. Generally speaking, in any situation in which there is not an entrenched community, resistance and transformation will be difficult. Similarly, where problems are not very challenging, it makes little sense to go to the extremes of resisting or transforming. Redeeming is more appropriate.

Despite this, transformation realizes full potential of community
partnership (social capital). That is, residents join with professionals and politicians as subjects, not objects, in control of their communal destiny (Allen 1996). One of the ways this occurs is through education, and Henry Sanoff’s work emphasizes the value of community design education as equal or more important than creating design solutions. This effort increases the human capital of community members, empowering them to stand up and articulate their desires to designers and politicians. A project with similar goals was the Paddington Federation carried out to among community members and planners who together held all members’ concerns equally valuable and pooled knowledge and intelligence to create a very successful campaign towards preserving the neighborhood against “creeping conversions” and “hotelization” (Allen 1996). Similarly, Walter Hood lived in a community of concern and walked its streets, getting to know its residents in a very honest way. He suffers a bit, wishing for corner stores that offer real choices instead of deadly temptations, but he doesn’t impose his values on his designs. Instead of creating places hostile to the prostitutes who live there, he includes spaces to privately carry out the profession, and dignified, cheap or free dwellings that elevate the person in that position. This dignity and inclusion, drawn from the experience of an embedded observer, yields a design that questions current attitudes and assumptions and mobilizes a community that is ordinarily fractured, silent, and stigmatized.

So, we can expand the earlier diagram to read:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Attitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sanoff</td>
<td><strong>Participatory</strong></td>
<td>Hood</td>
<td>transformative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cox</td>
<td><strong>Community-Led</strong></td>
<td>Hester</td>
<td>resistive (transformative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krumholz</td>
<td><strong>Paradigm-Changing</strong></td>
<td>Cruz</td>
<td>redemptive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: various philosophies of engagement with regard to community

In the process of assigning an attitude to the communities in which these authors worked I made no reference to the original categorizations; the direct alignment of attitudes with previous aims was not guaranteed. It is clear, however, that the patterns of these six practitioners are fairly consistent. Participatory projects tend to take place in transformative communities. This makes logical sense, because community mobilization naturally leads to active involvement. Interestingly, community-led approaches appear to take place in predominately resistive neighborhoods. This can be understood through the framework that communities bracing against change tend to have committed leadership and a desire to understand and be heard through the process of development. While both examples of resistance are parenthetically transformative (turning to transformative methods in the long run) some communities do not transcend division. Finally, it is interesting to note that those practitioners who seek
to change paradigms actually gravitate towards redemptive work. While redemption (operating within limits) and paradigm change (surpassing them) seem to be contradictory their pairing is natural. To challenge and expand constraints the practitioner must first understand and address them in order to discover and advertise their inherent fallacies. This process also offers a structure through which to enact apparently politically infeasible paradigm changes within existing governmental and social structures.

Literal and theoretical distinctions are somewhat more reflective of the community and architect’s mutual interest. Where the community is more in the focus, whether due to the professional’s interest in nurturing and educating the community (as in the case of Sanoff’s efforts) or because the community has initiated the project (as in the case of Cox’s collaboration), the project is likely to take a more literal approach. Davidoff, the last exemplar of literal practice, was an advocacy planner focused entirely on the community and its demographic and technical aspects.

Theoretical projects, in contrast, reflect a relatively larger role for the designer. Hood’s work was self-initiated, though he did operate as a resident. Hester worked very closely with communities but sought a more artistic outcome, drawing on their experience and transforming it into a new expression of the existing story. This story was often, if not always, reclamation of the culture of the community to strengthen the connections. Finally, Cruz engages in his social and political situation not only in the name of a community but also in the pursuit of art. This art helps interpret the conditions he finds, but also assists in creating an aesthetic, something, which is not overwhelmingly important to the “literal” practitioners, and immigrants he works with. All of these professionals have more influence in the work they do, but only work with deep dedication to their communities. Thus “theoretical” does not mean disconnected or impractical. All of the literal practitioners are based in the east coast while all of the theoretical practitioners are located in California. This is not to say that they did not originate in other parts of the country, or even practice in different regions, however the locations that accept and support their work (and teaching) are diametrically opposed, perhaps revealing something of the expectation and culture of professionals with regard to geography.

As has been stated above, literal projects tend to be more acceptable to communities that lack trust, as we can see in the literature review. This is because the process is transparent and the community receives what it asks for. It also offers a chance for participants to learn about the process and feel that their input is directly reflected in the outcomes, thus realizing tangible proof of their control over the process. Despite this, where trust is created between professionals and participants, there are greater opportunities that come from allowing designers and planners their full repertoire of strategies, including less-participatory actions that create
meaningful or innovative outcomes. In fact, it is often easiest for people to react against something, and so a proposal may start a more productive conversation than a complete blank slate.

**Conclusion**

Lower Price Hill has all the elements of a community of resistance. Because of this and the regional location of Cincinnati, the forgoing analysis suggests that a community-led, literal approach similar to the work of Maurice Cox (or perhaps Henry Sanoff, in the best case transformative outcome) would be most engaging and likely to create change. This also makes good common sense to suspicious communities and is cost conscious. Efforts by the community to resist external development while promoting and pursuing internal priorities have begun to approximate these goals through the redevelopment of Oyler and St Michael’s. Despite this, both projects are not truly community-led and thus do not empower the community to understand its own role and potential. It seems that the larger community has not been brought into the conversation by the vocal Community Council leadership.

It is for this reason that a more theoretical approach is appropriate in Lower Price Hill. While the theoretical bent tends to carry the imprint of its creator, increasing the price, aesthetic preoccupation, and self-consciousness of the work, the creator can mold the work to conditions in a way that serves the community. Hester’s work in Manteo exemplifies this by pointing out that design can mimic and expand existing social spaces into empty space, even if the residents are not fully aware of what about existing social space is working. This retains and reinforces social patterns while offering additional capacity to absorb outsiders and reduce spatial conflict. If the intervention is refined such that it takes into account flows, changing occupancy, political, social and economic pressures, as well as the aesthetics of the community and the broader city, ownership and change can be managed within the scheme, allowing for expansion or contraction of space and interaction.

From an architectural perspective, it can be broadly said that resistive communities tend to apply simple, off-the-shelf solutions, planting modular or prefabricated elements into voids. These are useful, but “dumb” in the sense that they do not communicate intent nor express the community’s genius. Redemptive communities often approach good bones with an appraising eye and make the most of what is already available. This is a little more innovative, and often costs a bit more. It also adopts a more middle- to upper-class appearance. Transformative interventions tend to turn a problem into a solution. This is a very important point, and it can be drawn directly from the Appalachian waste-nothing roots of Lower Price Hill. Transformation makes a vibrant community out of those who are unable to leave, so too it builds out of the materials that exist. In construction, this can be envisioned as shaping two components such that they make the connection with their own form rather
than purchasing a manufactured connector.

In the late 1800s through the mid 1900s the incline filled this gap at the urban scale, serving as transportation, destination, advertising and product. Each user perceived a different main service, whether it was the view, the transportation, the head house entertainment, or the community that surrounded each landing. These each provided positive reinforcement, while the overall form made the Incline itself impossible to ignore, even from a distance. Connection into a citywide transit system (the streetcars of the day) provided almost universal accessibility. By integrating into the terrain, transportation system, and value system of the day, the Incline was a transformative solution. Similarly, today's intervention to revive Lower Price Hill must be integrated and transformative.

This returns the discourse to the original focus: gentrification and social capital. Social capital, or asset-based community development, professes (as stated above) that the vacancies and existing institutions and individuals can answer community needs. Gentrification is the outside imposition of a higher and better-perceived use for these amenities, often arising when the community has failed to capitalize upon them. Developers in different parts of the country face different markets, so the process of gentrification progresses at different rates given housing market pressures and the availability of distinctive historic homes suitable for redevelopment. In some places, neighborhoods have half or full centuries to wait for developers to take interest, while other areas flip in a matter of decades or never decline in the first place.

Ultimately, the creation of separation between intertwined processes is often crafted by academics seeking specificity. In common experience, the difference between the creation of social capital and gentrification can be in the eye of the beholder or the attitude of the occupant. Education and community development before, during, and after redevelopment can do much to retain the existing community in truth and spirit, while its absence can consign a population to displacement from an otherwise positive project. Today's society is conditioned to expect clear-cut property
lines, similarity, and privacy. These delineations necessarily wall in or wall out, including or excluding groups, theorists, residents, professionals, and sponsors. Harsh contrast leads to further conflict and displacement such that communities with high inequality rely on security personnel, barred windows, and hired help to maintain appearances. These actions lead to resentment, ultimately justifying the forgone efforts.

An approach to the city that allows for liminality (ambiguity) offers cohabitation, coexistence and cooperation. Contrast and simultaneity (the awareness of two differing conditions in close proximity whether blurred or crisp, integrated or distinct) heighten the liminal condition. This is already true, though unrecognized: service jobs support executive jobs that create manufacturing jobs and so on. Poor and wealthy live on adjacent streets, and cuisine and socialization occur in parallel. There are linkages and connections in the urban system at every turn. Recognizing this and articulating it clearly in visible and spatial form is one way of educating the public towards equity.

Professionals both learn and teach through the process of engagement, whether literal or theoretical, transformative, redemptive, or resistive. This process of going back and forth between general and local expertise informs design and participation of their mutual value, and creates social capital that can inhabit and own space in the city, empowering communities to expand beyond labels to realize mutual goals. It is important that the terms developed in this text be understood as aids. They are not to condemn a community. While resistance carries a negative connotation, none of these terms are designed or intended to critique the means a community is using towards agency and social capital. It is important that any professional seeking to practice within a community facing external change respect and honor the attitude and intentions of the community.

The fruits of this study are theoretical, but their intent is participatory. Future research is necessary to consolidate the explosion of participatory practices to reign in naive or misguided methods while equipping those who are interested in this work with the tools necessary for sensitive and appropriate participation. The terms resistance, redemption, and transformation are only successful insofar as they are helpful to practitioners, academics, and community leaders in spurring debate, participation, and change. To do this, they must be verified through further research (triangulation) as suggested in appendix 3. A new term should be sought for “resistance” to honor the value and power that such a stance demonstrates. Finally, this theory of participation must be brought to bear on actual engagement.


Arefi, Mahyer. 2008. Asset-Based Approaches to Community Development. Edited by Xing Quan Zhang. Nairobi: UN HABITAT.


lower price hill is a liminal zone, belonging neither to lower price hill, nor to housing hill, nor the basin; its promise lies here; this rendering was requested by Mary Croft to suggest lighting the former incline route up Price Hill aligned with 8th street.
above + below, perspectives from Olden View Park, East Price Hill, looking to downtown along the eighth street alignment
1. protect + bypass local “social safe place”

- replace/relocate social agencies to interior blocks
- eliminate or limit resources beyond interior blocks
- isolating community + society

2. abandon Lower Price Hill to enhance East + West Price Hill

- “gateway” improvements only
- potentially neglect/abandon return stable street to mature
- view is the motivator

3. redevelopment is “green” + bike centered

- return to transportation as motivation: bus hub emphasized
- bike ramp/lift developed to “million dollar district”
- enhanced hillside parks/ecosystem
- enhanced housing demand in Lower Price Hill (zoning/declarations)
- enhanced use of community garden space
- “little northside”
- English St (closed) becomes a bike/skate park

4. redevelopment occurs with the community

- enhanced access for all
  (transit, bikes, pedestrians)
- enhanced social/retail district
  (bike shop, cafes, real grocery)
- enhanced garden/park space
- increased connection + inter relation
- increased development of new housing north of 5th Street

opposite, mapping existing site conditions and interventions; above, possible reaction/remediation strategies
the above map articulates current community social spaces in the community in maroon, outsider social areas in dark green, and crime in red. Crime enforcement is represented by the blue rectangle (squad car location). Potential future social spaces, articulated in the accompanying architectural thesis Community Ecology: Public Interventions for Communities at Risk, are highlighted in fuscia and bright green. Below: potential street improvements to eighth and state.
above: 40-60% hold a high school diploma, 10-15% earn twice the poverty line or more/ socialexplorer.com

>1% hold a bachelor's degree 5-10% have some college/ socialexplorer.com

most of price hill is 15-30% black black median income is <$15,000 / socialexplorer.com

hispanic median income is <$15,000 white median income is <$15,000 / 2007 estimates socialexplorer.com
above: 30-40% commute less than 10 minutes to work

20-30% work in production

500-1,000 people/square mile

lower price hill is 10-15% hispanic

30-40% work in manufacturing/transportation/ socialexplorer.com

30-40% work in the service sector/ socialexplorer.com

40-60% households have kids / 2007 estimates socialexplorer.com

40-60% single-parent households / 2007 estimates socialexplorer.com
above: white median age is <24  
40-60% of whites live in poverty/ socialexplorer.com

75-90% of properties are rented   
20-30% are vacant/ socialexplorer.com

5-10% rely on social security   
30-40% of households are sp female-headed / socialexplorer.com

5-10% of households are sp male-headed  
2007 Census Estimates, socialexplorer.com
Appendix 3: Proposed Methodology

In order to verify the “hunches” as to attitudes and appropriate participatory methods, more research is required. While this failing is admitted, and the research term for this thesis has come to an end, the following course of study is suggested to fill out and complete this case study.

Existing methodology:

1. urban definition literature review (defines the problem)
2. practitioner literature review (defines existing solutions)
3. case study (lower price hill)
   - limited review of community leadership
   - limited interviews to verify history/development
   - limited demographic research
   - limited review of nearby communities
   - thorough examination of urban condition
   - thorough review of nearby publicly funded projects
   - thorough history through 1940s

Proposed additional study:

4. further visits to community council meetings (recorded)
5. participation in BLOC ministries kids outreach
   - interviews with ministers
   - interviews with kids (with parental permission)
   - interviews with parents
6. research 1940-present history in detail
   - changing demographics through time
   - changing community institutions through time
   - document construction and demolition
7. quantify plans proposed/rejected by the community and outside groups via
   - interviews
   - newspaper archive
   - literature review
   - other public record
8. expanded practitioner list (multiple examples/aim)

Preferrably, this exploration would be carried out as a resident of the community itself. This would reduce skepticism and concern, and would increase awareness of real community concerns and dynamics.