I, Eric M Vu, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture in Architecture (Master of).

It is entitled:
City Encounters: Creating Community Through the Cultivation of Social Capital

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creating community
cohesion through
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During gentrification and urban renewal efforts, there is the possibility for two or more different socioeconomic and/or cultural groups to exist within one area. This thesis looks to see how these groups can coexist together and possibly create a community.

The building typology found in Over The Rhine of storefront on the ground and housing above will developed further. The fact that everyone in the neighborhood needs to procure food is utilized, making the grocery store a catalyst for community. The residential component will not only house people, but engage the street front as well as itself. In order to do this, the project is created on the foundation of dynamic interaction between the private and public, the building and the street, and people with people.

Minh Vu
city encounters
creating community cohesion through cultivation of social capital

Minh Vu
Many hands make light work is a saying we learn early on in architecture school. I’ve come to learn that this not only applies to the structure of a building, but many other aspects in life. The last two years of graduate school have been a growing experience, and along with that came some growing pains. If not for these people supporting me, I do not think I would be here writing this now.

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America’s urban city centers were once thriving with diversity of cultures and peoples. The industrial revolution brought about new types of employment and many companies set up shop in downtown areas. Workers and immigrants followed and began to establish neighborhoods in the cities. Enclaves of ethnicities such as “Little Italys” and “Chinatowns” became a common occurrence, though they were rarely truly homogenous (Massey and Denton 1993: 33), with the highest isolation of one ethnicity being a neighborhood in Milwaukee comprising of 56% of Italians (Lieberson 1981).

In the aftermath of World War II, the American government established the Federal Housing Act to provide housing for returning veteran soldiers (Massey and Denton, 1993: 23). This resulted in new suburban neighborhoods outside of the city, some of the most well known of which were the Levittowns of New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. These planned communities of identical houses, front lawns and white picket fences were a far cry from the urban environments most of these soldiers had grown up in. They were homogenous in terms of diversity, usually housing white middle class families. Policies prohibited the sale or rental to non-Caucasians.

The downtown area of cities were left then for the working-class and minorities, who were not allowed or could not afford to move to a Levittown. Deindustrialization and the moving of factories also contributed to the neglect of city housing. The areas housing for
the poor were labeled “slums” in dire need of help and reformation. But Gans observed while living in the West End of Boston, that while the environment was of physical disrepair and economic hardship, the neighborhood’s hard exterior hid a warmer community network (Gans 1962: 16).

Interest in urban areas regained traction with a new generation moving back during the 1950s and 60s. This was labeled gentrification and has gone under other names such as urban renewal or revitalization. These “pioneer gentrifiers” (Lees et al, 2008: 3) were interested in urban neighborhoods for a number of reasons, whether it be a feeling of community, efficiency, adjacency to work, and other reasons. But as the middle-class began moving back into the city, they were forced to live with the established working-class community that had been living in the city previously. Urban revitalization and gentrification will be discussed further in chapter 1.

Is it possible for these different socio-economic groups to have a community with one another? Or will they end up separating themselves, creating tension and hostility within the neighborhood?

Over The Rhine (OTR), an urban neighborhood of Cincinnati, Ohio, is a historic working-class neighborhood that is experiencing revitalization today. While the area is not as densely populated as it was during its peak in the 1800s, it still is a place for those of low income to live. But more and more rapidly, buildings are being renovated and constructed to bring new middle-class residents and families.

This thesis’ focus will be to explore community creation between the existing residents of OTR and those who are relocated to the neighborhood. Chapters 2 and 3 discuss theories of community construction and will try to apply them to the OTR’s situation.

Over The Rhine has the characteristics of many other old urban towns in North America. The buildings are situated closely together and as a result, walking and biking becomes a preferred mode of transportation for the residents. Its urban qualities call for an analysis of what makes an urban neighborhood successful and which qualities contribute to the success of its community. These urban qualities are looked at in chapter 4.

Lastly, all of these researched topics will be used to explore the various ways of generating community, specifically in Over The Rhine, and how those ways can be enhanced and reinforced through a designed physical manifestation.
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1.01 Slum removal programs in the US resulted in drastic demolitions of once vibrant communities.
Gentrification has been a widely contested topic over the past half-century. Today, the debate continues on its perceived benefits and negative effects. “Gentrification is not just a physical process, it is a social one, involving the movement of people and the movement of capital (Smith et al, 1984: 44).” Accordingly, gentrification, sometimes referred to as urban renewal, renaissance or revitalization (Lees et al 2008: 6-8), is a very human concern, affecting the social economic, political, cultural and institutional climate of a city (Lees et al 2008: 3). There have been many case studies on how in-movers adopt and adapt to their new urban environment (see Butler 1997, Caulfield 1994 or Nelson 1988). More recently, authors such as Freeman (2006) and Smith (1996) have been making strides on what existing residents make of their rapidly changing surroundings.

Because this thesis deals with building community in an urban environment undergoing gentrification, here follows a brief overview of gentrification’s effects on social aspects of a neighborhood.

The term gentrification was first coined by British sociologist Ruth Glass to describe the alteration of inner London neighborhoods as upper-status groups, viewed here as the “gentry”, migrating towards neighborhoods of lower-status groups. One definition of gentrification is “alterations in land-use patterns and changes in the composition of the neighborhood populations that are resulting in new social organizational patterns in inner cities (London et al
1984: 4).” Sociologists like Glass were already talking about the effects gentrification had on the residents of the neighborhood, how they were affected by rising housing costs until “all or most of the original working class occupiers are displaced and the social character of the district is changed (Glass 1964: xviii-xix).” But despite Glass naming the phenomenon, this grand movement of people had been seen before (Clark 2005:260). In Paris, for example, during the late 19th century, Baron Haussmann devised a plan for Napoleon III to modernize Paris’ inner city by widening streets and regulating building designs. Poor residential areas in the center of the city were demolished to make way for these new streets. Rent in the remaining areas was altered drastically with the new changes, displacing what poor were left to other parts of the city (Smith 1996:34-40).

“Gentrification proper” (Lees et al 2008: 4) began after World War II in advanced capitalist cities, with the earliest systematic occurrences being seen in large cities like Boston, New York and Washington D.C. (p. 5). The government sanctioned urban renewal plans were used to clear lower income housing areas and slums to make way for modern middle class housing and highways (p. 6). In Boston during the 1950s, Gans observed Boston’s West End, a notably Italian immigrant populated city neighborhood. The city government and realtors saw an opportunity to remove the slum and redevelop the area with “shiny new buildings” (Gans 1962: 283) to attract
The West End of Boston was once a dense urban community. Government urban renewal plans cleared large amounts of the neighborhood away. Today only a few of the original tenements still stand.

middle class and upper class residents. This would economically benefit the city by establishing a higher paying tax base, bringing consumers who could consume more from the shops in the center city and providing more jobs for local builders (p. 284). But what city officials failed to see was how the relocation of tenants and “the destruction of the neighborhood exacted social and psychological losses” (p. 320). Not only had the old buildings been cleared, but a functioning social system was replaced. Relocated families, especially older members found it very difficult to establish a community network to the same experience they had in the West End.

Later gentrification movements were less drastic than the government attempts at urban renewal. These grass roots movements were powered by historians, architecture enthusiasts and middle class families and involved the renovation of dilapidated historical buildings in lower income residential areas of a city. The movement acquired different names based on the historic housing character of each city it was taking place in; New York City with “brownstoning”, “homesteading” in Baltimore and “red-brick chic” in San Francisco (Lees et al 2008: 6). Though less dramatic, these areas of brownstoning and homesteading saw gentrification-induced displacement when the neighborhood “experienced accelerated property sales and inflated property values, …making it too expensive for residents of modest means to own their properties” (Gratz 1989:
Socioeconomic Mixing

For residents still able to reside in a gentrifying neighborhood, the aspect of social mixing or community cohesion has been touted as a major benefit of gentrifying a neighborhood. Initially, this concept was thought about in economic terms and dealt with bringing a higher income group into lower income area in order to balance the tax revenue for the city. It was later seen though that community cohesion clearly had a broad range of implications effecting social diversity, cultural diversity, and poverty and social inequalities (Cantle 2002). Through “improved social balance (Lees 2008)” and mixing of social classes, Britain’s Office of the Deputy Prime Minister argues that there will be a reduction of “neighborhood effects”, what is defined as “high levels of anti-social behaviour and lawlessness (OPDM 2005).” Concentrations of poverty act only to reinforce aspects of disadvantage, making it more difficult for one to move out of such situations (Randolph & Wood 2003).

During his fieldwork in Toronto, Jon Caulfield (1994) observed that gentrification was a process that united people in the central city, and created opportunities for social interaction, tolerance and cultural diversity (Lees et al 2008: 209). Through interviews with residents in the gentrified
neighborhood, one quality of life that neighbors enjoyed was the cultural and ethnic diversity they experienced (Caulfield 1994: 178-179). In response to the social heterogeneity of the city, many parents found that exposure to different cultures was very beneficial to their child’s upbringing, instilling in them respect and acceptance (p. 184-185).

Governments have attempted to establish social cohesion through public policies and developments (see Cantle 2002; Urban Task Report DETR 1999; Urban White Paper 2000). Their aggressively used tactics of bulldozing selections of low income housing to make way for new housing tended to actually reduce neighborhood levels of social mix and ethnic diversity (Walks & Maaranen 2005). In some cases, efforts to revitalize a neighborhood “ignore the fact that many of the working class neighborhoods … are indeed already ‘vital.’ They possess viable social networks that function to meet the needs of their population (London & Palen 1984).” So when development is executed, these social networks are erased, as was seen in the work of Gans (1962).

But what are the factors that contribute to the end result of little to no cohesion? Butler (2007) argues that “…these communities have very little to do with each other and pass across each other with almost no contact.” One explanation of this is that despite building and living in an urban environment, new development tends to be self-contained, gated from what is deemed unwanted, meaning the homeless, vagrants and working class businesses which might attract these types of people. Residents then tend to identify with their enclosed environment more so than the neighborhood as a whole (Davidson 2010: 8). These developments can evolve into homogenous districts that cater to only one social group. Distinctions between “them” and “us” are presented, shaped and mediated by the architecture, marketing and built form (p. 11). “Low levels of neighborhood social mixing are therefore partly explained for gentrifiers through a lack of engagement, attachment and/or investment in the local area (p. 9).”

Along with the physical boundaries, psychological boundaries also contribute to self-inflicted segregation in mixed neighborhoods. Lees (2008: 11) concludes in her paper, “[s]ocial mix policies also destroy…their moral authority because they socially construct the middle class as a natural category in contrast to a demonized working class.”

Gentrification and social mix have an “uneasy cohabitation (Lees
2008: 9”, though the terms have been synonymous since the writings of Glass (Lees et al 2008: 207). Though community cohesion between different socioeconomic groups sounds positive, spatial proximity does not necessarily equal social proximity (Freeman 2006: 131), meaning middle class and lower class may not see each other as peers to interact with. Freeman states from his interviews of indigenous residents of Harlem that those residents were more likely to benefit from improved amenities and services in the neighborhood rather than diverse social ties and collective socialization (Freeman 2006: 164).

**Positives of Gentrification and Countering Negatives**

Gentrification has developed into a very loaded term and has garnered much opposition. But it is not simply the act of “gentrifying” an area that should be condemned. Gentrification is too complex to have its definition so narrowly viewed. Rather, gentrification should be seen as a complicated keyword that:

“[i]t functions as a compound word and has multiple determinations such that no one of its particular meanings can properly be understood in isolation from all the others (Harvey 2006: 293).”

By describing the act of gentrification as above, the debate can then shift to specific steps in which gentrification is carried out. Gratz (1989: 64) argues that rate of change is key to successful gentrification and change in a neighborhood. The control of growth is important to deterring displacement.

Gratz explains in *The Living City* that without a constant flow of new blood and new business, any community will become stagnate (p. 63). No one should try to protect the status of a deteriorated neighborhood. If a neighborhood has experienced disinvestment, neglect and abandonment, it will still end up displacing people because living conditions are so terrible.

In Savannah, Georgia, there existed middle class neighborhood called the Victorian District. During the 1950s though, people began to move out of the area to suburbs further away from the city’s core. The Victorian District became a refuge for poor black, where the once large houses were divided
up into three or four apartments (p. 48). Twenty years later, the neighborhood had deteriorated so deeply with vandalism, fire and decay that experts had pronounced it irreversibly “dead.”

But during the 1970s, Lee Adler organized a group called the Savannah Landmark Rehabilitation Project. Rather than allow the government to demolish the area, his grass-roots group set out to restore the historic neighborhood by purchasing and restoring buildings. The group’s first and foremost plan was to rehabilitate one third or more of the Victorian District’s 1,200 units specifically for low-income housing before attempting to attract the middle-class market (p. 49). By ridding the area of abandoned buildings and slumlords and making the housing attractive even for low-income renters, black and white middle-class families began purchasing homes in the area because of its historical nature and adjacency to downtown. Businesses followed and eventually the Victorian District became one of the most racially and economically diverse neighborhoods in the country (p. 50).

So if the low- and moderate-income population is considered and viewed “as a city asset worthy of attention and public investment, rather than ignored until gentrification takes hold (p. 65),” displacement can be addressed. The continued presence of low- and moderate-income households obviously does not deter investment if the interest is there from middle-class populations. Cities that attract more affluent residents are more able
to aggressively finance affordable housing (Byrne 2003: 405-06). In fact, newcomers are more likely to be discouraged by a lack of adequate city services.

Freeman elaborates on this with his work in New York City. Though long-time residents of Harlem were weary of newcomers to their neighborhood, many saw certain benefits to be gained by having new neighbors. The neighborhood began to experience gains in institutional resources. He saw that the middle-class moving in was better positioned to establish and support community-based organizations. It’s not that these neighborhoods did not have community organizations before, but that this middle-class was able to organize and command resources and improvements for the community than the low-income community could (Freeman 2005: 152). The neighborhood later received a full-service supermarket, something it had gone without for years (p. 205).

Conclusion

Gentrification has proved to have positive and negative effects on neighborhoods. It has the ability to jump-start the economy of a deteriorated city area by attracting new business and increasing the number of residents who can pay taxes, purchase local goods and services, and support the city in state and federal political processes (Byrne 2003). Vacancy rates can be reduced and property values increased. However, the process can also cause displacement of residents due to rising rents. Communities can be broken up and social diversity lost. Surrounding areas can be negatively affected as they are forced to accommodate large influxes of a city’s poor population.

When organized and executed properly, through the consideration of a neighborhood’s existing residents and low-income population, the problems can be addressed and gentrification can be used to benefit everyone in the neighborhood, low- and middle-class populations alike. The problem then becomes: can this mix of people who have not been exposed to one another live together without conflict? There may have been a community before, but will newcomers disrupt the neighborhood’s accepted norms? It is now important to investigate how community is brought about and what factors need to be addressed in order for it to be sustainable.


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the linkages in large Canadian cities.” Urban Geography, 29(4), 2005.
The neighborhood of Over The Rhine (OTR) is situated just north of downtown Cincinnati. It was built during a time of major immigration coming from Germany and its other states such as Prussia and Bavaria. Its name comes from the immigrants acknowledging that the neighborhood was just over the Erie-Miami canal from downtown. They referred to the canal as “the Rhine”, recalling the river in Germany.

The culture was lively in the neighborhood, with streets consisting of numerous restaurants, shooting galleries, theaters, and, of course, beer halls. Its breweries rivaled those of other beer giant cities like St. Louis. It was often city officials performed business in the area at the beer halls.

After World War I, anti-German sentiment and Prohibition caused the closing of most of the breweries and other venues in the neighborhood. The canal became obsolete and abandoned, turning it virtually into an open sewer. The area went into decline as the economy became more troubled. There were plans to “renew” OTR and neighboring West End neighborhoods but the stock market crash of the 30s prevented this from happening.

During a period in the 1940s, OTR saw an influx of Appalachian migrants from rural areas looking to capitalize on jobs stimulated by the war. Because the area had fallen on hard times, housing was readily available and affordable.

Then during the 50s and 60s, America was going through its highway building boom and as a result wiped out much of the West End, a historically black neighborhood. More than 50,000 black and low-income residents were displaced by construction many of them moving to the vacant buildings in OTR.

The conversion of OTR to a “black” neighborhood resulted in “white flight” to the suburbs. The white population of OTR lost 84 percent from the 1960s to the 1980s. And from the 1980s to the 2000s, it has lost residents of all races.

Since the 70s, projects have been presented over and over to rehabilitate the area from decline. Historic preservationists wanted to save the historical building stock and the city wanted to bring in more affluent residents. Meanwhile, community organizations have been fighting these projects for fear of displacement of the existing residents.

The area has been in contention for decades, not to mention any progress to bring the area back being halted by several race riots. Each time there was a riot, investors quickly pulled out as well as people living there.

The 2000s brought renewed interest in the area. The city and organizers established a non-profit group called 3CDC that would oversee the
land banking of buildings and renovation of the area to make way for new businesses and residents. Today, much development has happened on the south end of Vine Street, where the revitalization began, in an area deemed “The Gateway Quarter”. Slowly, 3CDC moves north, converting dilapidated buildings into apartments and condos. Posh restaurants and bars are springing up everywhere.

There has been some effort to keep the neighborhood friendly towards its low-income community. A few buildings still cater to those who cannot afford the more expensive housing being constructed. And they’re actually dispersed among the new condos and stores. But still, community groups fear that their homes will be taken from them as property values begin to rise from recent construction.

Though many view Cincinnati as slow moving, maybe this has proven to be a virtue in disguise for OTR. While there is new construction, it does seem as if the city is taking into consideration the different groups that reside in the neighborhood. This is in large part in debt to those who work at OTR Community Housing and other community heads who pressure 3CDC and the city into taking into account all who live there.

Unlike other gentrification projects, OTR is somewhat different in that there does not exist a large mass of people living in the neighborhood. Most of the buildings are vacant and in dire need of repair. So in moving new residents and investment to OTR, it is actually saving it.

The question then becomes: as OTR develops and invites more people to live there, how will the city and developers move forward in their plans to revitalize the city? Will they continue to take into account low-income residents and keep some buildings at a more moderate price range, as was seen in Savannah’s Victorian district (Gratz 1986)? Or will increased interest in the neighborhood begin a more accelerated development, where those certain factors may fall by the way side in the name of progress?

It is my hope that instead of separating OTR along strong boundaries, that it will continue to be mixed. Groups may be established, different communities existing in the neighborhood. But there must be places through the neighborhood that also facilitate interaction and engagement of these groups with each, as was seen in Gan’s (1962) observations of West End, Boston.
2.01 Amish tradition depicts the community working together towards a common goal of raising a barn.
ommunity usually refers to people living within a specific area, sharing common ties, and interacting with one another (Lyon 1985). Smith (2002) describes community as “a static, bounded, cultural space of being where personal meanings are produced [and] cohesive values are articulated (p 109).” By questioning these traditional meanings, one is able to analyze social life as an “examination of complex patterns of change, diversity, and conflict (Day 2006: 116).” Sociologist Durkheim (1984) began to question how society is created in his book *De la division du travail social* (*Division of Labor in Society*) and came to the conclusion that through people’s norms, beliefs and values or as he termed, their “collective consciousness”, they form the moral basis for a society (p. 173). Collective consciousness helps to produce the society and collective consciousness is produced by people’s interactions with one another. Collective consciousness and interaction represent two aspects of community formation: the psychological and the physical.

As stated before by Davidson (2010, “low levels of neighborhood social mixing were explained by a lack of interaction”. He also wrote that proximity itself is inadequate in the formation of community. A key component is human interaction. This is how the community develops its understanding of one another’s norms, beliefs and values. But even in providing space for interaction to take place, there must be an element that facilitates the
1. **SITUATION:** Parties discover a disagreement.

2. **ARGUMENTATION:** Each party argues and reciprocates concerns.

3. **CONSENSUS:** A unified vision is formed through reciprocity and built trust.

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**Communicative Action**

The basis of Habermas’ theory of how communities are established is the interaction between two parties through communication. This is aptly named *communicative action*. Communicative action occurs when two conflicting groups “resolve their dispute through identifying a convergence of interest (Elliot 2010: 4)” between one another. Linguistics plays a large part in creating this agreement, and the result that is created is what Elliot refers to as a dialogical community, a community based in and related in dialog. This agreement is reached through rational and democratic means as opposed to what Habermas calls “strategic action”, which are actions subjected to non-rational compulsion (p 7). He notes the differences:

“A *communicatively achieved agreement has a rational basis; it cannot be imposed by either party, whether instrumentally through intervention in the situation directly or strategically through influencing the decisions of opponents. Agreement can indeed be attained by force; but what comes to pass…cannot count subjectively as agreement. Agreement rests on common conviction.” (Habermas 1984: 287)

This means that there can be other ways to force the issue, but for it to
Agreement rests on common conviction. Truly be an agreement, there must be communal vision. In order to achieve this, democratic interaction with language is heavily relied upon. By revealing intentions to one another and agreeing upon a common goal, it can be assumed that communicative action eliminates misunderstanding between conflicting groups so that a settlement can be reached (Elliott 2010: 6). With the requirement of both groups revealing their intentions there must be inclusion of people and ideas, trust building, and reciprocity (p. 17). Through exposure of each other’s norms and values, new ones can be created with both parties in mind. All of this becomes the foundation for a single community as it grows out of the accumulated decision-making processes of many social actors (Day 2006: 115).

Though creating a community purely of communicative action assumes a very ideal, almost absurd chain of events to take place (even Habermas admits that such a situation could never be realized in practice (p. 7)), the theory demonstrates interaction as being one of the most important factors in establishing a community.

**Collective Action**

Collective action happens when a unified vision is created, as all participating groups agree to work together towards this common goal (Gilbert 1989: 18). Gilbert calls this action the “plural subject theory”, in which two or more people jointly accept a proposition and carry it out with one will. She demonstrates this through a situation in which one person in a group asks, “Shall we go for a walk?”, to which the others reply, “Yes, let’s.” The interaction now results in everyone jointly committed to taking a walk with one another, “acting as if they were parts of a single person contributing to the walk (Gilbert 1989: 164).” Everyone also knows that the situation of the walk will be changed if someone were to not go for the walk now that the agreement is initiated. Each person is now a part of a “we-intention”, as opposed to an “I-intention” in which a person acts on his or her intention alone (Searle 1990: 401-403).

It is unlikely that all groups involved will all adopt a uniform position on an issue, “there will be some element of working together among them, whether voluntary or compelled (Day 2006: 117). An example Day utilizes is that of “NIMBYism” (‘Not In My Back Yard’), wherein residents of a neighborhood will mobilize in collective opposition to a threat (p 117). Now
these neighbors may not always be of a collective system, but a common interest is what brings them together in order to act. Neighbors will also act together in order to receive a resource which lacks in their neighborhood like a supermarket, better schools or repaired city infrastructure. Again, though this may be of different individual interests, it is done for the collective good of the neighborhood.

Another example of collective action can be seen in the act of protesting. During the autumn of 2011, hundreds of people gathered in public spaces around the world in order to protest social and economic inequality. This movement became known as the “Occupy” movement. This protest was initiated on the second week of September at New York City’s Zuccotti Park on Wall Street, and by October, several other occupations of public spaces were springing up all over the world (Thompson 2011). The movement is of particular interest in the case of community because of the slogan “We are the 99%”, referencing the disproportionate distribution of wealth between the top one percent of the population versus the other ninety-nine percent. This showed that even though ninety-nine percent of the population is made up
of millions of people, all with different ethnicities and cultures, norms and values, they had come together for this one purpose. Recent college graduates met up with middle aged women and men who had been laid off from jobs (Goodale 2011).

Kimmelman (2011) was told by one of the protesters that Zuccotti Park could be seen as a “Venn diagram of characters representing disparate political and economic grievances. The park is where their grievances overlap. It’s literally common ground.”

The park became an example of the most primordial makings of a community. All the different individuals who had gathered and were camping there began to establish rules, as well as ways of assisting each other with living together. The protesters had set up a kitchen, legal department and general store stocked with donations of clothing, bedding and personal hygiene products. They had set up a sanitation department as well as a medical station, recruiting anyone who had experience to help the others.

The Occupy movement is also significant because it demonstrates another community concept, the idea of “imagined communities”.

**Imagined Communities**

The Occupy movement took place all over the world, where it was likely that protesters in Oakland, California were not in communication with protesters in London, England. But because of their shared common goal and advertisement of those goals, the protesters all identified under the same banner of “Occupy”. This connection that the different groups shared was mostly made up through a perceived connection in their minds.

Therefore, construction of community also takes place in the mind.

Even without face-to-face interaction, people begin to identify with others who share the same values, experiences. After an initial interaction, one must relate psychologically with another in order for that person to consider them as apart of “we.” And even without face-to-face interaction, people begin to identify with others who share the same key values, aspirations, or experiences in common with themselves (Young 2000).

Benedict Anderson (1983) coined the term “imagined communities” in his book of the same name. He defined this as “all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even those) are imagined (Day 2006:
His studies were in reference to the idea of a “nation” among people but it can also be examined through the lens of religion, gender, sexuality, etc. Anderson qualifies that these are indeed communities despite people’s anonymity, the connections between those who consider themselves members are pictured as affirming a “deep, horizontal comradeship (Anderson 1983: 6).” These communities that lack adjacency are also referred to as communities without propinquity (Webber et al 1964).

Today, communities without propinquity grow rapidly with the increased levels of mobility and communication via cell and internet technologies. Whole communities are linked with one another through social networks and online gaming. But even without a physical connection, these people still interact with one another day in and day out.

Though Anderson’s theory deals with a different scale than the city, its ideas can still be applied. A nation is made up of different classes, genders, races, and generations. Though they may have internal conflicts and struggles, they hold firm to the idea that they are members of one nation (p. 16). There are varying degrees to which someone believes the status of their membership, but it is important because it begins to speak of how a community can be made up of different ethnicities and cultures, representing different norms, values and rules they follow in their lives.

Lifeworlds

A second concept of sharing experience is the concept of the lifeworld (in German, lebenswelt), which is “the ground for all human experience (Husserl 1970: 142).” It is through these lifeworlds that people share in common experiences. Through this intersubjectivity¹, people are prone to interact with one another, and forming a community around these shared experiences.

Habermas interprets the lifeworld through the lens of communication, wherein, the lifeworlds present opportunities for narration (Elliot 2010: 10). When people give narrative presentations of their experiences, it contributes to the communicative action of sharing the same vision. Elliot says that this is noteworthy because “by linking it, [the lifeworld] with narration, Habermas is making clear that a lifeworld, although specific to a social group or community, is not communicatively closed to other communities (p. 11).”

The act of forming a community within one’s mind forces one to identify themselves, ultimately displaying what is different about himself or herself in comparison to someone else. Bentley writes that:

“...this alone can be dangerous in that it begins to foster an ‘us’ versus

¹ Intersubjectivity is a phenomenological term that describes a condition in which a phenomenon is personally experienced, but also by more than one subject.
SEPARATE LIFE WORLDS:
People’s circles of experiences.

SHARED LIFEWORLD: When people begin to share in similar experiences, they begin to overlap lifeworlds.

2.04 | Lifeworld diagrams.

‘them’ mentality. Without physical interaction, people “…can develop to that extent fewer skills in making compromises, coping with ambiguities and so forth. In practice, this all too often breeds a stereotyped, intolerant view of the ‘them’ outside one’s own imagined world.” (Bentley 1999: 155-56)

Conclusion

Both physical and psychological aspects must be addressed for a truly integrated community to be formed. Davidson (2010) observes this in his investigation of social mixing in a gentrified development in London. Here, he states that disjunctured lifeworlds (psychological) contribute to the lack of social cohesion and the built environment (physical) can be prohibitive of interaction between differing groups (p.9).

Each of these community development theories demonstrates that community is not something that is always homogenous and static but that it can have many levels of diversity. It also says that community can exist at all kinds of scales. An element that runs common throughout all of these theories is that there is some sort of social interaction. How does this social interaction manifest itself in the city? And how can it be facilitated and cultivated in order to begin growing a community?
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The community in OTR may not be as strong today as it was once when the population was much more dense. But it still exists and this is due to its qualities as an urban neighborhood.

Because of its density and certain amenities like Findlay Market’s farmers market or public schools near by, neighbors can interact with each other at a constant rate.

While working at Findlay Market during the summer of 2011, I observed the same people worked the market and the same people came back day in and day out. People greeted each other and talked about things other than the purchasing of fruits and vegetables. Vendors and neighbors began acknowledging me as I passed by.

I also noticed this community in a couple interviews I had done with local business owners. Restaurant owners were always approaching one another to try out new dishes and recipes. Store owners would patronize other stores and ask about what their next business plans were. “There definitely is a close knit community between local business owners and their regulars who some times live right above the store,” said one employee at Park/Vine on Main Street. I saw how even if one neighbor was not looking to purchase any goods, they sometimes dropped by to say hello while they were exiting their building or walking by on the sidewalk.
Workers at Over The Rhine Community Housing (OTRCH) offered their own stories community. One interviewee, a college graduate in sociology spoke about living in the low rent buildings that OTRCH provided to the community. “I will see the same faces going in and out of the building. People offer to water my plants in our shared garden. Others will watch their neighbors children while the parents go to work.” She went on to say that though most people look upon certain parts of the neighborhood as unwanted and unsafe, this community she had built up with her neighbors made her feel very secure.

She did comment though on the transformation OTR was experiencing. “The new buildings are good for the neighborhood but they only seem to cater to a specific group. Even I don’t feel like I belong in some of those new establishments.” She then said that as long as 3CDC continued to take into account everyone who lived in the neighborhood, different types of places for different groups can exist. “It is important for there to be places where everyone can go and where they feel welcome to do so.”
By meeting the same people regularly at a common site, such as a bar, relationships are built and social capital is cultivated.
social capital refers to the norms and networks that enable people to act collectively (Woolcock & Deepa 2000: 225). As was seen in the community development theories, trust and reciprocity are very important characteristics of social capital. Lyda J. Hanifan, a superintendent of schools in West Virginia, began writing about social capital in 1916, describing how contact between neighbors would accumulate social capital, satisfying social needs and improving living conditions for the whole community (Hanifan 1916: 130-138). This description is very much about the social interactions of people and the benefits of such interactions. It is through interactions that people begin to develop their communities. Putnam (2000) describes the accumulation of social capital like “pennies dropped into cookie jar.” Each encounter is a tiny investment in social capital (p. 93). Sometimes social capital is formed in formal settings such as union halls or PTA meetings. Social capital is formed in informal settings such as union halls or PTA meetings. Social capital can be broken down into three categories. The first is “bonding,” which consists of relationships between family and close friends. Usually these groups are of similar beliefs and cultures. Second is "bridging," which consists of relationships between different groups. Third is "linking," which consists of relationships between communities. Social capital refers to the norms and networks that enable people to act collectively (Woolcock & Deepa 2000: 225). As was seen in the community development theories, trust and reciprocity are very important characteristics of social capital. Lyda J. Hanifan, a superintendent of schools in West Virginia, began writing about social capital in 1916, describing how contact between neighbors would accumulate social capital, satisfying social needs and improving living conditions for the whole community (Hanifan 1916: 130-138). This description is very much about the social interactions of people and the benefits of such interactions. It is through interactions that people begin to develop their communities. Putnam (2000) describes the accumulation of social capital like “pennies dropped into cookie jar.” Each encounter is a tiny investment in social capital (p. 93). Sometimes social capital is formed in formal settings such as union halls or PTA meetings. Social capital is formed in informal settings such as union halls or PTA meetings. Social capital can be broken down into three categories. The first is “bonding,” which consists of relationships between family and close friends. Usually these groups are of similar beliefs and cultures. Second is “bridging,” which consists of relationships between different groups. Third is “linking,” which consists of relationships between communities.
“bridging”, which is the connection between bonded groups. Often groups involved in bridging again share in similar social circles, lifestyles and classes. Both bonding and bridging are forms of horizontal ties. Lastly there is “linking” which is the vertical ties connecting people of different economic classes and situations (Woolcock 2001: 10). It is through the combination of these different types of social capital that a community becomes integrated of all groups in an environment (p. 11). As Woolcock states,

“_those communities endowed with a diverse stock of social networks and civic associations will be in a stronger position to confront poverty and vulnerability, resolve disputes, and/or take advantage of new opportunities._” (Woolcock & Narayan 2000: 227)

Scholars such as Gans and Suttles did not specifically research social capital but did notice the connections of neighbors in a city and how those connections had established a social network which benefitted everyone in the neighborhood.
Community in urban environments has not always been looked positively upon. Urban sociology of the late 19th and early 20th centuries often associated city life with experiences of isolation, alienation and social disorganization (Day 2006: 3). In his definition of two types of social groupings, Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, Tönnies (1988) also shows distaste for city life. Gemeinschaft is translated as ‘community’ referring to close bonds between individuals who derive meaning from the larger group. Tönnies often referred this concept to the connections of family and village in a rural setting (Day 2006: 4). Gemeinschaft is translated as ‘society or association’, in which relationships are rational based, impersonal and oriented more towards the individual (Tönnies 1988: p. 43).

Chicago School sociologist Wirth (1938) argued that because of the size, density and social diversity, people in urban environments were then put into superficial, anonymous and transitory relationships with one another. That despite being in close proximity, these “side-to-side” relationships are not able to produce meaningful connections (p. 1-24). His observations echo that of Tönnies’, and Wirth goes on to conclude that because cities lack a sense of community, urban social problems including personal disorganization, crime, corruption, delinquency, mental breakdown and suicide are more likely to happen than elsewhere (p. 12).

It was later that a colleague...
of Wirth’s from the Chicago School of Sociology, Robert Park, began to describe the urban environment in terms of a many parts wherein,

“...processes of segregation establish moral distances which make the city a mosaic of little worlds which touch but do not interpenetrate. This makes it possible for individuals to pass quickly and easily from one moral milieu to another, and encourages the fascinating but dangerous experiment of living at the same time in several different contiguous, but otherwise highly separated, worlds.” (Park 1967: 40)

These “little worlds” were spatially defined districts within the city where different social groups would create their own community. These groups were usually made up of immigrants recreating a sense of community they remembered from their homelands. In these specific areas of a city, the groups were able to retain a common sense of race, belief and religion in a new environment (Day 2006: 96). As these neighborhoods took root, they gained names such as “Chinatown” and “Deutschland”, further differentiating them from one another but also qualifying them as actual communities within the city. This was important because it “contained a central truth, that urban contexts were differentiated socially into distinctive types of neighborhoods” (Tonkiss 2005: 15), all containing diverse ways of life, providing a basis for the formation of urban communities where sociologists had not seen any previously (p. 20). These communities were strong demonstrations of the bonding and bridging aspects of social capital.

Park believed that community did not simply mean proximity and personal ties but the organization of formal and informal means (meeting places, institutions, conventions, codes and values) through which “social groups organized and reproduced themselves in particular spaces (p. 15).” His observations of the city provided further foundation for the community development theories discussed in the previous chapter.

**Community Formation in Working Class Neighborhoods**

Gans performed a study of the West End of Boston in the 1950s and the working class groups of Jewish, Italian, Polish and other immigrants.
who resided there. In his study, Gans describes an environment of physical disrepair and economic hardship. And yet, contrary to outside perception, the West End possessed “a well defined social order and combination of class and ethnic influences (Gans 1962: 15)”. For the most part, Gans observed each group kept to themselves in small circles of relatives and peers who shared the same basic class, age, sex and ethnic identity (Day 2006: 102). Some people knew each other for years, if only through saying hello while passing by.

Park’s aspect of living within the same yet separated world is demonstrated in Gans’ writings. But despite each group mostly keeping to themselves, all groups found a sense of *polis*, Karl Marx’s idea of the “in-common” that precedes any actual social activity (Elliott 2010: 39). Because the neighborhood was low-income, life similarities could be found amongst one another, issues such as “illness, job layoffs, and school or discipline problems among children occurred regularly. Alcoholism, mental illness, desertion…and even violence were familiar to everyone (Gans 1962: 15).” This commonality compelled neighbors to readily help each other in the occurrence of an emergency and in doing so, maintained solidarity within the West End. Gans refers to those who cross the boundaries of their small
circles as “missionaries” or “ambassadors” (p. 143). Within this framework of common circumstances, “there was room for a diversity of styles of living, as well as range of incomes, ethnic backgrounds and population sub-groups (Day 2006: 102).”

This observation critiques Wirth’s conclusion in that, yes there are these things but they are not due to the lack of community. In many ways, the issues he observed had brought the community together. It also illustrates Putnam’s (2001) claim that though altruism is not part of the definition of social capital, the amount of social connectedness is a strong predictor of it (p. 48).

A similar example comes from Suttles (1968), who spent several years living and observing the Addams district in Chicago’s West Side. Again, it was found that despite the appearance of a chaotic and decrepit location, the area was subdivided with ordered principles between ethnic divisions of Italians, African-Americans, Puerto Ricans and Mexicans. There the streets acted as communication networks for rumors, gossip and information about the neighborhood (p. 9). This common moral order kept from alienating anyone and creating distrust. It allowed residents to remain heavily engrossed in their local neighborhood as a separate and rather distinct moral world.

“Despite the complexity of its internal boundaries and subdivisions, the attributes of localism, moral integration, shared knowledge and personalized trust would seem amply to qualify the Addams district as an integrated community.” (Day 2006: 109)

According to both of these sociological studies, an integrated community does not mean that all peoples must have strong personal ties with one another, the idea of Gemeinschaft. Through association and shared experiences, Gesellschaft, a community can be formed. The crucial factor to creating a community of separate worlds is the connectivity between them, bridging, giving the ability for people bleed into other groups, becoming influenced by this different culture and also leaving their mark.

There was room for a diversity of styles of living.
Conclusion

The working class studies display that multiple groups can live together in a neighborhood. Even though they may keep to themselves, there can also exist "ambassadors" from each group who move in between "little worlds". Some would say that differentiation is what makes a city. But also that for different groups to live among one another, there must be a place for them to both feel comfortable interacting with one another.

Young (1990) describes what she believes to be the "four virtues of normative city life": (a) social differentiation without exclusion, (b) variety of social groups, (c) eroticism in the sense of exposure and attraction to surprising encounters, and (d) publicity in terms of public space open to all (p.112). In the previous two examples it can be seen that both neighborhoods fulfilled these virtues, causing Gans to conclude that even though the West End of Boston was a "run-down area of people struggling with problems of low income, poor education, and related difficulties... it was by and large a good place to live (Gans 1962: 16)."

The last virtue, public space for all, is very important. Any credible account of community needs a public space (Young 2000: 213). For Suttles, he observed this on the streets and corner stores. Gans saw this in streets as well, on stoops and alleys. Young underlines this notion by stating, "A public space is one which anyone has access, a space of openness and exposure. Such spaces importantly
contribute to democratic inclusions because they bring differently positioned strangers into one another's presence. They make concrete the fact that people of differing tastes, interests, needs, and life circumstances dwell together in a city.” (Young 2000: 214)

There are many factors to consider when planning an inclusive community in an urban environment. Though times of urban revitalization bring together different groups of people, sometimes against their wishes, there are strategies for providing public spaces that are inviting to everyone in the neighborhood. It is through these public spaces that an integrated community can be developed.

It is important then to examine why people approach certain spaces and do not feel welcome at others. Previously, Davidson (2010) spoke about specific kinds physical environments affecting the inclusion in a neighborhood of London. What are some attributes of an urban environment that do provide space people feel welcome to interact in?
works cited


Findlay Market has been a staple of Over The Rhine since the 1852. It is the last of the public markets in Cincinnati and is a National Historic Place. It also has served as a meeting place for everyone in the neighborhood and many who travel from areas outside of the city core. Week in and week out it attracts crowds that are socially, economically, racially and ethnically diverse. This is not only because it offers sometime essential, food, to the neighborhood, but because it offers a place where people feel comfortable gathering.

Local fruits and vegetables sit along side artisan waffles which share space with Asian street food. This diversity is what makes the market unique.

How can this spirit of diversity and community be spread across the neighborhood? Can space provide something similar to the atmosphere of Findlay without simply replicating its formula?

Similar to Findlay, there exists a diner in OTR called Tucker’s that former Cincinnati councilman Jim Tarbel calls “...the epitome of a melting pot.” The poor and homeless who frequent the Franciscan church around the corner will eat there. But so will the wealthy and even the mayor. Young college students travel from the local arts college. Race doesn’t matter. “It’s the people,” that are important owner Joe Tucker confessed in an interview. Others have talked about
Mr. Tucker’s good nature, often letting customers pay through credit, though he himself may be struggling for money.

Going back to the social worker at OTRCH, she also mentioned Tucker’s as a place of meeting. “Everyone feels invited and welcome to that place. It’s because they cater to everyone and everyone is treated with respect.”

For the project I hope to invoke these qualities though that may prove to be difficult because it is people, like Joe Tucker, who keep neighbors coming back. But there are ways that spaces and buildings can present themselves as welcoming and ways they can be defensive.
Sidewalk cafés facilitate a basic interaction between humans, that of people watching.
Sociologists have explored the urban environment many times over, with influential pieces such as those from Mumford (1938), The Chicago School, or Gans (1962) and Suttles’ (1968) in-depth studies of city slums. Mumford sums it up in his article, the aptly named, “What Is a City?”:

“The city, as one finds it in history, is the point of maximum concentration for the power and culture of a community. It is the place where the diffused rays of many separate beams of life fall into focus, with gains in both social effectiveness and significance. The city is the form and symbol of an integrated social relationship: it is the seat of the temple, the market, the hall of justice, the academy of learning… here is where human experience is transformed into viable signs, symbols, patterns of conduct, systems of order.” (Mumford 1938)

Clearly, a city is a complex organism, made up of many different elements that effect its spatial and social environment. Urban theorists have been attempting to determine what certain elements of the built world impact how an urban environment becomes successful, the most well known of these studies being by Jacobs in 1961. Despite cities changing shapes and appearances over time, they have always remained as centers of concentration for people, politics and communication. One of the most important aspects urban theorists list is the aspect of diversity.
within the urban environment. Jacobs states, “in our American cities, we need all kinds of diversity, intricately mingled in mutual support (Jacobs 2961: 150).” This diversity extends itself to people, cultures, ideas and uses. As was seen in the case studies of Gans and Suttles, an exposure of culture and ethnicity outside of one’s own familiarity fosters a larger sense of community (Woolcock & Deepa 2000). Without this exposure, a fostering of the idea of the “other” becomes much more dangerous in that one begins to construct psychological boundaries. This can be detrimental for the construction of community.

Aside from the diversity of people, the mixture of use is essential to urban life. Scenes of suburban areas in which zoning laws require division of use to specific areas display how a homogenous environment can close off a community. Creating spaces of mixture, or “hybridity” allow for the potential for unpredictable events to occur, “an infinite number of superimposed and unpredictable activities (Koolhaas 1996: 1254).” By providing this potential, the city gains a vitality and richness.

The intensification of program (Ellin 2006: 20) in a district, aside from providing economic effects, brings different types of users to a space at different times of the day, week and year. This again makes the place more dynamic. And by bringing in different types of users, the fostering of a community can begin.

Connectivity inherently comes with the notion of diversity because it...
4.03 | By providing a mix of program, different users are drawn to the same space, resulting in interaction.

**Intensification of program makes the space dynamic.**

is the way that the mixtures are linked together, what facilitates movement between functions. Lynch (1960) argues that the city is made of a network made up of urban nodes, paths, districts, landmarks and edges (p. 30). Paths are what connect the nodes of activity and this idea is precisely what needs to happen within a city in order for it to function with a mixture of functions (p. 47). In the city, these connections are its sidewalks and streets. Suttles (1968) comments on this, observing how on the streets of West Side Chicago, different ethnic group connected with each other. Hispanic children learned dances of the African-American children and clothing styles of different cultures influenced one another (p.70-71).

Jacobs describes in depth the sidewalks of a city and how creating strong connections can have residual positive effects. One of the first effects is safety. Through allowing people to actively populate the streets of a neighborhood, the perception of safety is constructed within the minds of the residents. Without active participants, barbarism and fear of the street are only allowed to grow (1961: 33). In a city that is made up of more strangers than acquaintances (p. 30), the presence of people matters, whether one sees others as threats or potential allies (Bentley 1999: 156).

In one section of her book, Jacobs talks with Frank Havey, director
of the North End Union housing settlement in Boston. He states that in his twenty-eight years of living in the area, cases of rape, mugging and molestation were always thwarted by passers-by, shopkeepers and those looking from windows (Jacobs 1961: 33). In a student survey conducted by Canada’s Carleton University, “isolation or few people around” was one of the four most cited reasons for feeling unsafe on campus. No doubt this sentiment can be echoed across many other university campuses. It is this almost unconscious network of volunteers who control the standards of the street by actively interacting with it (Bentley 1999: 165).

This is not to say that those of a similar culture and group should inhabit a sidewalk. In fact, Jacobs states that in areas of middle-income projects, where developers attempted to gate a community with in the city, crime was more likely to happen because the area was targeted (Jacobs 1961: 32). The separation heightened the targeting. Returning to the previous element of a city, diversity of a street makes the area safer.

“Some of the safest sidewalks in New York City, for example, at any time of day or night, are those along which poor people or minority groups live. And some of the most dangerous are in streets occupied by the same kinds of people.” (p. 31)

Sidewalks also contribute to the creation of community through interaction and engagement. If people are using the sidewalks, the potential for interaction is heightened. Gehl (1986) calls these unpredictable interactions “resultant activities” because they usually take place when one is under going one activity (shopping, jogging, eating) and spontaneously evolve into another activity (meeting an acquaintance, walking into another storefront) (p. 5). And even if these people are not intimately involved with each other, a nod of recognition every so often is enough to build social capital. The more quick informal social interactions one has with their neighborhood, more is laid to the foundation of the community because these opportunities
MARKETS:
Markets in different cultures, like a Chinese market or an Arab souk, embody these strategies.

INTERACTION:
A narrow circulation space gives more potential for interacting with people.

INTERFACE:
Each possesses a zone between the public and private to engage the customer.

ENCLOSURE:
Surrounding buildings and openings allow for connection from the street to residents in the buildings.

4.04 | Market places around the world show display in one area the different elements of an inclusive urban environment.
can lead to contact at higher levels of intimacy, maintaining already
established contacts and will become a source of information about the social
world outside (p. 17).

The visual of people on the street is also important for the perception
of community. This symbolic dimension of community construction is a
representation of the imagined community theory (Bentley 1999: 154).
Urban environments that are full of people become a great resource for this.
One example of an activity in which people are actively cultivating this
symbolic dimension is during people watching (p. 155). “Generally speaking,
one does not want to get involved with anybody passing by. People mainly
come to see the spectacle in front of their eyes (Oosterman 1993: 299).” The
physical presence of people, when being viewed, allows a place to develop
an identity of its users. This identity is what people connect with when
constructing a community in their minds.

The idea of legibility and access is the next element for a more
integrated urban community. Lynch defines legibility of the cityscape as
the “ease with which its parts can be recognized and can be organized into
a coherent pattern (Lynch 1960: 2).” It is important for people in the city
to be able to read and understand what nodes they can access and how they
The different layers from public to private. Nan Ellin describes this movement between spaces as “porosity” (Ellin 2006: 62). There are different types of porosity, Ellin points out. These can be visual (in which one is able to experience a space but not move into it), experiential (gaining access through invitation, choice or chance), temporal (when a place transforms over time, like a parking lot becoming a farmers market) and functional (the inflection of public and private space through shop windows, arcades or outdoor seating) (p. 70-75). Gehl describes the last porosity as the “soft interface”, where privacy is controlled but the transition space can be used to inform those on the outside of what is inside and vice versa (Gehl 1977: 5). It can also be used to for interaction between outside and inside. By providing legible ways of access through thresholds, people on the sidewalk become engaged with the urban environment.

Sidewalks contribute to the creation of community through interaction and engagement.

The gated community is the antithesis of this concept. In creating a community closed off to the outside, division, physically and psychologically, takes place. People are physically closed off. This may create a perception of safety for those
living within the community but it never amounts to anything more because they are limited to what is within the walls of the neighborhood.

The cultivation of an authentic culture again deals with an urban neighborhood’s identity. Through the cultivation of a distinct identity, people can identify with the environment as well as contribute to the culture, making them feel apart of the community of the neighborhood. This approach can be described as “everyday urbanism” (Ellin 2006: 104) that “celebrates the potential for inventiveness within the ordinary and is thereby genuinely of its moment” (Berke 1997: 226). A developing everyday urbanism seeks inspiration from the local culture and environment.

This does not always mean to follow a certain aesthetic of a city, at the risk of producing a “ themed” environment (Ellin 2006: 107). Such places, as seen in theme parks, shopping malls and large development neighborhoods. One example is the town of Celebration, Florida, which, under the plan of recreating a nostalgic town, has fallen under a “problem of dull homogeneity” (Sorkin 1998). This produces an “unreal” effect on the environment and those living within it. Ellin states what the opposite effect entails:

“Becoming real signals a transformation from isolation to integration, from numbness to feeling, from boredom to excitement, and from complacency to engagement.” (Ellin 2006: 109)
All of those transformations, when involving the people of an environment, contribute to the construction of a community.

Lastly, the city needs a vulnerability, “a willingness to relinquish control, to let things happen and to play” (p. 113). Cities are perpetually changing their appearance, their fabric and their users. This change can be embraced through design rather than resisted, making the city a more dynamic and improvisational environment (p. 120).

In the description for OMA’s Parc de la Villette competition entry, Koolhaas describes this as “architectural specificity with programmatic indeterminacy” (Koolhaas 1996: 921). By having the potential for unpredictable activities with which different people of different values may want to pursue (Bentley 1999: 150), the city becomes a place of acceptance and inclusion.

All of these elements address the creation of a vibrant and lively city environment. But they also address in different ways the construction of community by they ways each element creates the potential for interaction of people and the environment and people with other people. This integral urbanism, along with the theories of community creation, will provide a foundation for the methodology of this thesis’ project.
works cited


There's something to be said about sidewalk seating. One can be separate from the street and apart of it simultaneously. One night I was at a bar on Vine Street in OTR. I walked outside to make a phone call and sat in the seating outside. The area was empty. After my phone call, two gentlemen were walking by, coming from the Kroger grocery store up the street. They were headed to the swatch of housing a couple lots down from the bar.

“Will you look at this?” said one to the other. “This place used to be such a shit hole.” I think it was my presence outside that had drawn their attentions. I asked them had they never seen this before? And they said they had just disregarded it. I then asked what they thought of the changes to the neighborhood, assuming they knew what OTR was like before since the one gentleman had mentioned it. “Yeah, it’s nice. I what they’ve done to clean up the area. Crimes been down.” This was encouraging to hear that they did not feel that all of this was a threat but that they saw it as progress they could be apart of.

I also saw this as reinforcement that the presence of people can make people feel more comfortable in interacting with one another. My presence being outside of the bar had made the gentlemen stop and take notice. But previously they had ignored it because maybe it wasn’t a place they
Another story of interaction in a public place comes from someone I know who lives in newly renovated apartments across from the grocery store on Vine Street. In doing some research about the site, I asked what he felt about the grocery store. The store itself was one of the worst Kroger in the city. It was dark, small and did not provide as much as other stores did. But he said that everyone went there because it was so convenient. He also mentioned, without me telling him about my thesis, that he frequented many places south of his home and knew most of the faces down there but the grocery store was the only place he saw other people outside of his social circle. He was able to recognize faces each time he went but was not totally acquainted with them.

Though this may seem that they are not creating community, the grocery store provides a common space where everyone in the neighborhood need to go, similar to Findlay Market. This potential is very important and can be built upon in. If people are going to a place together already, there are only a few more places to go before they are engaged with one another.
Every neighborhood needs a grocery to sustain residents, especially if the residents do not have adequate methods of transportation to reach a grocery store outside of their neighborhood. A grocery store also provides grounds for the neighborhood to establish community ties. In the book *A Pattern Language*, Christopher Alexander states that “a neighborhood ought to support a grocery store for the sake of its own social cohesion.”

This is facilitated through interactions between residents, developing social capital in the neighborhood. Social capital refers to the norms and networks that enable a group of people to act collectively. It is heavily based on trust and reciprocity between everyone in the group. And this back and forth is developed through the interactions that happen within a neighborhood.

By cultivating social capital, a truly integrated community can be achieved, where in groups divided across culture, economics and social status can be connected.

This is where the programming the grocery store becomes very important. The relationships between activities and spaces needs to be fluid, especially near areas where people can linger and speak with each other.

Nan Ellin refers to this as “functional porosity.” This is where functions are allowed to bleed into one another, intensifying program and as a result, intensifying the interaction between different users. Not only does
this mean functions flowing into one another within the store but also facilitating interaction with the city sidewalk and street.

The modern grocery store is a collection of many different functions that used to be housed separately. The combination of all them under one roof was seen as a convenience. But by doing so, it has replaced the street, which was historically the public meeting place of the neighborhood.

Urban grocery stores have been a staple of cities and are becoming of more interest as people become more interested in living in city’s urban cores. These types of stores differ from the suburban model. They must adapt to their surroundings, engage the street and act as a community center for the neighborhood.

Goals of this urban grocery store are specific to establishing community within the Over The Rhine neighborhood:

1) Facilitating interaction between customers through blending of functions and providing interaction spaces such as cafés or delis.

2) Engaging the street to activate interaction between the public and private.

3) Providing an inviting place for all residents of Over The Rhine to purchase quality food and goods.

4) Offering education courses that teach residents about healthy food preparation, choices and cooking classes.

5) Establishing a public space for the neighborhood to use and interact with.
meeting place
produce
deli
bakery
dairy
dry goods
restrooms
alcohol & liquor
employee spaces
check out
café
learning center
public space
parking lot

grocery store
The **meeting place** will be the first space customers enter before going off to the grocery store, café or learning center. It serves as the main connector. The **produce section** will provide fresh fruits and vegetables for the neighborhood, some in attractive displays and some being refrigerated. This section will be open and fluid in circulation as opposed to the current small, on the wall section that exists now. The **deli** will serve fresh cut meats and cheeses, with interaction happening between the deli specialist and the customer. The section will also connect with the **café** to provide freshly made sandwiches and other foods. Bread will be provided by the **bakery**.

Along with producing for the deli, the bakery will also provide fresh baked goods for the consumer. **Dry goods** consist of a number of aisles of non-perishable and packaged foods. It may consist of other home goods as well. **Restrooms** will serve the major customer areas of dry good groceries, the meeting place, café and learning center.

The **alcohol and liquor store** will provide such services and will be placed within the market, away from the exterior,
for security. The **employee spaces** will house offices and a lounge area for employees, as well as back of house functions. It should be adjacent to most other areas for easy access. The **learning center** will house classrooms for education courses. These courses will address healthy food choices, food preparation and cooking. By providing these courses, the neighborhood will have the potential to become healthier and also interact with one another in the classes under a common interest.

The **café** is a major component of community building in Over The Rhine. It will provide a space that is different than home or work, a place for customers to socialize, read and dwell, what Ray Oldenburg refers to as a person’s “third place.” It will need to be inviting to the neighborhood as well as engage the street to activate the vitality of the street and pedestrians walking by. **Check out** will be the major end hub for all purchase areas. It can also serve as a buffer at the exit to move customers towards the entrance. **Public space** will be landscaped and available for gathering for the whole neighborhood.
STREET

spatial relationships

café

check out
deli

restaurant

alcohol

dairy

produce

dry goods

meeting place

public gathering space

Spatial relationships
learning center

employee

restrooms

parking

STREET
precedents
Today, even large stores such as Wal-mart and Target are experimenting with smaller scale stores that are embedded in the urban fabric as opposed to their usual placement of a large box in a field.

These stores do not provide all the amenities of the original stores but cater to smaller immediate needs such as fresh produce.

By positioning smaller stores in urban cities, Wal-mart Expresses are beginning to take cues from established grocery stores in larger cities such as New York, where the grocery stores have to be small, because of the city’s density, and have to engage the street in order to bring in customers.

The way these grocery stores present themselves to the sidewalk is very important. Sometimes they layout bulk produce as if they were a street vendor, providing a colorful and attractive invitation to the store. Other times, they provide highly visible interiors as invitations.

Many grocery stores, with Whole Foods at the forefront, have been providing for their audiences third places so that customers stay in their stores. This is a business model but also acts as a place for building community within a neighborhood.
meeting place
produce
deli
bakery
dairy
dry goods
& refrigerated
restrooms
alcohol & liquor
café
employee spaces
learning center
check out
public space
parking
To the left are seven qualities that will be contained in the grocery store. They have been used to categorize each area.

Community refers to any space that facilitate interaction between neighbors. Of course this should be expected from the grocery store as a whole but these specific areas are programmed to do so.

Urban refers to that spaces relationship with the surrounding area and the street/sidewalk.

Engaging refers to how the space engages the audience into interacting with it.

Health means the space needs to convey a sense of healthiness and well being with the audience through nutrition.

Productive refers to areas that customers can get in and out without being delayed.

Open is the quality of a space where it holds the potential to blend into another space. Closed is the opposite of this, for privacy or security reasons.
site analysis
The site of the project is in the heart of the Over the Rhine (OTR) neighborhood in Cincinnati, Ohio. It is situated between the main streets of Vine and Walnut Streets at east and west, respectively, and between the cross streets of 15th and 14th Streets to the north and south, respectively.

Currently, the site is the location of a Kroger grocery store at 1420 Vine Street. Its presence on the street differs from the typical OTR building context, as it is pulled away from the sidewalk to accommodate a small parking lot. The historical building context is of dense, closely located buildings that abut right up to the sidewalk.

The west side of the site that faces Walnut Street is the location of a parking lot in the front and empty lot in the back. At the moment, it usually serves no function as the lot is private property and restricts trespassers.

The Kroger also has a fenced parking lot for employees that is located off of 15th Street.
Housing types are very important to take note of if one is looking to explore a mixed community within the neighborhood. The development organization 3CDC owns many of the buildings and plots of land in Over The Rhine. Their goal is to revitalize the area through the development of market-rate housing and retail opportunities. So far, most of their completed projects are located on Vine Street. They also have landbanked other buildings for future use.

Low income housing, such as the ones provided by Over The Rhine Community Housing and St. Francis Seraph, are also apart of the OTR neighborhood. OTRCH owns and operates three building on Vine.

Though Vine Street has a good amount of residential above retail spaces, Walnut Street is almost all residential apartments. Some are market-rate and some are low income housing, but none of them are as new as the developments on Vine Street. 3CDC owns a smaller portion of buildings on Walnut Street.
OTR has been losing building density over time for the past half century. This was due to a number of factors like no investment in the area, residents moving out and building neglect. There was also the need for more parking areas as the automobile became more prevalent.

There are multiple surface parking lots off of Vine Street. Most of them are private lots for various business and residential buildings, though there are a couple that are accessible to the public, including the small lot in front of the Kroger.

Green space and empty lots go together because certain empty lots will end up growing vegetation on its own when left unattended. Other lots are concrete and sometimes used for parking. There are a few actual manicured green park spaces off of Vine. The largest green space, Washington Park, is located two blocks to the west.

Another feature of OTR is the private courtyard or enclave. These spaces are accessed through the narrow opening between buildings. The enclave will then be found in the rear of the building.
First, the project will consist of mixed-use program as was discovered in chapter 4 to be effective in creating a dynamic space of interaction. Along with the grocery store being a major focal point, the site will contain a mix of market rate and low income apartments. There will also be a space accessible by the public. This will house a small café.

It is important that the public spaces be inviting for everyone in the neighborhood. The appearance and aesthetics can dictate this. It will also be crucial to display a presence of people. Not only does this encourage interaction but it provides a sense of security as well. This is crucial in a neighborhood such as Over The Rhine because, though it has made strides in rehabilitating the area, people are still wary of crime on the streets.

While the presence of people is a goal, it is also important to provide those living in the apartment units with some privacy as they will be in direct contact with the public space and the street, similar to the historic context of the Over The Rhine neighborhood.

The market rate and low income apartments will be of a similar quality and dispersed with each other rather than separated. There will be spaces within the housing component for interaction between neighbors.

Lastly, the grocery store will act as a catalyst of interaction for those not living on the site. Views in and out will be vital for providing a street presence and conveying the environment inside to the neighborhood. One factor that holds a lot of potential for conveying a group presence is that of the learning component. In displaying cooking classes to the public, passersby will be able to witness people working and sitting together, hopefully building upon the imagined community of the neighborhood.
Design Studies

These study models were created by looking to the urban strategies from the research and interpreting them for the site in Over The Rhine. One factor that was important at the time was seeing how people could move through the site and interact with the building.

The next several models explored further the urban strategies. Each focused on one or two of the strategies.
Overlapping of program and views from across different stories.

Multiple functions and creating a large public space.

Another variation of maintaining the street front, overlapping and courtyard.

Another variation of multiple functions and creating a large public space.
Next, the studies and strategies were combined to create a scheme involving a mixed program of a grocery store, apartments, offices and a large rooftop public space. The roof was accessible from the street in order to provide a semi-public space for OTR. The office were located in a block that overlooked the public space and Vine Street. Housing was located along Walnut Street and also incorporated a large sloped parkscape.

While the scheme did incorporate many of the design strategies, the form was too sprawling and irregular to fit in to the context of Vine and Walnut Street. The program elements needed to be more cohesive in order to bring about community.
Scheme 2

This next scheme began to express the same street frontage as Vine Street. The grocery store was located on the first floor. The entrance was expressed with a void rather than a wall to the street to invite the pedestrians in. The second floor incorporated a public courtyard that was surrounded by apartments. There was also a cafe located on the second floor. This allowed both the residents and public to be exposed to each other rather than walled off from each other.

Voids again were used to move throughout the public spaces of the building, with a large one taken out of the Vine Street facade. This void allowed the street to look in and apartment residents be able to look out.

Lastly, a screen system was used for the apartments that allowed residents and the public to be able to no each others presence without invade privacy.
Developing the second scheme further, the Vine Street began to express the different functions of the building. The apartments again were articulated with a screen for the views and also expressed the same modularity as the brick buildings that surrounded it.

Rather than the use of only voids to express public and private, the scheme developed into different layers of transparency. A void expressed the most public, the glass front semi-public, behind a screen semi-private and behind a wall the most private.

This scheme did well to develop the ideas further but the overall building layout still proved to be too closed off. The apartments did share a courtyard but the residents to the north were walled off. And although the grocery store was being used as a community catalyst, there was not much interaction between that function and the residential function.

Going forward, the scheme will better incorporate courtyard that weave through the site. This would allow the unit clusters to share a courtyard that was also connected to the others. The grocery store would be connected to the courtyards through skylights and views. The entrance to the grocery store would again incorporate a space for customers to wait for the bus and converse with their neighbors.

And in the center of the site, a community building housing amenities such as fitness and urban gardening would act as a middle ground for all the residents. By centering the building, it would increase the amount of social capital accumulated for the residents.
site analysis


Tonkiss, Fran. *Space, the City and Social Theory*. Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2005.


