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THAT KIND OF NEIGHBORHOOD:

CREATING, CONTESTING, AND COMMODIFYING PLACE REPUTATION

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: WHAT DOES REPUTATION DO?

In September of 2016, then-presidential candidate Donald Trump participated in his first presidential debate with Hillary Clinton. The debate took place at Hofstra University on Long Island right outside New York City. However, the city that became the focus of President Trump that night was more than 800 miles away: Chicago, Illinois. As he had done on the trail throughout his campaign, Trump talked about Chicago as a war zone:

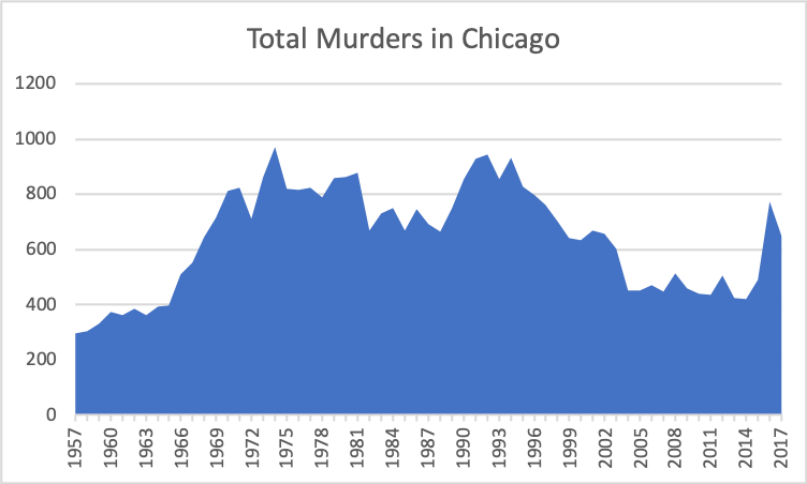
> We have a situation where we have our inner cities—African Americans, Hispanics are living in hell because it's so dangerous. You walk down the street, you get shot. In Chicago, they've had thousands of shootings, thousands since Jan. 1. Thousands of shootings. And I say, where is this? Is this a war-torn country? What are we doing?

Murder rates in Chicago had indeed spiked in 2016 (see Figure 1.1) compared to recent years, although this was after they had gone down precipitously since the 1990s as part of a general decline in violent crime across America (Gramlich 2019). Trump talked about Chicago throughout his campaign and afterwards, using it as a metonym for racialized urban violence (Kotlowitz 2017). As one critic of the president put it, "obsessively name-dropping Chicago isn't about achieving effective inner-city reform; it's Trump pretending to care about the conditions of Black people for the purpose of reassuring his white voting base that he is taking serious steps toward 'fixing' the inherent criminality that so many of them believe persists among African Americans" (Blades 2017). It was also useful to him as a way to tweak Chicagoan President Obama and the Democratic Machine that has run the city since the 1930s, as well as the city whose protests during the 2016 election season compelled him to cancel one of his rallies (Ziezulewicz et al. 2016).

Regardless of the reasoning behind his rhetorical deployment of violence in Chicago, Trump was able to use it because Chicago has a persistent reputation for gun violence that is salient across the United States, as demonstrated by polling (Erbentraut 2014). After Trump got elected, his Justice

Department opposed the consent decree Chicago had accepted after being sued by the American Civil Liberties Union (Sweet et al. 2018) after the murder by police of Laquan McDonald, a seventeen-year-old African American boy shot by police officer Jason Van Dyke in 2014. The consent decree would have limited the Chicago Police Department's stop-and-frisk abilities. Trump believed the consent decree reduced the police's ability to effectively do their jobs, while critics charged that it was necessary in a city marred by a history of police violence, torture, and corruption (Sobol et al. 2018; Taylor 2019). Trump ran on a platform that portrayed Chicago as a dangerous place, and once he got elected, he was able to institute policies that he believed made the city less dangerous, and his critics believed made it more dangerous, particularly for people of color on the South and West Sides of the city. Chicago's reputation for violence among American voters had served President Trump in his campaign, and once he got elected, he was able to institute policies that fed back into that reputation.

Figure 1.1: Number of Murders in Chicago[1]



Concerns over reputation in sociology go back at least as far as Weber's work on status and legitimacy (1922). More specifically defined, a subset of reputation—stigma—has been analyzed famously by Goffman (1963), and Fine (2001, 2012) has pursued a productive research program on the social construction of individual and political reputations. There has been less work done on the social construction of place reputation, though, and this is where my work comes in. People can have reputations, *but so can places*. More to the point, just as reputations are consequential in the lives of individuals, they are also consequential in the lives of places, and of the people who live in those

[1] This data comes from an article in the Chicago Tribune (Bentle et al. 2018) about the history of homicides in Chicago. In the portion of the article at the end where they make the data available for download, they explain:

> Homicide figures for 1958 through 2015 were obtained from the Chicago Police Department via a Freedom of Information Act request returned Jan. 10, 2018. The number of homicides could be different than data kept by the *Chicago Tribune* breaking news desk. Police Department statistics do not include slayings on area expressways, police-involved shootings or other homicides in which a person was killed in self-defense or their deaths were still being investigated. Homicide rates were calculated using U.S. Census Bureau figures. For each decade through 2000, the city population used to calculate the rate was the same, as the census only released population figures every 10 years. Since 2001 yearly population estimates were used. Because 2017 population estimates are not yet available, the 2016 population figure was used for the 2017 rate.

places. This dissertation is about the roots and consequences of place reputation in three urban neighborhoods.

I define place reputation as a widespread, collective sense of what people think they know about a specific place based on the circulation of ideas, descriptions, accusations, and insinuations about that location. Functionally, it serves as a heuristic, or shortcut, people use to make decisions when they have incomplete information about a place. In this dissertation, I apply the concept of place reputation to neighborhoods. We might think about the life of a neighborhood running along two tracks. On the first track is what we might say "really happens" in a neighborhood on a day-to-day basis. Often, this sort of information can be captured, however imperfectly, with descriptive statistics. How many children in the neighborhood live below the poverty line? What is the racial composition of the neighborhood? How many murders per capita are there in the neighborhood? How many grocery stores are in a neighborhood? The answers to these questions can all be measured and compared against other neighborhoods, so we know something about what happens in this particular place and how it is the same or different from other places in the same city or in other cities.

On the second track, though, is what people *think* happens in a neighborhood. While it may not be supported by statistics, it is no less consequential. What people *think* happens in a neighborhood is harder to measure. Instead of asking how many children live below the poverty line, we might ask if a neighborhood transfers stigma to a child at school. Instead of asking what the racial composition of the neighborhood is, we might ask who is understood to symbolically "own" the neighborhood. Instead of asking how many murders per capita there are in a neighborhood, we might ask whether people think the neighborhood is violent or dangerous. Instead of asking how

many grocery stores are in a neighborhood, we might ask what is keeping more stores from opening up. These questions belong to the realm of place reputation (Brown-Saracino and Parker 2017).

What Reputation Is (and Is Not)

Given the analytical importance of the category of "place reputation" for the rest of this dissertation, it is useful at the outset to more sharply define it by way of distinguishing it from two related but distinct topics: stereotype and rumor. I have previously defined reputation as a heuristic people use in order to make decisions when faced with incomplete information about something. While this is an adequate description of what reputation does for us, it could equally apply to stereotype and rumor.[2] Indeed, these categories do interact with and influence each other, and they are similar in important ways. Specifically, what these categories have in common is that they are ways of knowing that are distinct from actual experience with the object at hand. Each of them is some epistemological distance away from a way of knowing based on experience, or "having been there." That said, they are analytically distinct in important ways. I argue that what makes reputation

[2] Place reputation is also distinct from place narrative, place identity, and place branding, as established elsewhere (Brown-Saracino and Parker 2017). Very briefly, while place reputation is "a collective understanding about a place based on stories people out in the world tell about it" (Brown-Saracino and Parker 2017: 841), place narrative is a story people in a place tell themselves about it, place identity is a self-understanding that people in a place have, and place branding is a coordinated attempt to define the image of a place by interested actors looking to capitalize on how it is perceived. Unlike narrative and identity, reputation is about what people out in the world, as opposed to within the neighborhood, think of a place. Unlike branding, reputation is the received understanding of a place by outsiders, not the attempt to influence that understanding by place. That said, my data draws from neighborhood insiders discussing their understanding of their neighborhood's reputation, and sometimes their neighborhood narratives, neighborhood identities, and participation in neighborhood branding intermingle in their accounts of their neighborhood's reputation. That said, they are still ideal people to discuss neighborhood reputation, as discussed in the introduction, because their livelihood depends on their ability to read the reputation of their neighborhood, making them much more sensitive to it than any single outsider. Their utility as respondents about reputation—something that is categorically constructed outside themselves—is rooted in their ability to understand the "looking glass" nature of their neighborhoods (Cooley 1902; Sampson 2012) and attempt to imagine the *verstehen* (Weber 1922) of others.

unique from stereotype and rumor comes down to questions of evidentiary basis and theoretical falsifiability (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1: Ways of Knowing a Place Distinct from Experience

Concept	Audience?	Evidence?	Falsifiable?
Reputation	External	Specific	No
Stereotype	External	Categorical	No
Rumor	External	Specific	Yes

Stereotype

Stereotype differs from reputation in terms of its evidentiary basis. Whereas reputation is based on evidence specific to a place, stereotype is based on membership in a larger category. We might think about the difference between reputation and stereotype in terms of epistemological distance from experience, with reputation a step removed, and stereotype two steps removed. Think of it this way: we can know Woodlawn, an African American neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago with a reputation for violence, because we have spent time in Woodlawn and have walked its streets and spoken to residents there and shopped at stores there. This is a kind of knowing based on experience.[3] Yet, without ever visiting the South Side of Chicago, we can also feel like we know Woodlawn not because we have ever been there, but because we have read what people say about it, or because friends have told us about it, or because we have seen reports on television about it. This is a kind of knowing based on reputation. Finally, we can feel like we know Woodlawn because

[3] Of course, "experience" is a complicated category. Those who argue against "digital dualism" (Jurgenson 2011), for example, might claim that it is unreasonable to distinguish between physical experience in a space and digital experience there—like that obtained through Instagram photos, Twitter posts, or Google Street View—as physical and digital experiences are increasingly part of the same way we see the world. While taking this criticism seriously—and acknowledging that because of it different ways of knowing sometimes bleed into each other—I make the simple point that some knowledge is based on experience closer to the object in question than others, and that stereotype is typically based on assigning an object a value because of its membership in a group rather than based on actual experience—however one defines it—of that object.

Woodlawn is a Black neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago, and this is a socially relevant category that suggests particular things to particular people—although not everyone receives the same reputational information, and it can be stratified along levels of race, class, gender, and other dimensions—about its levels of poverty, safety, or disorder. This is a kind of knowing based on stereotype. Whereas reputation depends on second-hand knowledge about a place, stereotype requires no specific knowledge—only an ability to put a place in a larger category and judge it based on its membership within that larger category. An example of a neighborhood stereotype—particularly among white people— that previous research has documented would be that Black neighborhoods are violent (Taub et al. 1984; Quillian and Pager 2001). A reputation, on the other hand, would be that a specific Black neighborhood is dangerous based on its specific history and characteristics. Stereotypes can obviously influence reputations, but they are analytically distinct. In terms of consequential action, sometimes it does not matter whether someone is relying on a reputation or a stereotype as ultimately they are making decisions based on second-hand information in either case. However, it should be noted that stereotype has a particularly negative valence, to the point that a well-meaning person might consciously attempt to avoid making decisions based on stereotypes while feeling no such compunction about making decisions based on reputation.

Rumor[4]

There is a vast literature on rumor across the social sciences that helps us to distinguish between it and reputation.[5] Peterson and Gist (1951) define rumor as "an unverified account or explanation of events, circulating from person to person and pertaining to an object, event, or issue of public concern" (159). Fine (2005) offers "the defining feature of rumor as information that is suspect because of its uncertain and unauthorized origins within a social system" (1). Psychologists Allport and Postman (1947) define rumor as "a specific (or topical) proposition for belief, passed along from person to person, usually by word of mouth, without secure standards of evidence being present" (ix). They then clarify that "our definition calls attention to the fact that rumor is ordinarily specific and topical, and for that reason generally of only temporary interest. Rumors come and go; sometimes the same ones recur. But almost always they deal with events or with personalities" (ix). Fine says much the same thing, albeit more parsimoniously, when he says rumor "can be expressed as a simple claim of fact" (2). Similarly, Sunstein (2009) "take[s] the term to refer roughly to claims of fact—about people, groups, events, and institutions—that have not been shown to be true, but that move from one person to another, and hence have credibility not because direct evidence is known to support them, but because other people seem to believe them" (6). This distinguishes

[4] For an interesting discussion about the distinction between rumor and gossip, see Clark (2006:415–18). Essentially, Clark argues that "rumor concerns matters more in a public sphere, while gossip relates more to the private." Given the public nature of place reputation—and its absolute assumption of, and indeed dependence on, an audience, in discussing the differences between reputation and related social categories, I address rumor and not gossip. That said, the salient differences gossip has with reputation are indeed the same as those of rumor.

[5] While for the purposes of this discussion, it is most important to concentrate on the basic similarities in understandings of rumor across disciplines—particularly psychology, sociology, and the law—there are important debates. For discussion of some of these differences—including whether we should think of a rumor as an object or a collective process—see Shibutani (1966: 1–29) and Rosnow and Fine 1976: 50–62).

rumor from reputation, which is not a claim of fact but a claim of fundamental judgment—not something that happened, but how something *is*.

While people who live or work in a place can be aware of both, reputation and rumor are both most socially consequential for those on the outside without experiential knowledge. Shibutani (1966) suggests that rumors are responses to situations where "news" about a situation is inadequate to the psychic needs of people. Rumors are rooted in a lack of definitive knowledge—Peterson and Gist hold that spontaneous rumors can "be considered the product of collective efforts to interpret a problematic situation, when the public views the situation affectively and when authoritative information is lacking" (159). Moreover, rumor and reputation often come from the same social sources and have the same social outcome: to work through commonplace understandings about a place that are deeply rooted in historically contingent conflicts, alliances, and anxieties.

In discussing race-based rumors in the American South in the 1940s, for example, Odum (1943) notes how "the flood of rumors and stories reflected the whole drama of regional and racial crisis" and that "nearly the entire catalogue tended to recapitulate the historical points of tension and experience of the South since the Civil War" (54). Moreover, both can be weaponized by those looking to achieve particular political ends, or consciously manipulated by actors looking to either encourage or discourage people from coming to a neighborhood—boosterish real estate agents and territorial gang leaders can use them for opposite ends. Both reputation and rumor are socially emergent based on a number of causes. Both reputation and rumor are about specific places, as opposed to types of places.

The difference between reputation and rumor comes down to theoretical falsifiability. A rumor can, ostensibly, be proven or disproven, whereas a reputation cannot. For example, a person

who is the subject of a negative rumor can have it factually disproven but still have a bad reputation. This is because a rumor concerns itself with facts about a social object—in this dissertation, it will be about places, but rumors can attach to people, events, or any other social objects—whereas a reputation concerns itself with a judgment.

An example is useful to illustrate the distinction. There can be a rumor that a man was shot in a neighborhood, and this, as a "simple claim of fact" can be shown to be true or false. However, if there is a reputation that a place is dangerous, it is not necessarily true that demonstrating some fact about it—say, that the murder rate is actually lower than in other neighborhoods—will diminish this reputation. Saying somewhere has a reputation for being dangerous is not a claim of fact, but an attribution of ontological status. Rumors might *contribute* to a reputation, but the difference remains that a rumor is a statement of (ostensible) fact whereas a reputation is a statement of judgment. So then, the difference ultimately comes down to the issue that one can argue about facts, but it is more difficult to argue about judgment. There are important similarities, as one might say the same thing about reputation that Allport and Postman say about rumor, namely that "in order to decide whether we are listening to information or to rumor we must judge the closeness or remoteness of the evidence upon which the report rests In rumor the source of evidence has grown dim" (x). Still, we must remember that a rumor can be flatly wrong; a reputation cannot. It can be more or less accurate, but the nature of its claim—that a place *is* a certain way—makes reputation more difficult to "disprove" than a rumor, at least theoretically, as the presentation of a contradictory fact is not sufficient to take down a reputation.

Reputation helps people make decisions, even when they have incomplete information about a subject, which is most of the time. Donald Trump rhetorically deploying Chicago's reputation as a dangerous place was consequential because of this reality. In terms of what the Trump story teaches

us about place reputation, it is a reminder that reputation (1) has material consequences (2) whether or not the reputation is "true," and (3) that it comes from diffuse sources, making it difficult to disprove.

Material Consequences

Put simply, reputation is of great importance in our lives, across a range of dimensions. Podolny (1993), for example, demonstrates that investment banks underwriting corporate securities use status as a signal when faced with inadequate information about the quality of a good in what he calls "a status-based model of market competition." From a different strand of the organization literature, Zuckerman (1999) demonstrates that in markets mediated by critics—in his example, stocks—it is disadvantageous not to conform to a particular category because it leads to lack of coverage by the mediators, which can lead to confusion over identity. Neighborhoods are not corporate securities or stocks, of course, but the same processes apply in what we might call "a status-based model of neighborhood competition." People have a limited amount of information about a city, so they rely on status signals—place reputation—in order to make decisions about what neighborhoods to "invest" in, whether that means buying a house, going to a bar, or opening a business. Moreover, people make sense of the world through categories, so if a neighborhood can be understood as a "type"—the hip neighborhood, the Mexican neighborhood, the gay neighborhood—then it helps funnel people interested in that type toward it efficiently. Of course, if this type is negative—the dangerous neighborhood, for example—it efficiently funnels people away.

To go back to the example I started with, Mayor Rahm Emanuel responded in material ways to Donald Trump's barbs about Chicago's violence problem, as he knew these comments could lead to negative consequences for his city's tourism industry and potentially for his political career. He began aggressively pushing Chicago as a tourist destination in response (CBS Chicago 2016;

Channick 2016). This is because he knew his city had a reputation for violence that was salient to many people, and that it had been particularly activated by Trump's negative characterizations. Not everyone lives in Chicago, and of those who do not, not everyone has the time or the inclination to learn about it on a granular level, so they rely on knowledge of its reputation to make consequential decisions, like whether to go there and spend their money or not. Reputation has ramifications for actual decision making by individuals on the ground. For example, recent research has shown that undocumented immigrants draw on perceptions about neighborhoods' connection to law enforcement to make decisions about where to live (Asad and Rosen 2018). Reputation also has material consequences insofar as its rhetorical deployment can influence action and lead to tangible changes, as Trump's election and subsequent shift in policy on the Chicago Police Department's consent decree demonstrates.

Irrelevance of Accuracy

If people think a neighborhood is one way, they treat it that way regardless of the facts on the ground. Notice that this does not imply any level of accuracy (or inaccuracy). A key component of place reputation is its non-congruency (or at least its non-mandated congruency) with the way things "actually are" on the ground (for more discussion of the disconnect between expectation and reality, see Brown-Saracino and Parker, 2017; for discussion of the distinction between reputation and information, see Kaliner 2014). In other words, reputations have consequences regardless of whether or not they are what we would call "true." There has been plenty written about how Chicago is *not* actually as dangerous as it's portrayed in the media (Trapasso 2018), about how there are other cities that are much more dangerous than our nation's third largest (McCarthy 2017). There are lots of cities with higher murder rates that people do not think of as dangerous in the same way they think of Chicago. This should not be a surprise, of course; as the Thomas Theorem

reminds us, "if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas and Thomas 1928). What ultimately matters the most is not that Chicago is *not* the most dangerous city in America, but rather that people think it is (Erbentraut 2014).

My concern is not to draw attention to the fact that a place's reputation can misrepresent the reality of a place—although this is certainly true—but rather to look at the work reputation does for a place *regardless* of whether or not it represents the reality of a place. Slater and Anderson's (2011) treatment of Peach's (1996) idea of the "reputational ghetto" is instructive here. They describe public policies being implemented in neighborhoods based on "territorial stigmatisation" of the area as a ghetto despite the fact that the area does not actually qualify as such. In the same way, Brown-Saracino and Parker (2017) suggest that a place can be a "reputational lesbian enclave," where a reputation is enough to drive real actions like migration patterns, regardless of facts on the ground. This pattern is potentially applicable to any number of neighborhoods, as at its most basic level, it simply requires people to make decisions and take action based on perceptions, regardless of whether those perceptions line up with reality. Of course, these realities are contested, and potentially relative— different people might have different opinions on whether a neighborhood is hip or dangerous— but when there *are* mismatches in what people tend to think about a neighborhood and what life is like on the ground for people in that neighborhood, there are potentially very interesting questions to ask.

What does it mean if a place has a reputation for being dangerous, like Chicago? As Gerald Suttles says, "just as there is guilt by association, so there is stigma by location" (Suttles 1968: 16, n. 5). Moreover, it is often racialized, as the South Side of Chicago is often read as Black and describing it as dangerous relies on a history of stereotypes about Black spaces in America (Anderson 2015). Research suggests that people use race as a proxy measure for crime (Taub et al. 1984), and

particularly that the percentage of young Black men in a neighborhood positively correlates with perception of crime level, after controlling for actual crime level (Quillian and Pager 2001). Moreover, stigma can persist in spite of positive changes to a previously dangerous neighborhood (for discussion of this literature, see Kaliner 2014: 15–16). This all leads to a situation where people avoid the neighborhoods as places to live, as places to shop, as places to spend time.

Sources of Reputation

Another important component of reputations is the diffuse nature of how they are perpetuated. This chapter started by talking about Donald Trump, but it could just as easily have started with media sources, musicians, and even cell phone apps. This means that reputations are persistent. Unlike a rumor, which is falsifiable, or gossip, which moves through particular social networks, reputation is more durable because its existence is decentralized and is premised on an assertion about the way something fundamentally is as opposed to whether or not something happened. For example, there might be a rumor that someone got shot last night in Chicago, and that can be verified or rebuked, but an assertion that that Chicago is dangerous cannot be dismissed as easily because it is not contingent on a single provable fact but on a wide circulation of ideas, descriptions, accusations, and insinuations, in both public and private spheres.

Chicago's reputation in particular as a dangerous place, while dating back at least to the notoriety of Al Capone (Dailing 2017), has been burnished in recent years by the concept of "Chi-Raq," a term for the city that has made it into a Spike Lee movie title (Lee 2015) and a Vice documentary series about Chief Keef and other local drill rappers (Vice Media 2016). As to cell phone apps, with the rise of location-based mobile applications (Taplin-Kaguru 2016), consumers have been given unprecedented ability to share information about the products they consume, from coffee shops to neighborhoods. With the rise of technology focused on the latter, we have seen

accusations of racism leveled against both SketchFactor (Dewey 2014) and GhettoTracker (Narula 2013) in recent years, with critics pointing out how these apps that advertised themselves as ways to remain safe had the potential to reinforce prejudice and racism.

While people can certainly have strong opinions about their favorite coffee shop, there is understandably more emotional investment in whether the place one *lives* gets tagged with such a negative descriptor. People are often proud of where they are from, both where they are born and where they choose to live, and to insult it is tantamount to insulting one's family. People wear clothes proclaiming their allegiance to their hometowns or neighborhoods, and they support sports teams that come to represent cities. Just turning on the radio, you can hear music that places primacy on place, from the Beach Boys (1965) singing about "California Girls" and Katy Perry (2010) updating it with "California Gurls," to Drake (2011) stating, "All I care about is money and the city that I'm from." I suggest that reputational information flows to people primarily in three ways: migration, media, and material objects.

Migration

The first way information flows through a reputational system is through migration of people. Migration is consequential because of both migrants themselves and the apparatus around the process of migration. By migrants, I mean people who move from one neighborhood to another. Migrants can be permanent, as when people move from living in one place to living in a different place. They can also be more temporary, as when people remain living in the same place, but visit other places on a regular enough basis to provide a meaningful social connection between them and a new place. By migration apparatus, I mean the collection of individuals and institutions that encourage and benefit from migration. This apparatus includes, but is not limited to, real estate agents and neighborhood booster organizations. Reputational information flows through migration

in two basic ways. First, migrants and migration apparatuses act as carriers of reputational information, expanding the base of knowledge about other places and contributing to the collective geographical vocabulary people use to understand their neighborhood. Second, migrants act as carriers of reputation itself, coming to represent the places they come from in the eyes of locals.[6]

Insofar as people are, among many other things, receptacles of information and opinions, it would stand to reason that people moving from city to city or neighborhood to neighborhood would be important transmitters of information and perceptions about other places. People move to a new neighborhood or city, perhaps because they heard it was a certain "type" of place (Brown-Saracino and Parker 2017). Part of this knowledge certainly comes from the concerted effort of migration apparatuses such as city tourism bureaus, local chambers of commerce, and real estate agents. Once in a new neighborhood, migrants bring with them knowledge and perceptions of the places they came from. This experiential knowledge about *other* places is bound to shape how they come to understand a new place. It provides a sort of geographic vocabulary for the way people make sense of a place. Given general patterns of social homophily (McPherson et al. 2001), as well as the persistence of historical residential segregation (Massey and Denton 1993), it can be expected that people have higher likelihoods of moving to certain neighborhoods than others, either through choice or constraint. Because of this, the relevant constellations of neighborhoods that serve to create reputations relationally become in some sense predictable.

People carry reputations with them to new neighborhoods even when they do not move. Urban researchers have long recognized that people have lives in places other than their

[6] One could argue that this is actually a matter of stereotype, not reputation, as assuming a person is a certain way because they fit in a broader category—in this case, a category of "resident of a certain neighborhood"—is structurally similar to assuming a neighborhood is a certain way because it fits into a broader category.

neighborhoods of residence (Wellman and Leighton 1979), and recent research has drawn attention to the symbolic weight people attach to neighborhoods even when they themselves do not live there, and these "vicarious citizens" (Greene 2014) become important social components of neighborhoods even when they live elsewhere. If there are people moving back and forth from one neighborhood to another and making important social connections in both places, then it makes sense that they would come to compare the two places in the social construction of each place. Though they do not live in a particular neighborhood, their understanding of it—which contributes to a collective understanding that becomes reputation—is constructed in contradistinction to the places they do live.

Migrants, particularly temporary migrants, also matter in another way distinct from their role as carriers of information. That is to say, they also serve as representatives of other places to people in the neighborhoods they visit. As documented above, the social construction of Wicker Park as a hip place was dependent on the social construction of Lincoln Park and the suburbs as un-hip places, and this was facilitated by the denizens of Lincoln Park and the suburbs visiting Wicker Park on weekends and engaging in behavior thought to be gauche by residents. There are similarities found in family life: while a parent might always want their child to behave, anxiety is ratcheted when the child visits someone else's home, for fear bad behavior on the child's part would reflect negatively on the family. The child in this circumstance represents not just herself, but her entire family in this new place. The dynamic is the same in urban life: when it is known where a visitor is from, that visitor has the potential, rightly or wrongly, to implicate their place of origin in their behavior.

Media

While person-to-person contact is important, much of our life is mediated in some way, and the way we receive reputational information is no different. Reputational information is produced and distributed through a number of mediums, including news, popular culture, and branding apparatuses. People absorb reputational information even when they are not trying to just by consuming media.

A major channel through which reputational information moves is news media. As discussed in Chapter One, people cannot possibly know all the information there is to know about a single city based on first-hand experience, never mind about different cities or countries. Because of this, the way we learn about other places is largely by reading about them or hearing about them from others. As the migration section mentioned, sometimes we hear about them from actual people, but this is not always possible. While the public sphere might be embodied in physical spaces like coffee shops (Habermas 1962), it can also be constituted virtually (Warner's 2005). We watch the news, listen to the radio, and read websites in an explicit effort to understand what is happening in other parts of the world, of the country, of the state, of the city, even of our own neighborhoods (Brown-Saracino and Rumpf 2011).

While the deliberate dissemination of information and debate outlined in Habermas's conception of the public sphere is one channel through which information moves, an earlier Frankfurt School theorist provides a model for how reputation might move through media popular culture. Analyzing the effect of film on an audience, Benjamin (2001) outlines the power of "reception in distraction" (120). People need to be aware they are absorbing information, or even necessarily looking to find it, for its transmission to be successful. Given the fact that people absorb media about places they have never been, there are people for whom Bensonhurst, Brooklyn means

Do the Right Thing, for whom Wicker Park means *Wicker Park*, and for whom Manhattan means *Manhattan*. Even if people *do* go to the places they see on television and movie screens, the fact that they have seen these images before affects how they relate to actual places. People take *Sex and the City* tours of New York or try to recreate *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* in Chicago. The way visitors and residents alike see and experience cities and neighborhoods is influenced by the preconceptions they bring to them by way of media culture.

Material Objects

The final way information moves through a reputational system is through material objects. Suttles (1984), in making that claim that Firey's (1945) sentiment and symbolism amount to more than "a subjective and methodological embarrassment," argues for the existence of "a vast, heritable genome of physical artifacts, slogans, typifications, and catchphrases" (284). Suttles makes the case for the importance of low as well as high culture, for the significance of "not just what people put in their museums, but also what they put on their car bumpers and T-shirts" (284). Indeed, think about T-shirts and bumper stickers you may have seen: "Keep Austin Weird;" "I ♡New York;" "What Happens in Vegas Stays in Vegas;" "The Biggest Little City in the World." These all communicate something about a place to people within it and from without.

Of course, many of these slogans are the result of branding initiatives by the migration apparatuses mentioned above (for a discussion of how "I ♡ New York" came to happen, see Greenberg 2008). That said, not everything that gets put on a material object is put there by boosters. There is a large market for merchandise related to place, including neighborhoods. People wear shirts and hats with their cities and neighborhoods adorned on it. Sometimes these come from local sports teams—a Chicago White Sox hat can come to represent the South Side of the city just as a Brooklyn Nets shirt might represent that particular borough. Other times they come from

companies that specifically sell products related to a certain place. New York's Neighborhoodies was a company that made custom apparel revolving around neighborhoods, and Chicago's Neighborly is a Chicago shop dedicated to selling products related to Chicago neighborhoods. Visit any local craft fair, and you are likely to find multiple purveyors of neighborhood identity you can buy and wear.

Reputations often aggregate in reputational objects, or physical objects or places that come to stand in for the reputation of a neighborhood. In the same way that a reputation is a sort of simplification of a more complicated place, a reputational object is a sort of simplification of a more complicated reputation. The next three chapters examine three neighborhoods in turn by examining a reputational object from each: the neighborhood bar in Bridgeport, the vacant lot in Woodlawn, and the stroller in Wicker Park. Each of these objects is an object loaded with particular meaning in the neighborhood it represents. The previous chapters have examined how reputational processes flow through these objects, connecting neighborhoods to other stars in their constellations and reproducing social processes that cement inequality in cities.

First and foremost, it should be noted that neighborhoods themselves are reputational objects. Bounded territories that are often defined by administrative units like community areas, police districts, voting wards, or census blocks, neighborhoods are social objects whose very definition is contested and accomplished through mutual association, interaction, and agreement about what is what. That said, in the neighborhoods I looked at, there are other social objects smaller than the neighborhood itself that come to stand in for the neighborhood and its reputation. When people talk about these objects, they are more likely than not also talking about their neighborhood.

In Wicker Park, the primary reputational object is the stroller. The stroller contains the hopes and anxieties of Wicker Park across time, and rhetorical deployment of it in conversation has

been used to express both hopes about safety and fears about squareness. When someone complains about a stroller running them down on the sidewalk, they are talking about an actual event, but they are also talking about how they are unhappy with the changes happening in the neighborhood. On the other hand, when someone talks about how it is nice to see strollers out, and that they make a special effort to make their business hospitable to those who use them, they are also saying something about the change in the neighborhood—that it is positive and that they hope to see more of it.

In Bridgeport, the primary reputational object is the corner tavern. A dominant social institution in the neighborhood—historically rivaled only by the Catholic church—the corner tavern is a site of conviviality and community in Bridgeport, and in many ways is a place where citizenship is performed. People come to a tavern to drink, yes, but also to be around others from the neighborhood and to show that they are a person who matters. Being banned from a tavern is a grave punishment, and in many ways removes a person not just from that tavern, but from a larger social ecosystem in the neighborhood. Because of this, neighborhood taverns in Bridgeport—and particularly one tavern, Maria's, that has undergone the most dramatic change in recent decades—are reputational objects insofar as they stand in for anxieties about the neighborhood and aspirations of its citizens. When people talk about Bridgeport's reputation for racism, the image they often reach for is walking into a tavern and feeling unwelcome (or not even getting into a tavern in the first place because the door is locked and no one will let you in when you ring the buzzer). On the other hand, when people talk about constituting their community in the neighborhood, they also talk about the tavern. As a result, when a tavern excludes people—whether people of color or old-timers—discussion of it is in reality discussion of anxieties about the neighborhood and the way it is, or is not, changing.

Finally, in Woodlawn, the primary reputational object is the empty lot. As with the stroller and the tavern, many people talk about the practical implications of the empty lots in Woodlawn. Most notably, mothers would tell me they would not let their children play outside in Woodlawn, and singled out the empty lots in particular as places of crime and violence. However, often the discussion of the empty lots is part of a larger discussion of Woodlawn, its problems, and its reputation. They are pointed to not just as practical problems, but as representatives of the traumas of the past—notably the decline of the neighborhood through depopulation and the literal destruction of parts of it through arson—and as impediments to having a vibrant neighborhood in the present. Notably, though, some actors in the neighborhood talk about it in positive symbolic terms, construing it as a sort of blank slate for the neighborhood, a promise of better things to come.

In all places, certain objects are imbued with enormous symbolic power. We can think of obvious examples we see in everyday life—a cross in a church, a badge on a police officer, or a flag outside a government building. Everyday objects can be symbolic, too, though. A cross, a badge, and a flag are all primarily symbolic, not practical, insofar as they do not have a specific widespread utility beyond what they symbolize. A flag could be used for a blanket, for example, but this would be highly out of the ordinary. The reputational objects I have identified in these neighborhoods—the stroller, the corner tavern, the empty lot—are all objects that *do* have practical purposes, first and foremost. People use strollers to travel the streets with their children, taverns to drink, and empty lots to build things on (or to gather with others, if no building is going on). However, because of the contingent histories of these neighborhoods, these practical objects are *also* symbolic, and because of this, they become reputational objects as well. They are reminders that while they might seem to

float around us, reputations can be tangibly seen and felt in neighborhoods if we know where to look.

Methods

This brings me to the theoretical puzzle that motivates this dissertation: in a society where place reputation is visible, consequential, and potentially manageable, how does a neighborhood's reputation structure economic action and either disrupt or reproduce inequality? To answer this question, I went to a particular group: neighborhood business-owners, or merchants.

This dissertation is based primarily on 100 interviews[7] I personally conducted with neighborhood merchants and other neighborhood stakeholders in three Chicago neighborhoods: Wicker Park, Bridgeport, and Woodlawn. I supplement the information from these interviews with ethnographic fieldwork at focused gatherings as well as historical research on and media coverage of these three neighborhoods, but the bulk of the dissertation is built on the merchant interviews.

Why merchants? Crucially, they are what I call frontline reputational actors. What I mean by that is, merchants are often the first point of contact for neighborhood outsiders and tourists. For people deciding whether or not to come to a new neighborhood, merchants are often the initial draw, whether it is someone buying a product or trying a restaurant, bar, or coffeehouse. Second, merchants are acutely aware of their neighborhoods' reputation because they have to be—their livelihood is dependent on knowing what people think about their neighborhood and how that influences whether or not they are willing to spend time there. Finally, given their position in the neighborhood, merchants are not just accurate perceivers of their neighborhood's reputations, but

[7] I gave my respondents the choice of whether they wanted me to use their actual names or pseudonyms, and have followed their wishes in this project. The one exception is that there are cases where I changed someone's name to a pseudonym even though they said using their real name was fine specifically in order to avoid confusion, e.g., in cases where more than one person shared the same first name.

also active participants in its construction, consolidation, and contestation. As figures who stand to benefit or suffer because of the increasing importance of place reputation in a highly mediated world, they are incentivized to take advantage of, or ameliorate against, this proliferation of knowledge.

There are other practical reasons we should be interested in merchants when considering place reputation. Commercial spaces in neighborhoods are important because they often come to stand in for how people understand what neighborhoods are—they contribute to what Deener (2007) calls "the structure and symbol of neighborhood life." In recent years, research has focused on the importance of commercial establishments in neighborhoods, with a recent volume extolling the virtues of "shopping streets" (Zukin et al. 2016). While these shopping streets are important, we need to know more about the merchants who populate them. A good place to start is by thinking about how they fit into—or fail to fit into—their neighborhoods. While some stores certainly get some of their business through the internet, recent media coverage of the "retail apocalypse" speaks to the importance of physical customers for brick and mortar stores. Because of this and the fact their careers place them firmly within the physical space of a neighborhood—often for an extended period of time—merchants provide invaluable perspective on both life in their neighborhood and their neighborhood in the mind of the public. A number of questions present themselves. Are all merchants equally concerned with their neighborhood's reputation? Do different reputations elicit different types of decision-making? How do merchants understand change in their neighborhood's reputation, and how do they understand stability?

Examining the subjectivities and decision-making of merchants has the potential to intervene in a longstanding debate about the comparative relevance of economic and cultural causes for gentrification (see Smith 1979; Zukin 1982; Ley 1986; Hamnett 1991; Smith 1996; Lees 2000;

Ley 2003; Slater 2006; and Brown-Saracino 2009 for some review). Those who primarily explain gentrification in economic terms conceive of it as a process in which economic forces moving in cities fundamentally structure the way land is used (see Smith 1979 and Smith 1996 for examples, Logan and Molotch 1987: 4–12 for discussion of human ecology, and Taub et al. 1984: 2–3 for discussion of early models of urban change). A key move in gentrification research in recent decades has been toward recognition that cultural causes matter, too (Zukin 1982; Lloyd 2006; Brown-Saracino 2009; Ocejo 2011; Deener 2012), with scholars often paying particular attention to the role of commercial businesses in neighborhoods as a way to weigh competing claims about economics and culture.

This is the value of commercial businesses as sites of interest for those studying gentrification. They are physical locations where economic and cultural interests intersect. Recently, research has challenged the idea that "there is an uncomplicated relationship between one's economic position and one's ideology" (Brown-Saracino 2009: 7). Further, Brown-Saracino's concept of social preservationists who "are highly self-conscious about their role in gentrification and, as a result, work to minimize its risks for certain long-time residents" (xi) is interesting to consider. She argues that "social preservation pushes us to consider the possibility that culture—even that of relative elites—can complicate processes of capital accumulation, such as those associated with gentrification, even if it does not effectively prevent or stall it." (16) How might we explain business-owners who oppose gentrification, even as they contribute to it? We need a deeper understanding of how economic and cultural interests intersect if we are going to better understand gentrification. This is where reputation comes in.

Reputation is important for neighborhood merchants, and neighborhood merchants are important for understanding contemporary neighborhoods. As such, looking at the role of

reputation in this context is potentially illuminating for understanding important urban processes like neighborhood change—whether gentrification or decline—and stability. Other neighborhood stakeholders matter for this process, too, of course, but merchants offer a unique connection to place that makes them especially sensitive to changes in a neighborhood. Merchants are in many ways dependent on their neighborhoods as sites of cultural consumption for their livelihood.

Neighborhoods: Sites of Reputational Drama

While the neighborhood as a unit of analysis has long been an important component of urban sociological work, from the early Chicago school (Park, Burgess, and McKenzie 1925; Zorbaugh 1929) to crucial neighborhood studies (Whyte 1943; Drake and Cayton 1945; Jacobs 1961; Liebow 1967; Suttles 1968; Stack 1974; Anderson 1978; Zukin 1982; Pattillo 1999; Klinenberg 2002; Small 2004; Lloyd 2006; Brown-Saracino 2009; Deener 2012), to the more contemporary research agenda on neighborhood effects (Sampson 2012), we still do not know a lot about exactly how reputations develop in and influence neighborhoods—what effect they have on business development or neighborhood change, for example. At a time when a great deal of research concentrates on how neighborhood residence can affect important life outcomes and how cities can become more attractive to migrants based on particular metrics (Florida 2005), the reputation of a neighborhood clearly matters a great deal.

A reputation matters for a neighborhood primarily because it creates incentives and constraints for action. A reputation helps residents to decide whether or not to live somewhere, tourists to decide whether or not to visit somewhere, and merchants to decide whether or not to locate somewhere. Cities are simply too large, and there is simply too much going on for any one person to actually be able to *know* it all. Anxiety about this fact has characterized urban sociology, and indeed urban life, at least since its modern incarnation in the nineteenth century. In his field-

defining essay "The Metropolis and Mental Life," Simmel (1903) finds a great deal of freedom in the new cities, but also cause for concern about what they might do to people's psyches. "The psychological foundation, upon which the metropolitan individuality is erected, is the intensification of emotional life due to the swift and continuous shift of external and internal stimuli," Simmel tells us (325). It's not just about "metropolitan individuality" as a modern type, separated from actual place. He continues,

> To the extent that the metropolis creates these psychological conditions—with every crossing of the street, with the tempo and multiplicity of economic, occupational and social life—it creates in the sensory foundations of mental life, and in the degree of awareness necessitated by our organization as creatures dependent on differences, a deep contrast with the slower, more habitual, more smoothly flowing rhythm of the sensory-mental phase of small town and rural existence. (325)

If "every crossing of the street" causes this turmoil, what are we to do? One of Simmel's answers is that we take on a "blasé" attitude and countenance (329) because to feel *everything* would be too much. If we let in all the sensory stimuli the city offers, we would suffer nervous breakdowns, Simmel seems to suggest, so we stop feeling, or at least stop feeling as much.

Relying on reputation is not the same as not feeling, but it does serve a similar purpose in the face of the total unknowability of something as large as a city and the psychic toll in trying. In his book *Images of the American City* (1976), Strauss documents the ways people try to understand a city, from maps to travel literature because "the city, as a whole, is inaccessible to the imagination unless it can be reduced and simplified." Writing long after the first pangs of urbanization that Simmel documented, Strauss emphasizes the same reasoning:

> And so, from all the foregoing, it seems safe to say that without the resources of rhetoric the city-dweller could have no verbal representations of his own or any other city. Characterization of the city, and of the life lived in it, is indispensable for organizing the inevitably ambiguous mass of impressions and experiences to which every inhabitant is exposed, and which he must collate and assess, not only for peace of mind but to carry on daily affairs. When the city has been symbolized in some way, personal action in the urban milieu becomes organized and relatively routinized. To be comfortable in the city— in the

> widest sense of these words— requires the formulation of one's relations with it, however unsystematically and crudely. Uncertainty about the character of the environment can only engender deep psychological stress. (17)

Strauss then brings up the diversity of different parts of the city and suggests that a panoramic view of a city— Chicago's skyline, for example— acts as a "mask" for its complexity (11). He expands: "A large city is infinitely greater than its parts and certainly greater than its partial views, which mitigate but do not remove the pressures felt by an individual trying to understand imaginatively his urban milieu" (11). Subdividing a city into neighborhoods allows the viewer— in this case the citizen, or perhaps the tourist— insight into several discrete entities instead of having to comprehend a city in its totality. Of course, the city in its totality will have its own reputation, and no amount of subdivision will destroy it, but dividing a city into neighborhoods serves the same psychic goals that Simmel and Strauss outline in their discussions of how people deal with cities overall. Once reduced to neighborhoods, of course, the same mechanisms Strauss identifies exist, just on a smaller scale, and for the same reasons.

I suggest in this dissertation that, like a blasé face or an aerial map, a place reputation is a way of reducing and simplifying something vast so that we might comprehend it at least a little. A reputation is most useful when we have incomplete information about a place but still need to function, and given the massive amount of sensory experience involved with urban life, we *always* have incomplete information about a place. Reputation allows us to function.

Bringing Reputation to Bear on Urban Research

For such an important process, we do not know very much about place reputation in cities, and that is because as urban sociologists, we are ill prepared to study the processes that reputation impacts. This is because reputational processes often operate below the surface and in ways we do not pay attention to. Specifically, reputation operates in ways that do not manifest in traditional

measures taken of neighborhoods, like demographics and crime measures, and reputation is socially constructed not only in reference to a single neighborhood, but to a *neighborhood constellation*. While qualitative scholars explore neighborhoods in an in-depth way that gets at processes statistics are ill-suited to describe, they often focus on "thick description" (Geertz 1973) of single neighborhoods, missing the relational aspect of social construction. Quantitative scholars often have the opposite problem—they have comparative data across neighborhoods they can use to relate one neighborhood to another, but the data is often insufficient to describe what truly matters to people on the ground. I identify two complementary ways urban sociologists can better understand reputation, and thus better understand neighborhoods: by focusing on data that is beyond the scope of survey research and administrative statistics, on one hand, and by shifting focus from single neighborhoods to constellations of neighborhoods on the other. Different groups of urban sociologists often do a good job at accomplishing *one* of these goals, but accomplishing both in tandem is what is necessary to understand reputation.

We are presented, broadly, with two ways of doing urban research that have accomplished a great deal but have their shortcomings. On the one hand, we have in-depth neighborhood studies that provide rich detail about the inner workings of a neighborhood. However, all too often, these studies concern themselves so much with the specific social world of the neighborhood—a sort of extended version of Fine's (1979) idioculture—that we miss out on its connections to other places. On the other hand, we have large scale comparative work that *does* consider other neighborhoods, but mostly only for the sake of statistical comparison rather than for understanding the symbolic interdependence of neighborhoods. Even large-scale research that does try to connect the experiences of different neighborhoods has been limited in the sorts of questions it asks, as it has mostly been within a neighborhood effects literature overwhelmingly concerned with collective

efficacy and its statistical correlates. These studies have goals different from understanding reputation, though, so neither of these strategies is effective for studying for those types of questions.

This project addresses the first problem—traditional neighborhood studies' over-focus on singular neighborhoods—by situating a neighborhood in a larger constellation of other neighborhoods made of specific neighborhood types that vary with the focal neighborhood across dimensions of both space and time. This is not done arbitrarily, but based on the recognition that neighborhood reputation is constructed much the same way individuals are—in reference to others (Cooley 1902; Mead 1934; Sampson 2012). Chapter Five will cover this idea more in-depth, but to state it briefly: I argue in this dissertation that people make sense of neighborhoods by constantly consciously comparing them to other neighborhoods. People think of neighborhoods as "types" of neighborhoods, and what that type is can be constructed in relation to a neighborhood that is similar to it or one that is different. If people idealize one neighborhood and vilify another, how does that contribute to how they view their own neighborhood? How does what a neighborhood *used* to be like shape how people think about its current form? What role do aspirations for a neighborhood play in how the present is conceived of? This project addresses the second problem—large scale comparative works' inability to measure exactly the sorts of thoughts discussed in the previous paragraph—by taking the connection among neighborhoods seriously and pursuing comparison not only to measure outcomes against each other, but to connect the social processes of one place to the social processes of another.

What my project draws attention to is the interconnectedness of neighborhoods in ways economic, symbolic, and imagined. To be sure, singular neighborhoods and their features matter. In fact, I argue that reputations typically manifest themselves in discrete *reputational objects*—the stroller

in Wicker Park, the neighborhood tavern in Bridgeport, the empty block in Woodlawn. These objects come to stand in for something larger than themselves. Whether that something is positive or negative depends on the priorities of the beholder—each reputational object can be placed in both virtuous and vicious frames. All that said, while reputations manifest locally, they are constructed relationally.

Cases: Bridgeport, Woodlawn, and Wicker Park

In this project, I focus on three neighborhoods, but in focusing on them, I end up exploring three different neighborhood constellations. Before getting to the constellations, though, it is important to introduce the focal neighborhoods.

Wicker Park

Wicker Park is a neighborhood in the northwest section of the city. Bounded roughly by Bloomingdale Avenue to the north, the Chicago River to the east, Division Street to the south, and Western Avenue to the west, the neighborhood in fact used to be the northwest corner of the city. Surviving the Chicago Fire of 1871 (Lloyd 206: 30), the neighborhood provided resources to help rebuild the city and has historically served as a site of settlement for Chicago immigrant groups, from Germans and Poles at the turn of the twentieth century to Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in the middle of the twentieth century. In the last decades of the twentieth century, the neighborhood became famous as an arts and music scene, and it is currently known, within the city and on a national level, for being a hip neighborhood, or at least a neighborhood full of hipsters. Wicker Park is also part of the Wicker Park-Bucktown Special Service Area (SSA) #33. SSAs in Chicago operate similarly to Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) elsewhere (see Hyra 2008:46–47) Although BIDs and SSAs use the tools of the state through taxation, the way the money is ultimately spent is left to the organizations themselves. In Wicker Park, the SSA created a "Master Plan" document that

lays out the very specific vision for the type of neighborhood they would like Wicker Park to be. Although anyone can be a commissioner on an SSA, based on attendance at public meetings, those who participate (and moreover, most of those who attend the meetings) are business owners in the neighborhood. In the past, the SSA has used funds to support neighborhood festivals, public art, bicycle infrastructure, and augmentation of city services like snow removal (raising the question of whether part of what SSAs do is provide services previously provided by municipal governments). In this way, state power is brought to bear on the neighborhood, but it is mediated through local actors who make up relevant organizations and publics. It is for this reason it is so important to understand local culture and sentiment (Firey 1945), which one can do by "reading" local culture as "a vast, heritable genome of physical artifacts, slogans, typifications, and catch phrases," ultimately to get at the "cumulative texture of local culture" (Suttles 1984: 284).

Wicker Park, with its reputation for hipness and the constellation of commercial establishments aligned with that reputation, offers an ideal place to study the question of how merchants respond to a reputation that is financially remunerative for a neighborhood. Who helps hold up this reputation? Does it benefit everyone in the neighborhood? Is there anxiety about the potential diminishment of the reputation as the neighborhood changes—a change brought about, interestingly, from development that can be linked to the reputation in the first place?

Bridgeport

Bridgeport is a neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago, but it is historically unique in terms of demographic makeup. While most of the South Side emptied out of white residents fleeing for the suburbs after the Supreme Court made restrictive covenants unenforceable in their ruling on Shelly vs. Kramer in 1948, Bridgeport remained a white stronghold, in part because of the high numbers of city workers in the neighborhood who needed to maintain a city address to keep their

jobs. The neighborhood is bounded roughly by the Chicago River to the north, the Union Pacific railroad tracks to the east, Pershing Road to the south, and Bubbly Creek,[8] the south branch of the Chicago River, to the west. Bridgeport has a long history as one of the most notoriously racist neighborhoods in Chicago. Most famous as an Irish-American enclave—and for the associated Democratic Party machine that produced five mayors, including Richard J. Daley and Richard M. Daley—the neighborhood has historically also been home to a variety of other white ethnic groups. Situated to the west of the Black Belt and its most famous neighborhood, Bronzeville, Bridgeport has been a site of racial tension going back to the nineteenth century. There were pro-Confederate rallies in the neighborhood during the Civil War (Pacyga 2004), and the neighborhood was heavily involved in the race riots during the summer of 1919 (Cohen and Taylor 2001: 35–36). Incidents attributed to racism continued well into the latter half of the twentieth century, including the coma-inducing beating of Lenard Clark, a thirteen-year-old African American boy, by white youths in nearby Armour Square that drew national attention to Bridgeport, which the *New York Times* described as "a neighborhood known here for producing mayors and racial hostility" (Terry 1997). Even as the neighborhood began to diversify through a massive influx of Mexican and Chinese immigrants, the percentage of African Americans in the neighborhood has remained relatively minuscule, especially in comparison to the rest of the South Side. There is a significant presence of art galleries in the neighborhood, along with new restaurants, bars, and coffee shops—many of the markings of a bohemian neighborhood Lloyd talks about when discussing Wicker Park in the 1990s. These new additions to the neighborhood have not totally redefined it, however, as the neighborhood's old-timers remain to tell you what the neighborhood used to be like. The 11th

[8] "Bubbly Creek is so-named because the meat byproducts dumped in the river from the nearby stockyards made famous in Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906) made it bubble.

Ward, which includes Bridgeport in addition to some nearby neighborhoods, recently elected a new alderman: Patrick Daley Thompson, a Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Commissioner and nephew of Richard M. Daley.

Bridgeport, with a historical reputation for parochialism and racism and a more contemporary reputation for hipness and an arts scene, provides an excellent case study for exploring a neighborhood in potential reputational transition—or not. Faced with a negative reputation that threatens to do damage to—or prevent the ascension of—a more positive reputation, how do merchants respond?

Woodlawn

Woodlawn is a neighborhood on the South Side of the city of Chicago, divided from the University of Chicago in Hyde Park by the Midway Plaisance that was the site of the 1893 World's Fair. Bounded roughly by the Midway to the north, Lake Michigan along Jackson Park to the east, 67th Street to the south, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive to the west, the neighborhood is an historically important neighborhood for the Black community in Chicago. A predominantly white neighborhood in the early twentieth century—only 2% of the neighborhood counted as African American in the 1920 U.S. Census (Pacyga 2009: 290)—Woodlawn became predominantly African American in the middle of the twentieth century, as "between 1930 and 1960, Woodlawn's population grew from 66,052 residents to 81,699. African American inhabitants jumped from 13 percent to nearly 90 percent of the community in the same time period" (Pacyga 2009: 291). The neighborhood is anchored at the eastern end by the Apostolic Church of God. Along with that church, and others like First Presbyterian—another of the dominant institutions in the neighborhood in the middle of the twentieth century—was the street gang the Blackstone Rangers. There was actually a history connecting the gang and the churches, through social service

organizations like the Temporary Woodlawn Organization (TWO),[9] working in concert on neighborhood projects and even attracting federal dollars to do so (Moore and Williams). Woodlawn used to be a bustling neighborhood—63rd Street, its major commercial thoroughfare, was a major shopping street in Chicago at one point. But today, the neighborhood is filled with abandoned buildings, and 63rd Street itself is partly filled with empty, ill-maintained lots. The neighborhood emptied out in the second half of the twentieth century, and according to the 2010 census only had 20,983 residents ("Community Area Populations- City of Chicago"), a stark comparison to the bustling neighborhood it was in the 1960s. People talk about the way the neighborhood used to be and the way it is now, lamenting the violence caused by gangs. Recently, the big news in the neighborhood is the location of the Obama Presidential Center at its eastern edge. There is a great deal of excitement, but also a lot of questions about exactly who stands to benefit and who, perhaps, stands to suffer as a result of this important institution.

Woodlawn, with its reputation for danger and its sparseness of commercial establishments and development, is an ideal place to examine how merchants respond to a reputation that has a negative impact on businesses in a neighborhood. Who, if anyone, is working to change the reputation of Woodlawn? Is there anyone who benefits from the neighborhood's current reputation? If there are efforts to change the neighborhood's reputation, is there conflict among people with different visions or anxiety about potential changes that might accompany a shift in the neighborhood's reputation? With the opening of the Obama Presidential Center, what role is reputation playing in the neighborhood?

[9] According to Rev. Arthur M. Brazier, "In the early days TWO stood for Temporary Woodlawn Organization. Later the name became The Woodlawn Organization and kept the same initials, TWO" (Brazier 1969: 33).

Chapter Outline

Chapter Two is entitled "Somehow Still Hip: The Anxiety of Selling Cool in Wicker Park." How do people with disparate interests and values coordinate action? Hipness being a financially remunerative reputation, it has attracted a lot of merchants to the area. With the wide variety of merchants comes a wide variety of ideas about what Wicker Park should be. This chapter explains how reputation can serve as a coordinating mechanism even in groups of people with different or even oppositional interests.

Chapter Three is entitled "A Place on *That* Corner?: The Social Transformation of Reputation in Bridgeport." What does a shifting reputation look like in a neighborhood, and what role does commerce play in it? Using the case of a neighborhood bar that underwent a dramatic transformation, it explores how commercial establishments can serve as bellwethers for a neighborhood's reputation, and thus often become sites of contestation over neighborhood identity. Moreover, it examines the way an effort to diminish a neighborhood's negative, exclusionary reputation can involve the creation and maintenance of a new moral order that is exclusionary in its own right.

Chapter Four is entitled "Who Benefits From a Bad Reputation?: Disorder and Development in Woodlawn." How do merchants respond to a manifestly negative reputation, and does anyone benefit? Examining the neighborhood at a particularly interesting time in its history—when the Obama Presidential Center is about to move in, but the neighborhood still has a reputation for being dangerous—this chapter probes the possibility that while a negative reputation can have negative consequences for a neighborhood and encourage deliberate opposition to it, such a reputation can also be beneficial for certain groups and individuals. The perpetuation of a negative reputation can be financially remunerative.

Chapter Five, entitled "Relational Neighborhoods," lays out the mechanism for exactly how neighborhood reputation is constructed in the minds of the merchants. Reputations are socially constructed relationally, and manifested locally in reputational objects. As sociologists we need to expand our object of analysis beyond the focal neighborhood to a constellation of neighborhoods, and to pay attention to the ways that reputations have consequences for the trajectories of places. Using examples from the three neighborhoods I study, I introduce the concepts of the ghost, the *doppelgänger*, the *bête noire*, and the vision.

Chapter Six offers some concluding thoughts on neighborhood reputation, both in terms of implications for sociology and implications for the neighborhoods themselves. For sociology, it is imperative that we study neighborhoods relationally. In "Relational Ethnography," (2014) Desmond calls for us to take as our ethnographic objects relations rather than bounded groups. I suggest that the two are co-constitutive—that places are made by relationships, and that following Brown-Saracino (2015), "places shape identity." As such, it is crucial that we look at both neighborhoods as discrete objects *and* as segments of relationships with other neighborhoods. We cannot understand one without understanding the other. As for the neighborhoods themselves, my work has implications for the trajectory of neighborhoods, particularly those undergoing gentrification. What people think about a neighborhood has consequences for that neighborhood regardless of whether or not it is true. If we are worried about persistent inequality in American cities, it is not enough to look at the things we can measure. Turning a dangerous neighborhood into a safe neighborhood is only one part of the solution. We also have to make people *think* it is safe. I conclude with a consideration of how these ideas might be applied at different scales, e.g., states, regions, and countries, using a case study of current reputational trends regarding the American South to explore

how study of reputation at scales larger than the neighborhood are similar and different to the study of neighborhood reputation.

CHAPTER TWO

SOMEHOW STILL HIP?: THE ANXIETY OF SELLING COOL IN WICKER PARK

"You used to walk down the street here and see this crazy bohemian nature of this neighborhood, you know what I mean?" says Ben, of Wicker Park, the neighborhood his community-based ad agency inhabits. "There was more independent shit, there were skate shops, there were people hanging out smoking, there were people who were trying to do shit." Wicker Park is a neighborhood that has been designated as hip. Ben himself says, "It's an artistic bohemian neighborhood, it always has been." It is also a neighborhood where people fiercely dispute its hipness.

While Wicker Park's emergence as a "Neo-Bohemia" in the 1980s and 1990s (Lloyd 2006) is well-documented, the neighborhood's character has continued to shift in the intervening decades. While Wicker Park has come to represent a certain sort of hip neighborhood, in Chicago and nationally, a closer look reveals divisions. There is uneven development in the neighborhood, and storefronts that gained prominence as Wicker Park garnered its reputation for hipness compete for space with moneyed chains that moved in afterwards to take advantage of the people that reputation drew to the area. There are also newer stores that serve a different sort of customer base, including a newer one that might have more money but is not as interested in the neighborhood's "edgy" past.

This is a common refrain among shopkeepers I speak to in Wicker Park: the neighborhood *used* to be hip, but is not anymore. They told me about the "good old days" or the "golden age." There is a constant suggestion that the neighborhood has changed, and for the worse, and is no longer a neighborhood just for artists and hipsters. It is square now.

The truth of the matter is that Wicker Park was never a neighborhood just for artists and hipsters, even in the 1990s and early 2000s when it was receiving national attention for its arts and

music scenes (Schippers 2002; Lloyd 2006). Even then, there were still plenty of people in the neighborhood from the multiple waves of immigration over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—Germans, Poles, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans—and while some of them were certainly artists or hipsters, others were working people with families and no particular subcultural allegiance. What people who lament Wicker Park's squareness get right, though, is that at the moment the neighborhood merchants serve a wide variety of populations, and this fact causes anxiety for many shopkeepers. While Wicker Park might never have been a monolithically hipster neighborhood—defined exclusively by hipsters and hipness and devoid of anyone or anything else—*it has a reputation for being one* (Lanham 2002; Brennan 2012), and that reputation has been very financially remunerative for the merchants of the neighborhood. Because of this, neighborhood actors have become concerned about potential shifts in the neighborhood's reputation.

Perhaps the contemporary clash of neighborhood character is seen in its clearest form at the Renegade Craft Fair. Renegade Craft Fair is, per its website, "a curated gathering of the designers, makers, doers, and dreamers that define today's craft and design communities across the U.S. and beyond." Put more succinctly, it is Chicago's[1] premier destination for hipster paraphernalia of all sorts—ironic t-shirts, handmade jewelry, literary quarterlies, screen printed posters, various pickled foods in Mason jars, and craft coffee and food of all sorts. In short, it is exactly what you might imagine would appear in the Wicker Park of the 1990s and early 2000s that Lloyd talks: artsy, edgy, *hip*.

[1] Though it started in Chicago, the street fair now has yearly outposts in eleven American cities, plus London, and serves 300,000 attendees per year. Before it was a hipster craft institution, though, it started as a small event in Chicago in 2003, "just as the indie-craft movement was gaining momentum," according to its co-founder, Susie Daly (Todaro 2013). Its major events in Chicago every year are a summer fair and a winter fair. They used to both take place in Wicker Park, but in recent years the winter event has moved to Bridgeport.

It is also full of small children, which one might not have guessed from Lloyd's writing about middle-class young people turned *avant garde* artists setting up galleries in live/work spaces, bartenders dispensing cheap shots as a form of social capital, and scenesters waiting for their drug dealers to arrive outside the parties that lit up the streets. Lloyd's world was one of twenty-somethings wanting to be part of a scene and offering their subcultural capital cheap as members of a reserve army of hipster labor, each of whom could be replaced at a moment's notice by a *different* tattooed musician who was happy to sling coffee at a day job while they made art and drank at night. And yet, here at Renegade, where if one is so inclined one can certainly see the remnants of the subculture that existed in Wicker Park in the 1990s, one also sees signs of middle-class domestic life that seems antithetical to Wicker Park's image as an edgy bohemian enclave. There are signs for yoga for children and people offering "punk rock" haircuts for kids. Mostly, though, there are lots of strollers. Setting up the tableau of Renegade, one writer in 2011 observes as "lines at the wine and beer vendors begin to form. An influx of new families with strollers, a greyhound, sometimes two, overwhelms the area" (Kelsey 2011). Since then, the strollers seem to only become denser at each subsequent fair.

This is distressing for some merchants, who are vocal in their complaints about the strollers in the neighborhood. They complain about the space they take up—and the people who push them. Other merchants bring up strollers—unprovoked—in a positive light, and even defend them from imagined opponents. What do the strollers represent, and why are they a nexus of conflict in Wicker Park?

In the rest of this chapter, I explore the social processes happening in Wicker Park in an effort to answer this question. First, I briefly examine the history of the neighborhood to understand the reputational context that the merchants are operating in. Because of the nature of the changes in

the neighborhood over previous decades, conceptions of Wicker Park are tied up in issues of gentrification. It remains a controversial issue in the neighborhood, as it has been for decades. The shopkeepers I spoke to understand gentrification as having the potential to change the essential character of the neighborhood, and their reaction to it is based on whether they believe such a change to be positive or negative. After going over the history of the neighborhood, I argue in this chapter that the circumstances in which merchants come to either embrace or repudiate gentrification emerge as a combination of key characteristics that differ significantly among them, and a common understanding of a neighborhood that they share. This common understanding they share is more specifically a common understanding of the neighborhood's reputation for hipness. A key finding here is that while we might expect different understandings of and experiences with the neighborhood to stratify merchants' actions in Wicker Park, a common orientation toward preserving a financially remunerative reputation for hipness flattens these distinctions, if not in attitude then at least in activity, by allowing people with disparate interests and cultural commitments to coordinate their actions to the greater economic benefit of the neighborhood.

This does not mean there is not anxiety among the merchants, though, and it is the characteristics that differ among them that drive the talk about strollers. I argue that the strollers are metonyms for changes to the neighborhood, and to its reputation. Although they immediately call to mind children and families, the strollers have come to be a stand-in for other kinds of neighborhood change as well: the influx of yuppies, not all of whom have small children. Essentially, talk about strollers represents talk about all the things that have changed in the neighborhood in recent decades, which they bundle together as a group of cultural signifiers with elective affinities (Weber 1905). The stroller is a reputational bellwether: a sign that the neighborhood is shifting, and with it,

if no one does anything about it, the remunerative reputation it has for hipness. This change is anxiety-inducing for some shopkeepers of Wicker Park because it threatens the neighborhood's reputation for hipness, which they have come to rely on for financial profit. Other shopkeepers talk about strollers in less negative terms, and this is because the shifts to the neighborhood's reputation do not threaten them, and in some cases actually benefit them. There are cleavages in the Wicker Park merchant class along lines of financial stability, customer base, and cultural commitment to bohemia, and talk of strollers makes these cleavages visible.

The stroller is a useful reputational object because it brings to light exactly how people think about Wicker Park, and in this case, the conflicts over that perception. Just because there are conflicts, though, does not mean there can be no rapprochement among people with different motivations. Ultimately, this chapter explains how a common understanding of a neighborhood's reputation can be utilized as a coordination mechanism in groups of people with disparate priorities, while individuals can still express anxiety about the neighborhood using a common reputational object.

From Artists' Neighborhood to Hipster Zoo

Though much of Wicker Park's reputation for hipness is built on the history of the neighborhood in previous decades, it does persist, specifically in the idea that Wicker Park is a "hip" neighborhood. Recently, Forbes called it "the Midwest Mecca of Hipsterdom," ranking it as the fourth best hipster neighborhood in America based on a quantitative formula along with a startup's "Hipness Index" ("4. Wicker Park, Chicago, IL - Morgan Brennan Closing Table - Forbes.," Brennan 2012). Relatedly, it also has a long and continuing history of gentrification.

Although it has this reputation as a hip, gentrified neighborhood, Wicker Park and its main commercial corridor Milwaukee Avenue in particular is a site of uneven development, with one end

of the commercial corridor the site of much more commercial development—and more commercial development associated with a hip, bohemian aesthetic, in particular—than the other. While the upper end is populated primarily by restaurants, bars, cafes, and boutiques, the lower end, to the extent that it is commercially developed at all, is dominated by furniture stores and shoe stores, as well as a large grocery store surrounded by an enormous parking lot. While there are some commercial outposts that are more like those on the upper end of the street, one is much more likely to see an empty storefront than a haven for hipsters. As such, while at the upper end you might see people stop by a record store, a high-end taco joint, or an artisanal doughnut shop before heading to a trendy dive bar or a famous music venue for a show, at the lower end you mostly see either people purchasing basic needs—shoes, furniture, groceries—or, often, walking past shuttered stores on their way to the more active end of the street. In other words, Wicker Park is a neighborhood that can rightly be called both gentrified and gentrifying as the process is both longstanding and ongoing in the neighborhood.

While there are very real differences of opinion about the origins and consequences of gentrification, the process continues to happen on the ground in neighborhoods, and the people who live in these neighborhoods have to make sense of it. Despite claims by some that the negative consequences of gentrification are minimal for residents (Ellen and O'Regan 2011) and that those presumed to be negatively affected by gentrification are not always against it (Freeman 2006), there are a number of malign processes associated with gentrification in the public imagination and media portrayals. From the aforementioned displacement of vulnerable residents to the appropriation, or "swagger-jacking" (Crockett 2012), of local culture, gentrification is a loaded term fraught with negative meaning for many people.

While gentrification as Glass (1964) defined it is characterized by patterns of residential

mobility, in Wicker Park it has left its most visible mark on the commercial landscape. New consumers demand new kinds of stores. These consumers are sometimes new residents that classic gentrification literature addresses, but they are often what Greene (2014) calls "vicarious citizens": individuals who do not live in a neighborhood but have a sentimental or symbolic attachment to it, which translates to them spending both their time and their money there. It has reached a point where Wicker Park has become a destination, not only for out-of-town tourists but for people from other neighborhoods, as boutique-owner Eric explains:

> A tourist comes to downtown; you walk around Michigan Avenue for a couple of days and you're like, okay now what, I want to see a real neighborhood: this is the neighborhood they come to. The train is right here, it's a big part of it. They can catch a train; it's easy to get a train. So they come, they see our independent shops, 'Ph this is cool, this is actually cooler than Michigan Avenue.' So then they go back and tell their friends, come to Wicker Park. So then now it's busier, stores are more vibrant, now you get another bar pops up, another bar pops up, another retails space, a hair salon.

He also talks about a dark side, though. For both local customers and outside tourists, the idea of Wicker Park as a bohemian neighborhood is an important part of its draw, which can feel like voyeurism or "slumming" (see Heap 2009):

> I feel like this is like a zoo, because people come to the neighborhood to see it being something, it's like outsiders coming to see this cool neighborhood and I feel like it's not really as cool as it actually could be. Then one is coming as an outsider to see what's happening and only a few people actually create stuff, you know. But before, I feel like more people who were actually involved in the creative process, not looking, not looking outward in, more just doing it, who were part of it. There were more people who were starting businesses and doing their own thing, now it's like, you get a lot of tourists in the neighborhood, too, now. Before that, you had no tourists coming to the neighborhood, like none.

Eric feels frustration because he feels like Wicker Park's reputation for being cool gets in the way of its ability to actually *be* cool. Not everyone feels this way, though. There are differing reactions to gentrification and its potential to change the neighborhood character of Wicker Park among the merchants there, based on both geographic location and perceived customer base (for further

discussion of these cleavages, see Parker 2018).

Looking for "Something that Sort of Fights the Hipster Wicker Park-ness"

While Eric might not think Wicker Park is as cool as it could be, and Ben might describe Wicker Park as "an artistic bohemian neighborhood" and lament the changes that make it less of one, there are other merchants in the neighborhood who are more wary of Wicker Park's reputation for hipness. They bristle at the neighborhood's reputation for hipness because they feel like their businesses do not fit in. As a result, they come to appreciate a certain kind of development and gentrification that might be dangerous to merchants who rely on the image of Wicker Park as a cool bohemian enclave to attract customers.

Kevin is the manager of a bar and restaurant that he says caters to everyone, from "someone who just kind of lives in the neighborhood or like next to the artist types to the young professionals that live in Lincoln Park to downtown to like my parents." He talks about feeling like his business does not belong during a summer street festival in the neighborhood organized around indie music and says that there was an initial struggle to find a place in the milieu of Wicker Park as a hip neighborhood.

> I think that what we had, I think what we struggled with a little bit before was trying to kind of like fit in with some of the like the, kind of like the hip neighborhood kids and that's not really like.... Those people would go like to go to a different like Nick's, or Flat Iron or Crocodile and some bars just down the street from us and maybe wouldn't want to come in here.

I ask why, and he responds:

> I don't know I think just because we are a little bit more, we are a little bit cleaner. We are a little bit more upscale like those places are kind of like; they are little dingier, they are bit more divey. They are a little more like grimy and edgy.

He's seen a change in the neighborhood, though, that he views as positive:

> But over the years like I feel like it's nice because what you have got, there is different places to going out. It's a little bit different like there is, there are corporate kind of retail place like

> an Urban Outfitters and you've got your Starbucks and stuff like [that].... You notice it when you see the street festival or when you ... like on certain nights during the week when it is mainly just kind of local people bouncing around in the summer time like from bar to bar. It's still got that kind hip kind of vibe to it where ... I think it's always going to have that; I think Wicker Park is always going to be cool.

He claims Wicker Park still has a "hip kind of vibe to it," but likes the increasing number of corporate spaces in the neighborhood. He views this change as good for his bar and for the neighborhood in general as he thinks it opens up the neighborhood to new people.

Similarly, Aubrey, the manager of a clothing resale shop, strives for her store's customer-base to be wide-ranging, including more professional people. She suggests that a reputation for coolness or hipsters might work against this:

> As far as in terms of the customer service that, I mean people see a store like mine and they think immediately like "Oh, I'm going to bring my stuff in there and they are going to treat me like crap and they are going to tell me I'm not cool enough and blah, blah, blah," it's kind of that whole "Have you heard of this band? Of course not, only I know about it" thing. To me it's like the opposite of the customer service that I want presented here, it's I want to be accepting and open, obviously trying to get money from everybody, not just hipsters, frankly they don't have that much.

Perhaps not coincidentally, when asked what kinds of businesses she would like to see open up in the neighborhood, she rattles off a list of chain stores:

> That's a really good question, I mean, I have a couple of things, I would love to see, like, you know, an Anthropologie, like a J. Crew, something that sort of fights the hipster Wicker Park-ness, something just to kind of break up the, it's so impossibly cool here. Something a little more mainstream might be nice, like you know we've got an Aldo and an Urban Outfitters, but like even that is a little too cool for school. I think it would be interesting to see that happen. I mean I'd love to see some other local businesses like local boutiques and things like that would be awesome to get a really specific kind of retail flavor in there.

She still talks about local businesses in a positive light, but the first places she mentions are retail chains to fight the "hipster Wicker Park-ness" of the area.

Coordinating to Sell the Neighborhood

While merchants differ on the degree to which Wicker Park remains hip, they are united in their understanding that it is the perception of this hipness that makes their neighborhood financially successful. Because of this common understanding, they are able to use the neighborhood's reputation as a coordinating mechanism when making decisions.

In discussing gentrification in the neighborhood, respondents return repeatedly to fairly similar issues. Beyond focusing on their position in the neighborhood and who they perceive their customers to be, respondents generally tend to talk about Wicker Park and their place in it, with reference to it being a certain *kind* of neighborhood, in this instance one with a certain level of reputational hipness. The idea of Wicker Park as a hip neighborhood matters in totally different ways for different respondents, but ultimately, they tell stories about the same process from different perspectives. If Lloyd and others documented how Wicker Park and neighborhoods like it became hip, part of the story here is how Wicker Park has become, for some people, *not hip*, which has ramifications for everyone I spoke to.

One gets this sense from insiders. Recently, news came out that Disney would be creating a television version of the 2000 film (and 1995 book) *High Fidelity*. Along with the Liz Phair record *Exile in Guyville* and the fact that MTV deemed the neighborhood worthy of being the setting of a season of their flagship reality franchise *The Real World*, the film *High Fidelity*—about a lovelorn record store clerk played by John Cusack and set in Wicker Park—was one of the most visible pop culture arguments for Wicker Park as a hip neighborhood. And yet, when news of the television show broke, Chicago-based website The AV Club noted that "there's no word if *High Fidelity* the show will shoot in Chicago like the film did, but if it does, please note that Wicker Park is no longer cool. Maybe try Pilsen?" (Ryan 2018). That said, Wicker Park continues to populate local and

national lists of elite hipster neighborhoods and maintains a reputation for hipness that seems unharmed by the demographic and cultural changes that have characterized the neighborhood in recent decades. Why?

Hipness helped build the economic viability of Wicker Park. Jamie, an urban planner who helped develop the neighborhood's Master Plan—an urban planning document outlining the neighborhood's resources, history, and vision for its future— discussed how even those who were development-minded on the neighborhood's Special Service Area (SSA)[2] board "would try to care about the art scene and the music scene because they did recognize that it did bring a unique flavor to the neighborhood and it did draw people in." So what happens if the neighborhood is in danger of losing it? Regardless of their personal ideological commitments or even the type of store they run, merchants make sense of development and gentrification in terms of the neighborhood's reputational hipness—what Deener (2007) calls "the structure and symbol of neighborhood life." Wicker Park is conceived of as a hip neighborhood, and that matters for how these businesses operate whether or not they themselves are conceived of as hip. A look at the Wicker Park-Bucktown SSA Master Plan, with its emphasis on what *kind* of neighborhood Wicker Park is—namely an assertion that "drawn by unique spaces, convenient location, affordable prices and a gritty urban feel, the influx of artists still defines the image and perception of the community" (68)—is enough to realize that the merchants of Wicker Park know how they are getting paid, regardless of the diversity of experiences, opinions, and customer bases that make up the merchant class in the neighborhood. The reputed hipness of Wicker Park was a salient issue in some way for all of my

[2] Special Service Areas are similar to Business Improvement Districts. They draw tax money from local areas and spend that money on neighborhood services and amenities. In Wicker Park, this money has been spent on things like neighborhood festivals and bicycle racks, but also services that the city used to provide on a more regular basis, like snow removal.

respondents. That said, for everyone I talked to, this reputation has benefits and drawbacks.

Table 2.1: Relationship Between Reputation and Business Interests

	Benefits of neighborhood hipness to merchants	**Pathologies of neighborhood hipness to merchants**
Independent business with hipster appeal	Membership in predominant neighborhood aesthetic and economy	Hipness attracts attention from tourists and emigrants from less cool neighborhoods and suburbs, which ruins the neighborhood
Independent business without hipster appeal	Hipness attracts customers to the neighborhood who might patronize businesses	Hipness might prevent chains from coming, which would also attract customers; Image of hipness might scare off customers who are afraid they are not cool enough
Chain store	Hipness makes the neighborhood attractive economically	None, for businesses that are hip enough to fit into the neighborhood

For the independent business owner whose customers are identified as artists, bohemians, or hipsters, the identity of Wicker Park as a hip neighborhood is tied in with their businesses image as hip stores, benefiting them socially and financially. The downside of neighborhood hipness, from this perspective, is that it has the potential to attract attention from tourists and less cool neighborhoods and suburbs, which "ruins" the neighborhood by diluting the coolness or sanitizing the grittiness. For independent businesses without bohemian appeal, the benefit of Wicker Park's reputational hipness is that it attracts potential customers for everyone's business. The downside is that the reputational hipness might constrain the type of development that can occur in the neighborhood, as only certain kinds of chains are in a good position to locate in the area, and that a reputational hipness might scare off some potential customers who are afraid of being deemed not cool enough. Finally, for the chain stores in the neighborhood, the benefit of Wicker Park's reputational hipness is that it provides a neighborhood built largely on consumption that is attractive

from an economic and aesthetic perspective *assuming* your chain can fit in with the neighborhood. The downside for a chain is that it seems that only certain kinds of chains are believed to fit in the neighborhood.

The corporate development that has occurred in Wicker Park has been by and large by chains that have a sort of subcultural feel while still having a traditionally capitalist business model. For example, real estate agent Ian describes the corporate stores in Wicker Park as being stores with clothing that "leans towards that funkier, hipper, younger generation," while urban planner Jamie distinguishes between the higher-priced chains in Bucktown and those found in Wicker Park, saying "Wicker Park is where—when I think about it, it's like Wicker Park is like Bucktown's younger kind of rebellious sibling." Based on the way my respondents discuss development and gentrification in Wicker Park, the image of Wicker Park as a hip, edgy place is what attracts many customers to it in the first place, which means that the continued viability of independent businesses in the neighborhood is not only in the best interests of the independent stores themselves, but also of the corporate stores whose customer-base in the neighborhood is largely ensured by the attraction of a neighborhood people perceive as hip. We might consider the type of commerce directed at children and families in the neighborhood similarly. The scenes described at the beginning of this chapter—of punk rock haircuts and yoga lessons for kids—call out not just to families, but to specific *kinds* of families: those with children, yes, but also those with hipster tastes and money to demonstrate it. If Wicker Park is going to become family friendly, the merchants suggest in their words and actions, it is going to become specifically hipster family friendly.

The ways my respondents make sense of their neighborhood are both animated and constrained by the concept of hipness and what it means to reach an appropriate level of it in Wicker Park. Respondents might disagree about the *accuracy* of this reputation. Boutique-owner Eric

laments that "this is not an avant-garde neighborhood, this is not SoHo," while hair salon owner Masa believes that the neighborhood is still "hip enough." How reputation matters for each merchant depends on a number of factors on which they might differ, but the fact that it does matter is undeniable.

Despite their diversity along a number of dimensions, the merchants of Wicker Park deal with issues within a common reputational context, in this case their neighborhood's reputed hipness. Merchants might respond in different ways to this reputational context—in general, merchants support gentrification when they understand it primarily as an alternative to financial instability and repudiate gentrification when they understand it primarily as a disruptor of aesthetic stability (Parker 2018). But regardless, they all orient their attitudes and decision-making in light of an understanding of their neighborhood as reputationally hip. Neighborhood business communities can be incredibly diverse in terms of any number of dimensions—experience, economic structure, customer base, and financial needs, among them—but the common context of neighborhood reputation unites them and orients them toward at least one common goal and encourages coordination in that endeavor: the maintenance of that neighborhood reputation for hipness.

A shared understanding of reputation is the object around which these merchants coordinate. This does not mean that they agree on every action and neighborhood change—discussion with the urban planner reveals that there is disagreement. No, the fact that merchants coordinate around their conception of Wicker Park's reputation means that it flattens their differences in terms of acceptable plans of action in the neighborhood. The reputation for hipness is what dictates a shared understanding of what Wicker Park is and what the stakes of change are. It creates "the definition of the situation" (Thomas 1919; Goffman 1959). While capitalism is often associated with competition, this coordination of understandings toward a common object reveals

the extent to which cooperation is a necessary component for the successful operation of a commercial district in a neighborhood, even at the level of a single street. Given a set of circumstances, sometimes merchants will cooperate to achieve common goals, as with the construction of a neighborhood master plan. Sometimes they will compete with each other over what priorities ought to win out, which can be seen in the debates during the creation of the master plan. What is important is that they are oriented to the same "definition of the situation" because they share a common understanding of the importance of the neighborhood's reputation. As stakeholders in a neighborhood, merchants of all types have influence in the way their neighborhood develops, whether informally by contributing to a certain sort of consumption environment, or explicitly by helping to formalize guidelines in neighborhood master plans or advocating certain zoning regulations. It is overly simplistic to assume that just because people have distinct economic interests means they will always be at loggerheads over neighborhood issues.

The Stroller and Women in Public

Underneath this coordination, though, there *are* differences. A source of anxiety for some merchants is that while they recognize that Wicker Park's reputation for hipness is what drives money to the neighborhood, demographic shifts threaten to alter that reputation. Part of this is certainly new people moving in—handwringing about people coming from the suburbs or Lincoln Park is common—but it might not always be different people, just the same people at different stages of their lives. This makes the issue of neighborhood change potentially not just a question of group migration, but also biographical life stage processes. Eric brings up the possibility of the same people who used to dress more bohemian needing to dress more conservatively when they get better jobs. Similarly, Rachel says that part of her store's customer population consists of professionals,

even if they targeted the neighborhood because of its "bohemian feel." Specifically, she mentions a "yuppie crowd," and explains what she means:

> [Laughs] Probably the young families in their late 20s, early 30s. People who are starting a family but still want to, you know, keep up with trends and look fashionable and cool, but have clothes that function well for their particular lifestyle. Which is, you know, people who stay at home but do still work from home, and so need to kind of look professional-ish.

Even among businesses who target customers with an idea of bohemia, there is an understanding that some customers will be professional people. Crucially, she says, they may be "starting a family," and indeed many merchants emphasize that the neighborhood serves not just young people, but also families. Of course, with families come strollers, and Anna talks about how at her restaurant, "our running [joke] is especially in the weekends we call it our daily parking section for strollers back here in the back."

It is in the context of this larger wave of neighborhood change—of Wicker Park's demographics shifting and thus their stores and institutions serving a new kind of clientele distinct from the artists and hipsters the neighborhood is known for—that talk of strollers occurs. In talking about strollers, merchants talk about children, yes, but they also talk about all the other changes happening in the neighborhood that are demographically coincident and symbolically associated with children. Whether strollers are viewed with derision or acceptance depends on where the merchant stands on the question of these larger changes in the neighborhood.

The image of the stroller, and of women in public more generally, is deployed rhetorically a number of ways in Wicker Park, and in each one we can find information about the hopes and anxieties in the neighborhood. Specifically, merchants in Wicker Park speak about women in public in two primary ways: first, as representative of the concept of yuppie consumerism, and second, as representative of the concept of family friendliness. This shift is seen by some as a source of ruin and by others as a source of hope. Even those who lament how it is ruining parts of the

neighborhood's aesthetic acknowledge that it is a sign of improvement in terms of the lack of violence in the neighborhood. Data from the United States Census suggests that this perceived shift in Wicker Park to a more feminine, family-friendly place has coincided with a rise in white residents. Analysis of the census data combined with discussion from respondents suggests a possible racialization of concepts of femininity and family-friendliness.[3] When people talk about Wicker Park being overrun with women with strollers, what they may be trying to communicate, whether overtly or not, is that the neighborhood is becoming whiter, or rather a different *kind* of white. While most of the artists and hipsters that moved to Wicker Park in previous decades were white, too, there is a sense that the *new* white people are different.

The expressed reason the influx of yuppies in the neighborhood is one of the major concerns among some merchants is that there is a sense that the people moving in now are fundamentally different from the people who have lived there in the past. Sometimes this is expressed directly, as when Chris, who owns an art gallery, says

> [My wife] did have a studio up here in the arts district, a little tiny attic space. She was probably one of the victims of the artists getting pushed out, whereas rents kind of started to escalate, and the new owner came into the building and said, no, I don't think I want you here anymore, I can get some high-priced yuppies to take over the space.

[3] I used census tracts 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, and 2416 from the Year 2000 Decennial Census, and census tracts 2402, 2403, 2405, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, and 8310 from the Year 2010 Decennial Census. Census tract 8310 did not exist in the 2000 Decennial Census and is a bit overinclusive of the neighborhood but contains a large portion of the northern part of the neighborhood that was covered by census tract 2404 in the 2000 Decennial Census, so it was included in the numbers for 2010. Because of the way the Census boundaries were drawn, these census tracts do not extend to the river to the eastern boundary, but rather to the nearby expressway. This was done to maintain as much consistency between the two Decennial Censuses as possible and should not substantially affect the findings. See Appendix 1 for screenshots of census tract maps for 2000 and 2010. For all 2010 data and data on population by age in 2000 not disaggregated by race, I used Decennial Census Data for 2000 and 2010. For data disaggregated by race in 2000, I used SF4 Sample Data.

While in this example the yuppies, who do not have the same subcultural capital (Thornton 1995) as the artists and hipsters who preceded them, are genderless, other people definitely feminized them. Frank, who manages a boutique, talks about why a Zumiez skateboarding store hypothetically moving into the neighborhood would be a bad thing:

> A Zumiez. It's like a mall skate store. We have Uprise up the street, which has, you know, been there a long time. They care about the Chicago skateboarding scene. Whereas Zumiez, it's just a store that sells skateboarding goods. They don't even know what they're selling. I mean, they have girls that don't know anything about skateboarding working there. It's just, I don't know, they're just cashing in on everything that's good.

Eric talks about an entire lifestyle change associated with the neighborhood:

> You come here, you buy a house, and that's cool, but now you're saying quiet down, because you're not 24 anymore. Now you got a kid, so it was cool to be loud when you were 24, now you are 34 or 35, whatever, with a two-month-old, it's not so cool anymore. So you change the dynamic of the neighborhood. What I said before, you're 24 or 25, you might have wore certain kind of pants, now you've got this job at a law firm, okay now I'm dressing it. You're thinking different, I listen to different kind of music. It's the changing of the neighborhood. I eat different kind of food. I maybe eat fancy food now, before I was eating hamburgers and hotdogs, now I can afford to go out and go to some three, four-star or five-star restaurant with that. So all those things changed, but gentrification, to me, it's a lot of things about, you know, safety. The neighborhood used to be violent, you had gangs. So they slowly move out and nowadays, you know, these girls from Lincoln Park move to the neighborhood, they're not really gangbanging, they just want to go out and get drunk.

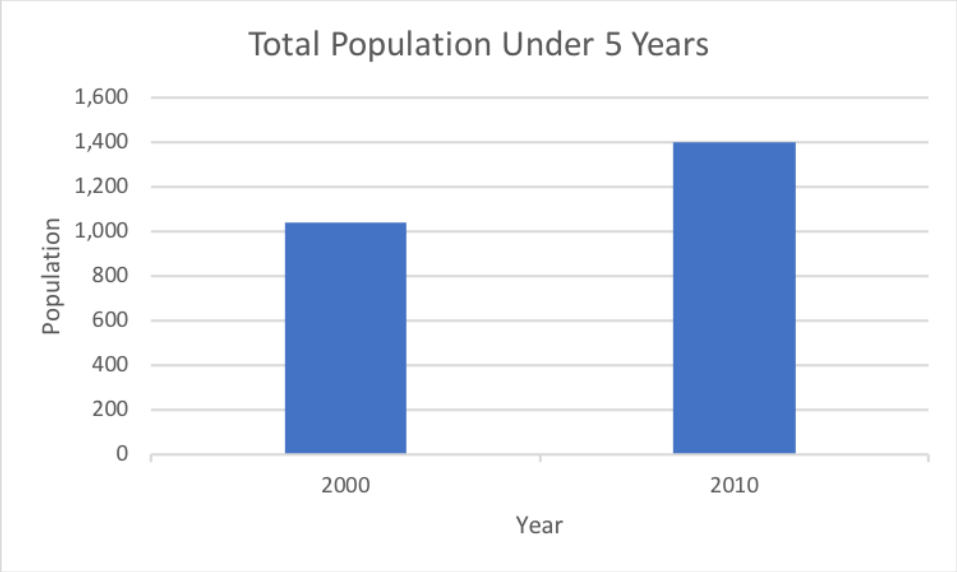
While he certainly does not lament the fact that the neighborhood is less violent, the people he chooses to represent neighborhood change from what it was are "these girls from Lincoln Park . . . [who] just want to go out and get drunk." Not mothers or representatives of families, even the drunk girls of Lincoln Park—a stereotypically "yuppie" neighborhood—are blamed instead of their drunk male counterparts.

It is not just about consumption patterns, though. When discussing the changes going on in their neighborhood, merchants often discuss the shifting demographics of their customers and of people who live near their businesses. Jamie, an urban planner who lives in the neighborhood, comments, "I think there are a lot more kids in the neighborhood now. There's a lot more strollers,

I think. I may just be more aware of it. I don't know. The jury's out on that one, but I think there probably are more young families with young kids."

In fact, there *are* more small children in the neighborhood. In the ten years between 2000 and 2010, the population of children under 5 in Wicker Park—those children most likely to be in strollers—increased from 1,042 to 1,403 (see Figure 2.1). While in terms of proportion of the neighborhood, those under 5 merely went from 5.3% of the neighborhood to 6.48% of the neighborhood, in terms of sheer numbers, this represents almost a 35% increase. Put another way, there were 361 more children under 5 in Wicker Park for merchants—or anyone else in the neighborhood—to see on a day-to-day basis in 2010 than there were in 2000. We will see later in the chapter that the changes become even more drastic when taking race into account, but for now, it is enough to say that there are more children living in the neighborhood, which is to say nothing of the children who come to the neighborhood with their parents in greater numbers as Wicker Park has increasingly become a destination neighborhood for tourists and Chicagoans alike. Not all the toddlers getting punk rock haircuts or taking yoga classes are actually from Wicker Park, but they still spend time there and are part of the population that merchants see on a daily basis. If those with a political and symbolic investment in a neighborhood who do not actually reside there are vicarious citizens (Greene 2014), there is another whole group of people we might call vicarious dependents who are not in the neighborhood voluntarily—they are often being pushed in a stroller by parents—but form part of the social fabric anyway.

Figure 2.1: Total Population Under Five Years in Wicker Park, 2000-2010



The sense among my respondents that the neighborhood is becoming more geared to this demographic is backed up with the demographic reality of a neighborhood with small children in it, and they often comment on this phenomenon by talking about strollers—often in negative terms. Dan, who owns a bar, used to worry about violence in the neighborhood, but says, "Now I worry more about getting run over by a baby stroller or a girl in her SUV on her cell phone." He suggests he will take the trade-off. "I'll take this over bullets flying over my head," he says, but the point is that it *is* a trade-off. Women with strollers and the changes to the neighborhood that they represent are to be tolerated, but only because the alternative is worse.

While there is disappointment and anxiety about the change to Wicker Park women with strollers represent, there is also recognition that it is not all bad. A good example of this recognition comes from JC, who owned a business in the neighborhood. At first, he talks fondly about what the neighborhood used to be like when it was less family friendly:

> It was tons of art galleries and like cheap rents. Our first place that was on Thomas was unbelievable cheap. We would have events where we would open the whole building up and

> all the neighbors would have a house party. You could never do that now. All the neighbors would call the police in five seconds because they'd be like, I have to go to work on Monday!

He is not all nostalgia, though. While he recognizes the draw of this type of neighborhood to *him*, he realizes it is not for everyone:

> I do remember it being a lot more vibrant than it is now, but that also might be romanticizing this idea that shady, rundown neighborhoods that have a couple cool rock clubs or a couple cool bookstores are somehow still great communities. Maybe for a certain set of the population like us would think that's cool, like going to Wax Track Records or something, but I'm sure that it wasn't very pleasant to live there or raise children there at the time, at all.

He even ends up commenting on the rhetorical use of strollers as a way people condemn change:

> The strollers, I'm sure that gets brought up a bunch. I still think that's kind of bullshit to complain about. It's like, look, eventually you're gonna have kids or even if you don't, you're basically saying you're anti-children. I mean so what if there are strollers? It's not it's like they're gas guzzling Hummers or something like that. They're strollers.

Despite the fact that strollers *were* indeed villainized as JC guessed they would be, what they represented—safety and family friendliness—was acknowledged to be a good thing by many respondents.

Frank, who manages a boutique, comments that

> I live with, or my landlord, his parents live in my building, and they've lived there since the 60s, and I don't think they are upset with anything, it's just, if anything they feel safer, because my landlord told me. I think in the 80s, he said our street was really dangerous, but now, you know, you go outside and you see a kid riding his bike with his parents half a block away not really too concerned, you see I don't know, you see people walking alone at night and it's not too big of a deal, so I'm sure they're fine with it, because they're still living the same way, I'm sure.

For Frank, children in the neighborhood represent something positive. Jamie comments on how the aesthetic of the neighborhood may have changed, but that she does not necessarily miss it.

> Even closer to North Avenue, some of the older establishments are gone and there are some newer ones. It's not a value judgment on the older ones but it's just like new energy, new life, new ideas, and just kind of a new take. There were some bars that were like, kind of like—there still are—like, what do they call them, cash and carry, where you can go in and drink a six pack and then walk out with the rest of it. They're not, whatever. They're nice to have

> sometimes but other times it's not like the best … again, like I said, now with a two-year-old, it's like the drunks on the street aren't that exciting, not that they ever were but it's just different.

While Jamie acknowledges that these bars are "nice to have sometimes," she is clear that she does not miss them.

Timothy, who owns a vintage clothing store, talks about this shift in demographics in a positive light, lamenting the fact that the neighborhood is not seen as *more* family friendly, saying that "we are making a strong effort through some of the organizations that I belong to . . . to reformulate the neighborhood's identity and not to change it necessarily but get the message out there that it's a really diverse neighborhood." When I ask him what the current identity of the neighborhood is, he is quick with an answer that "it's a [hip] party neighborhood is what I think if you just ask population at large that is what they'd say." When I ask what he's trying to do, he says:

> I don't think they would talk about as much as it is a neighborhood friendly, family friendly during the day. It kind of has two faces—a day face and a night face. I think a really strong example of that is several years ago there was a neighborhood group that developed a large children's area in our local park and that area exploded and actually now is too small because families with children have adopted that park and are going to that park regularly, but unfortunately, you don't see as many of those strollers on the street shopping in neighborhood stores.

Notice that the strollers are mentioned again, but this time in a positive sense, as something that Timothy would like to see *more* of on the neighborhood shopping street. Strollers are symbols of family friendliness, an image that is understood by him in positive terms.

Women as Stand-Ins for Whiteness

Another number that has dramatically increased during this time period is the proportion of white people in Wicker Park (See Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2: Racial Composition of Wicker Park, 2000-2010

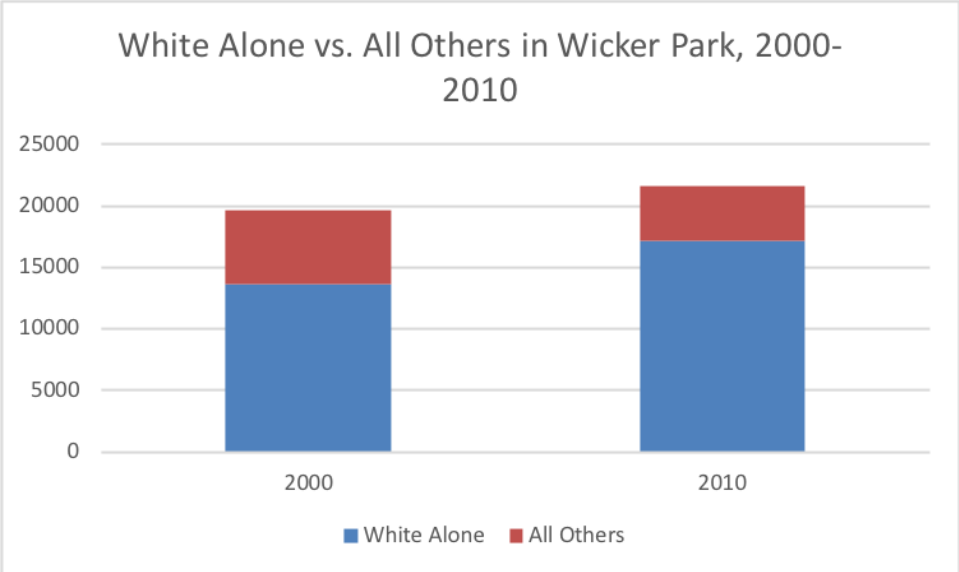
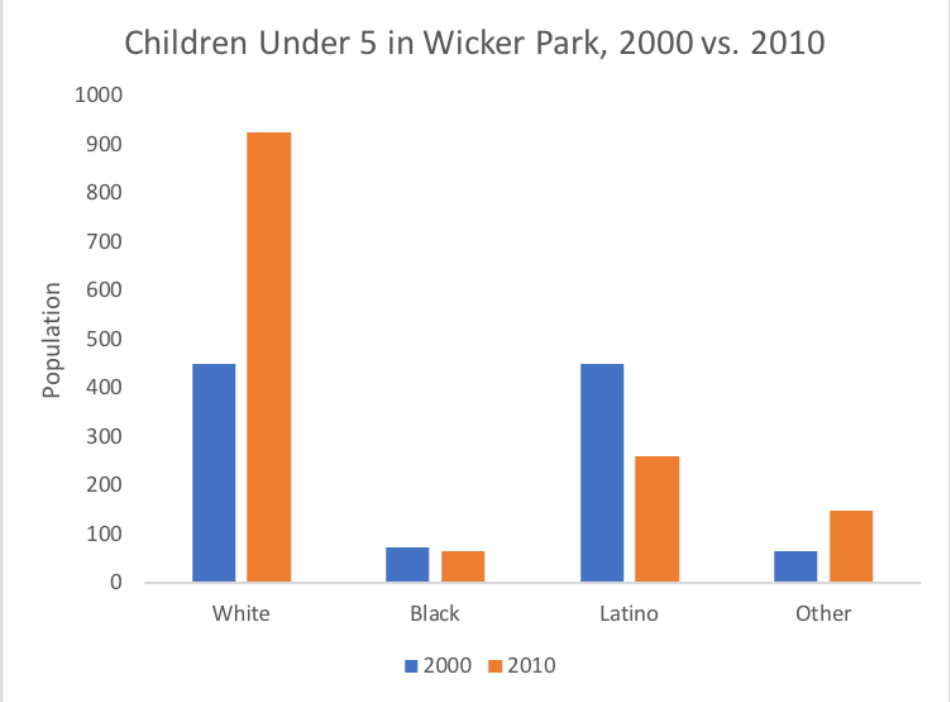


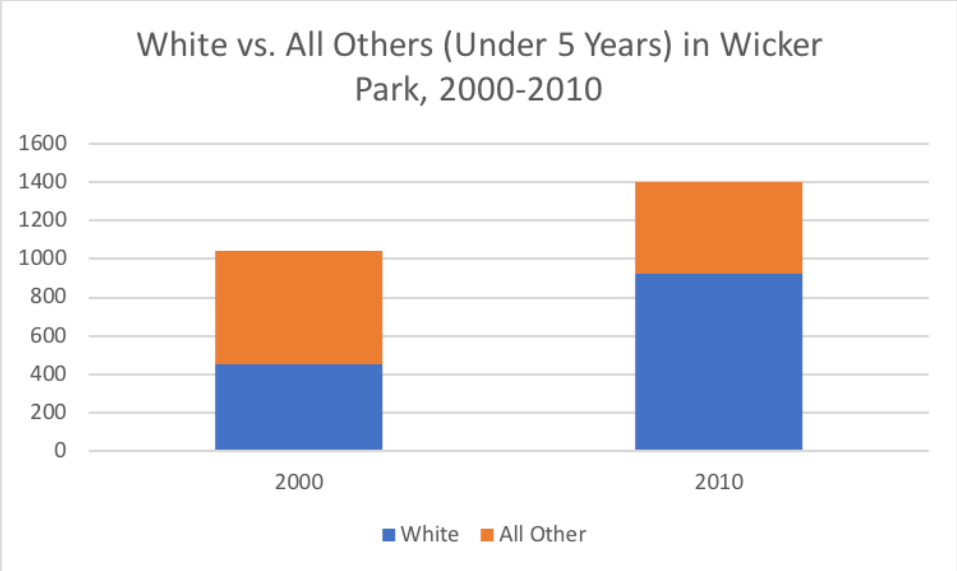
Figure 2.3: Racial Composition of Individuals Under Five Years, Wicker Park 2000-2010



Put in terms of children likely to be in strollers, children under 5 went down slightly for African Americans, from 74 to 67, although there were not many of them compared to the rest of the population to begin with. The real demographic change story for the stroller set comes in the story

of Latinos and whites. The number of Latino children under 5 plummeted from 450 in 2000 to 261 in 2010. The number of white (non-Latino) children under 5, on the other hand, more than doubled, from 451 in 2000 to 925 in 2010. (See Figure 2.3) Taken together, these changes mean that white children under 5 years went from being a slight minority in their age group in 2000 to making up almost a two-thirds majority (see Figure 2.4). Just based on sheer numbers, merchants are significantly more likely to see white children in strollers in the neighborhood now than they were at the beginning of the century and are less likely to see children of color in strollers. This is a drastic change in the makeup of the neighborhood above and beyond the simple increase in children overall. When people talk about Wicker Park being overrun with women with strollers, another fact that they may be trying to communicate is that the neighborhood is becoming whiter.

Figure 2.4: White Vs. All Other (Under Five Years) in Wicker Park, 2000-2010



There is evidence for this in the interviews. Eric, who owns a boutique, frames the stroller as representative of a very specific kind of neighborhood change:

> Like I said, I mentioned not seeing a thirty-one-year-old white lady pushing on a stroller down the street with a two-year-old baby. You just didn't see that. You would see the eighteen-year-old black girl or eighteen-year-old Puerto Rican girl or eighteen-year-old white girl pushing the baby, if you went to Clemente or Wells [area high schools]. You'd see that.

> But you wouldn't see like a soccer mom, you just wouldn't see that. You wouldn't see the coffee shop place. Starbucks moved in, everyone was like oh it's the end of, no, it wasn't that kind of, I mean you had coffee shops, they weren't called Urbis Orbis [a coffee shop that was a neighborhood institution in the 1990s before it closed and was replaced by a bank], it was different, it wasn't a corporate coffee.

For Eric, the "thirty-one-year-old white lady pushing on a stroller" or "the soccer mom" is representative of the same thing that Starbucks is: something that is perhaps technically similar to what was in the neighborhood before, but is obviously different to anyone who knows about the neighborhood. In the same way that Starbucks and Urbis Orbis both fit in the broad category of coffee shops, the "thrity-one-year-old white lady pushing on a stroller" and "the eighteen-year-old black girl or eighteen-year-old Puerto Rican girl or eighteen-year-old white girl pushing the baby" near the local high schools fit in the broad category of women with children. The fact is, though, that Starbucks represents, to Eric, the gentrification of the neighborhood, as does the "thirty-one-year-old white lady pushing on a stroller."

This quote is illustrative of the way rhetoric about change in Wicker Park is not only gendered, but classed and raced, as well. By and large, when discussing women in public as a way to talk about the change in their neighborhood, respondents talked either implicitly or explicitly about women who were wealthy and white. It is not that there were not families or children in the neighborhood before it gentrified. It is just that it was not wealthy white families, but families of color. Again, the interview data backs this up, as respondents talk about how the neighborhood used to have more families of color, but that now there are more young people. Anthony, who manages a furniture store, talks about the demographic changes in the neighborhood and how it has affected his business:

> It's a lot less Hispanics. I would have to say using the median age has come down a little bit. Especially local customers, you know we get a lot of younger, single or recently married customers. And, you know, they need their basics. They need maybe a sofa, a bed, a small dinette. Where before the customer maybe it was a little bit older, maybe already have a child

> or two, so they would buy instead of a bed, a bedroom set; instead of a sofa, a living room set.

There are actually two framing demographic shifts going on in merchants' narratives about Wicker Park. First, there is the shift from Latino families to young white hipsters. Second, there is the shift from young white hipsters to upwardly mobile white families, who are sometimes associated with yuppies. Which shift one focuses on is largely dependent on who one's customers are. If, like Anthony, your customers were historically Latino families, their decline in the neighborhood would be what is important to you. If, on the other hand, your customers have historically been white hipsters, then it is their perceived decline and the concomitant perceived increase in families that becomes your primary concern.

Family friendliness for many merchants also is tied up in the idea of the suburbs. Because of a number of factors in the middle of the twentieth century, including federal loan policy, the expansion of the highway system, and the end of restrictive covenants (for discussion of housing policy and suburbanization in the time period, see Hirsch 1983 and Jackson 1985), American suburbia has historically been white and wealthy and certainly retains that reputation despite increased heterogeneity (Bourne 1996; Murphy 2010). Multiple merchants commented that people who in the past would have lived in suburban locations are now choosing to live in cities. JC, who owned a business in the neighborhood prior to my interview with him, talked about this change:

> I grew up in Oak Brook, which is right by Oak Park. But the shit has been resettled severely in the last 15 years where no one has really had this inclination to move to the suburbs, even when they've had kids. The schools have gotten better, the neighborhoods have gotten safer, it's cleaner. One thing that Daley really did do is clean the fucking shit out of this place. I just remember Chicago being so dirty and Wicker Park almost feeling like there was tumbleweed on the street. It had a Wild West kind of feel at night because it really was only bars and stuff.

Jamie, the urban planner who lives in the neighborhood and has a child, echoes a similar sentiment:

> This is interesting as well as a result of where the economy is now. People who maybe thought they were going to live in [nearby] Bucktown for three years, invest in a property, and then sell it for a big profit are finding that they can't do that, and so they're having to stay in the neighborhood. So I think that's also part of the reason why you see people investing more in like, okay, if we're going to be in this neighborhood, let's make it a good neighborhood. Let's make sure the schools are good. So I think people are finding that in a lot of neighborhoods that this idea that you would live somewhere for a couple years, make a lot of money on your investment, and then move out to the suburbs isn't panning out for people because they can't sell, or they'll sell for a loss, or they're not going to sell for what they thought they'd be able to sell it for. So they start looking around and they're like, okay, well, maybe the school here in the neighborhood isn't so bad. It's just kind of the reality, which I think in the end could be a real benefit for the city that they're not losing all these people who choose to move to the suburbs. So that's a change I think I've seen in the last seven years is that maybe there were a lot of strollers before, but now I see a lot of five-year olds, too. It's like filling in a little bit more in those in between ages and not just the babies.

Strollers are just the most visible symbol of a perceived demographic shift in the neighborhood. While they are often brought up to talk about a perceived increase in women, children, and families, what they may actually be representing is a specific influx of wealthy white families that have changed the character of the neighborhood.

Conclusion

Women with strollers are many things in Wicker Park beyond just themselves, and like all reputational objects, become metonymic for how people perceive the neighborhood. When the shopkeepers of Wicker Park speak negatively about strollers, it is not just about it getting harder to navigate the sidewalks. Rather, it is an expression of anxiety about the changing demographics of Wicker Park. Cognitively, people bundle together a number of cultural ecological characteristics that have, in their minds, elective affinities (Weber 1915) with each other. The unifying factor of this bundle could best be described as being unlike the image of the typical Wicker Park hipster—middle-aged, wealthy, and domestic instead of young, poor (perhaps voluntarily), and without families. Some merchants then associate this bundle with an object that they invest their anxiety in: the stroller.

There is reason to believe that this process is not limited to the case of Wicker Park. Ghaziani (2018) discusses how in "gayborhoods," strollers often represent a straight incursion into queer space. We must remember, as Ghaziani says, that "symbols acquire significance in particular places and times and for certain groups of people" (2018: 208–209), which is to say that not every stroller is the same. Although at some level it represents a significant social change whenever it is deployed rhetorically, the particular threat the stroller plays in each of these scenarios is different than it is in Wicker Park. Ghaziani's respondents fear that a space that has been important to them for reasons of both safety and symbolism is changing character. For the shopkeepers in Wicker Park, the change is distressing because of the possibility that a financially remunerative reputation is in danger of withering away.

This is what unifies the shopkeepers of Wicker Park: they are subject to the same reputation, to the same understanding that outsiders have of them *merely by dint of being in the same neighborhood*. They can differ on any number of dimensions—and indeed they do, from financial strength to customer base—but they are tied together by what other people think about Wicker Park. Their individual destinies are shaped, in large part, by the fact that other people think that Wicker Park is hip, and they know it. This shared understanding is the root of the merchants' ability to coordinate actions despite their differences, but it is also the root of their different responses to the stroller as a cultural object.

CHAPTER THREE

A PLACE ON *THAT* CORNER?:

UNDEFENDING THE NEIGHBORHOOD IN BRIDGEPORT

Right before I moved to Bridgeport, I told a professor who had studied in Chicago in the 1970s that I was moving there because I thought it seemed like an interesting place, and he seemed bemused. "Bridgeport is so square," he said, explaining that it had always struck him as a boring place, with the most remarkable aspect of it during his time in Chicago in the 1970s being the putrid smells emanating from the Chicago Stockyards immediately south of the neighborhood.

Three years later, well into my dissertation research on the neighborhood, I told a different professor that I lived in Bridgeport and studied it. "See, you can go there, but I can't," she said. While the first professor I had told about my move to Bridgeport was a white man, the second professor I told was an African American woman. At this point, three years into living in the neighborhood, I was not surprised by this response. Time after time, any time I told a person of color, friend or stranger, that I lived in Bridgeport, I noticed a slight shift in the social interaction. Sometimes it was just a look and a brief moment of quiet, but sometimes I would hear stories.

A South Asian Uber driver gave me a ride home once and told me that he had gone to school at the Illinois Institute of Technology, just a few blocks east of the Interstate that served as Bridgeport's eastern boundary. He had even lived in Bridgeport at the time. When I asked him what it was like then, he told me that he and his roommate had avoided going out at night for fear of harassment.

It happened again the final weekend at Schaller's Pump. Schaller's, a tavern, was the longest-serving restaurant of any kind in the city when it closed in 2017. It had opened in 1881, and in the intervening 136 years had made it through the Black Sox scandal, two World Wars, Prohibition, and

the rise of Bridgeport as the home of the Chicago Democratic Machine. This last one—with its associated five mayors from the neighborhood since 1933, overseeing Chicago politics from City Hall for all but 15 of the 84 years since then—was on view out the front window in the form of the 11th Ward Regular Democratic Organization directly across the street. While drinking the last can of Hamm's, a cheap Midwestern lager, Fernando, a friend of a friend I was with, arrived to join us for the bar's last weekend. Fernando, who is Mexican-American, was wearing a White Sox hat and explained there was a particular reason for this. "This place has a history of not really liking other races," he said before ordering from the dwindling supply of cans of domestic beer. I did not ask him if he meant the bar or the neighborhood. While Fernando did not get into the story that night, I would find out over the course of doing fieldwork, conducting interviews, and living in the neighborhood, Bridgeport's reputation for racial hostility was salient in Chicago, especially within communities of color on the South and West Sides, where parents and grandparents would pass on warnings to their children to avoid the neighborhood.

I lived in Bridgeport on the near South Side of Chicago for just under six years, in the top floor of a brick three-flat apartment building. A block to my east was a housing project, and a block to the west was a coffee shop, a hipster bar, a fusion Polish Korean restaurant, and a laundromat I would lug my clothes basket to even in the frigid winter as my own apartment did not have a washer or dryer. Across the street was an auto mechanic and a convenience store my roommate and I always suspected was a front for something.[1] My building had a stoop that led up to a door decorated with lace curtains, and a rotating cast of signs. One that said "We Support First

[1] When it got raided by police and shut down in 2018, our suspicions were confirmed. While the owner denied accusations of illegal activity, a newspaper reported that it was "closed for promoting and contributing to illegal activity" (Charles 2018). We never got a clear answer on what exactly they were selling besides Gatorade, cigarettes, and cereal.

Responders" stayed up through different seasons, while festive decorations switched in and out for whatever holiday or event was closest at hand— Christmas, St. Patrick's Day, the Chicago White Sox home opener, Easter. These decorations were changed assiduously with the season by my landlords, an older white couple who lived in the apartment on the first floor. The building had been in her family for decades, belonging to her parents before it was passed down to her. He worked at a nearby airport, and she used to work at Wal-Mart but was now semi-retired and dealing with some health issues. Rent was cheap and paid in cash. "It is a cash economy in Bridgeport," laughed one of my respondents when I told him this, which meant that on the first of every month, I went downstairs with a handful of twenties. My landlord would write me a receipt for the first few years, but after a while we both just sort of forgot about that formality. I never signed a lease.

Bridgeport has been and, in some ways, continues to be what Suttles (1972) called "a defended neighborhood." In this chapter, I aim to explore this general sociological concept, apply it to the history Bridgeport, and then offer a new concept to explain the thoughts and actions of my respondents. First, I will review sociological literature about neighborhood hostility to outsiders, specifically Suttles's concept of the defended neighborhood. Then, I will review Bridgeport's history as a place with a reputational hostility to people of color, particularly African Americans, placing it firmly within the tradition of the defended neighborhood. Then, using interview data from my respondents, I will propose that a group of them attempt a process I call *undefending the neighborhood*. This process, and the rhetoric around it, coalesces around the merchants in Bridgeport, and particularly around a single neighborhood tavern. The undefending of Bridgeport is a complicated process that encompasses moral objections to exclusion, but also economic motives for inclusion and the creation of a new moral order that, ironically, perpetuates one form of exclusion in response

to another. In the conclusion of the chapter, I will propose a rationale for *why* businesses are important sites of reputational change because of their dual roles as both bellwethers and vanguards.

Forbidding Reputations

Much of the recent attention the concept of neighborhood reputation has gotten has been concerned with the drawing power of a positive reputation. Neighborhoods with a reputation for hipness attract a certain kind of economic jumpstart in formerly moribund industrial corridors (Lloyd and Clark 2001; Lloyd 2005), with research focusing on the remunerative powers of reputations to do with music scenes (Grazian 2003), art scenes (Currid 2007), and bar scenes (Ocejo 2014). Moving up a level of scale from neighborhood to city, Florida (2005) documents how cities perceived to be "tolerant" are economically advantaged in an economy that focuses on attracting skilled workers. In all of these contexts, place reputation is crucial as an attractive force, something to draw in workers and tourists and dollars to a neighborhood or a city.

By and large, a positive view of the possibilities of place reputation has sprung up, with a cottage industry of academic entrepreneurs cropping up to tell people of the wonders of "creative cities" that can bring people together and drive up profits for companies and, crucially, cities looking for a replacement for their formerly industrial economies (Florida 2002; O'Connell 2017; Wainwright 2017). While this function of reputation is important—and was covered extensively in Chapter Two on Wicker Park—it is not the whole story. In fact, some of the most important work connected to neighborhood reputation has historically not been related to what attracts people to particular neighborhoods, but rather what keeps people out. The quintessential conception of reputational work in neighborhoods studies is that of the "defended neighborhood."

Suttles (1972) identifies the defended neighborhood as "the residential group which seals itself off through the efforts of delinquent gangs, by restrictive covenants, by sharp boundaries, or

by a forbidding reputation," and identifies it as "a major category in sociological analysis" (21). While early urban ecologists (Park and Burgess 1925; Hoyt 1939) focused on the movement of individuals and groups across the urban landscape as a function of economic determinism constrained by physical features of the land, cultural ecologists like Suttles and Firey (1945) identified cultural, sentimental, and symbolic motivations behind the way people move through the city. A defended neighborhood is a creation of its residents, an attempt to mark clear territorial lines over which certain other groups should not step. These territorial demarcations are particularly crucial in the absence of physical barriers that might serve the same purpose, like rivers, railroad tracks, highways, or mountains.

These lines become socially important when they are incorporated into what Suttles calls "cognitive maps" (22). The defended neighborhood is a two-sided process, whereby those in the neighborhood attempt to keep others out, and those outside it are aware that it represents territory they are unwelcome in. Whereas Park and Burgess focused on questions of residential succession, or where groups of people are sorted in terms of residence throughout the city, Suttles recognized that people move through parts of the city that they do not necessarily live in on a regular basis, and that in order to decide whether or not to go to a place—to go shopping, to go to a bar, to simply go for a walk—a person must have "a set of social categories for differentiating between those people with whom one can or cannot safely associate and for defining the concrete groupings within which certain levels of social contact and social cohesion obtain" (22). This set of social categories helps a person construct their cognitive map, which provides an important mechanism by which the defended neighborhood is defended. Trespassers can be dealt with by youth gangs, and interlopers can be thwarted by restrictive covenants, but perhaps the most powerful part of a defended neighborhood is the "forbidding reputation" that stops people from even trying to come to the

neighborhood in the first place. Since its founding, Bridgeport has been defended along all these dimensions, most notoriously its reputational racism. A new generation of merchants in the neighborhood is pushing against that reputation. They are attempting to undertake what I call the *undefending of the neighborhood*, a process that has found its symbolic focus on Bridgeport's most significant reputational object: the neighborhood tavern. Before discussing the undefending of Bridgeport, I will discuss how it got defended in the first place.

The Defended Neighborhood in Bridgeport

Bridgeport is the oldest neighborhood in Chicago, and almost from its birth, it has been known as a place hostile to people of color, particularly African Americans. Founded in 1836 on an area previously called Hardscrabble, Bridgeport was established to house the largely Irish laborers working on the Illinois and Michigan Canal (Pacyga 2004). From that point on, Bridgeport was an important hub of industry in Chicago, with its role as a resource transportation center augmented by the industry provided by the meatpacking district immediately to the south in the Back of the Yards neighborhood. Though originally Irish, the neighborhood became a patchwork of different white European ethnicities over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In 1927, Thrasher described the neighborhood, saying, "the earliest settlers in Bridgeport were the Irish who retreated before the influx of Germans. The latter in turn gave way to the Poles who are in the majority today" (17). Eventually, Irish, German, Polish, Lithuanian, Croatian, and Italian communities all formed solid ties in the neighborhood, largely focused on Catholic parishes, but also on other institutions like unions, youth gangs called "athletic clubs," and neighborhood taverns.

Labor Strife

With this diversity of ethnicity came territoriality as documented by Suttles (1968, 1972), as well as conflict between ethnic groups, like "an almost legendary clash between the Germans and

the Irish [that] occurred in 1856" (Pacyga 2004). While internecine rivalries within the neighborhood certainly existed, what Bridgeport became notorious for was its hostility to people of color, particularly African Americans. Manifestations of this hostility date at least as far back as the Civil War when there were rallies in favor of the Confederacy in the neighborhood (Pacyga 2004). Much of the racism was rooted in fears about labor competition. Drake and Cayton (1945), in *Black Metropolis*, note as much in their description of just who opposed black migration to the city.

> Opposition to an increase in the Negro population was most pronounced among the white laboring classes. It was not the issue of social equality which fundamentally disturbed them, however, but the fear and suspicion that Negro freedmen would be used to depress the wage level. Most bitter in their opposition were the Irish, who, Catholic and poor, were scornfully referred to as "unwashed Dimmycrats" by the Protestant Republican businessmen and artisans who controlled the city and professed to champion the Negro. From time to time during the twenty years preceding the Civil War, Irish workingmen in Chicago rioted against fugitive slaves who secured employment as stevedores, porters, canal bargemen, and general laborers. (42–43)

They further note that "three years after the Civil War, Irish contingents in a Democratic election parade in Chicago carried signs denouncing Republican reconstruction policies in the South: 'LET THE NIGGERS PAY FOR THEIR OWN SOUP'; 'NO NIGGER VOTING'; 'WHITE SUPREMACY'" (44). Strife over labor intensified during and after the Great Migration, as the African American population in Chicago ballooned. "The 1910–20 increase in the Negro population of Midwest Metropolis (from 44,103 to 109,458) amounted to 148 per cent" (348). African Americans, new to the city and looking for work, were used to break a stockyards' strike three years after WWI, and "although they became permanently established in that industry they earned the bitter antagonism of Irish, Polish and Italian workers" (77). The fact that African Americans had fewer rights and opportunities and could thus be conscripted into breaking strikes as "scabs" intensified whatever racial animosity already existed among white laborers in Chicago.

Race Riot

Bridgeport, as a site of both industry and a white residential neighborhood at the edge of the Black Belt, was an ethnically charged neighborhood, particularly at Wentworth Avenue, the dividing line between Bridgeport and the Black Belt. Youth gangs would patrol the boundary and attack outsiders. Gangs had always been part of Bridgeport—in his exhaustive analysis of Chicago gangs (1927), Thrasher identifies the first gang in Chicago in Bridgeport in the 1860s, although back then "most of the mischief committed by neighborhood gangs was breaking fences and stealing cabbages, for there was not much else to take" (17). Soon enough, they would be involved with more nefarious activity. Drake and Cayton document the terror the gangs wreaked at territorial boundaries, describing a very literally defended neighborhood decades before Suttles took up the term:

> Attacks and reprisals were particularly bitter up and down the western and southern boundary between the Irish neighborhoods and the Black Belt. Here, youthful white gangs—the so-called athletic clubs—functioning with the tacit approval of the ward politician who sponsored them, raided the Negro community, attacking the people whom for years they had derided as "jugs," "shines," "dinges," "smokes," and "niggers," and who were now fair game. (66)

These attacks gained particular prominence in the city around the time of the 1919 riots.[2] The Chicago Commission on Race Relations (1922), charged with investigating the causes of the riots, described a similar situation:

[2] The summer of 1919 was referred to nationally as the "red summer" (Tittle 1970) because of the race riots that occurred across the country, and Chicago had among the worst of its kind. The riot started when Eugene Williams, a seventeen-year-old African American boy, drowned after having a rock thrown at him when he swam too close to the whites-only portion of the lakeshore at 29th Street Beach. A policeman refused to arrest the man, and "within two hours the riot was in full sway, had scored its second fatality, and was spreading throughout the south and southwest parts of the city" (1). African Americans' precarious position in the labor market again contributed to the violence, as the Commission reports that "as the afternoon wore on, white men and boys living between the Stock Yards and the 'Black Belt' sought malicious amusement in directing mob violence against Negro workers returning home." (5-6) In addition to attacks taking place, buildings were

> As part of the background of the Chicago riot, the activities of gangs of hoodlums should be cited. There had been friction for years, especially along the western boundary of the area in which Negroes mainly live, and attacks upon Negroes by youth toughs had been particularly frequent in the spring just preceding the riot. They reached a climax on the night of June 21, 1919, five weeks before the riot, when two Negroes were murdered. Each was alone at the time and was the victim of unprovoked and particularly brutal attack. Molestation of Negroes by hoodlums had been prevalent in the vicinity of parks and playgrounds and at bathing-beaches. (3)

It was these "youth toughs" organized in athletic clubs that were ascribed much of the blame for the 1919 race riots that occurred in Chicago, with the Commission reporting that "but for them it is doubtful if the riot would have gone beyond the first clash" (11). The most famous of these athletic clubs was the Hamburg Athletic Club, which counted among its members in 1919 the seventeen-year-old future Mayor Richard J. Daley, who went his entire career neither confirming nor denying his participation in the riot.

The 1919 race riots in Chicago that largely centered in the area around Bridgeport certainly burnished the neighborhood's reputation for racism and is indeed brought up among my respondents when they explain what outsiders think of the neighborhood. That said, the fact that there were rumors of bodies being disposed of in Bubbly Creek *in 1919* speaks to the reputation that Bridgeport already had among communities of color.

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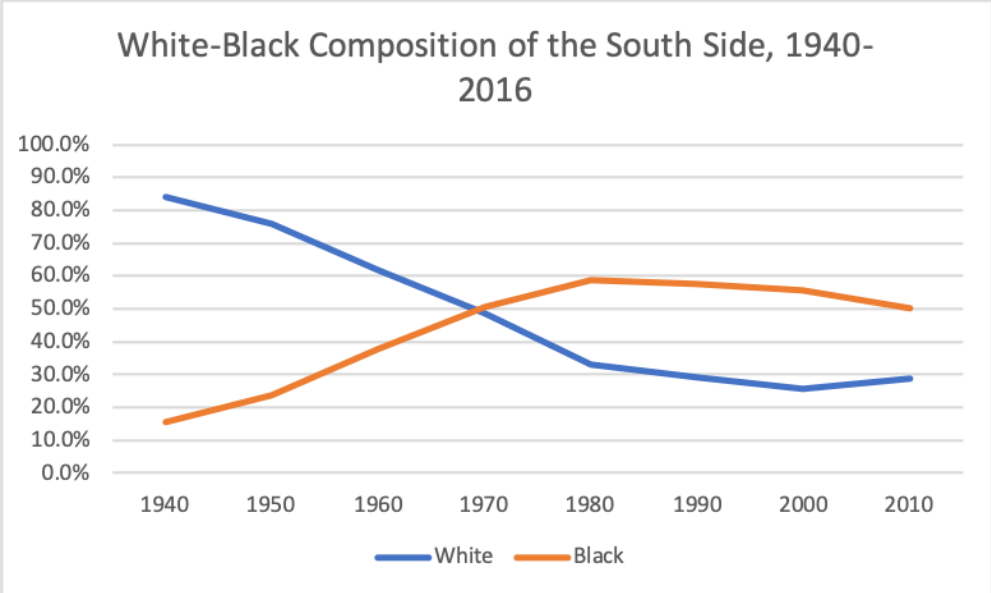
bombed. Accounting for the injuries, the Commission reports that "the worst clashes were in Districts I and III, and of those reported injured, 34 per cent received their wounds in the 'Black Belt,' District I, and 41 per cent on the South West Side, in the district including the Stock Yards, District III." (9) District III consisted largely of Bridgeport and the Stockyards. The Commission also reports that on Halsted Street, which is the major commercial corridor in Bridgeport and Back of the Yards, "crowds of young men rode in trucks shouting they were out to "get the niggers" (11). "Thirty-eight persons killed, 537 injured, and about 1,000 rendered homeless and destitute" was the Commission's official count (1922: 1), but there were rumors of even more deaths. Indeed, Fred, who is a fifth generation Bridgeporter whose family arrived in the neighborhood sometime in the nineteenth century, tells me that "there were a lot more people killed in that than, you know, the history books say." The Commission commented on these rumors, noting that "a rumor became current that bodies of riot victims were thrown into [Bridgeport's Bubbly Creek]. It became so persistent that efforts were actually made to discover them" (570).

Redlining, Restrictive Covenants, and the Machine

Events that stoked the reputation of Bridgeport as a racist neighborhood did not end in 1919. A significant part of the reputation for racism is related to its status as a white neighborhood on the edge of African American areas and the conflict that goes on at that border. A look at the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) maps reveals the state of Bridgeport in the 1930s. The HOLC maps became infamous for the creation of redlining—areas deemed "Hazardous" (as opposed to "Definitely Declining," "Still Desirable," and "Best") were literally marked in red, identifying them as neighborhoods of high risk for mortgage lenders. This practice, of course, crippled entire neighborhoods by cutting them off from financial resources and most notoriously affected Black neighborhoods, exacerbating inequality and segregation in American cities (Massey and Denton 1998). Despite its status as a highly defended neighborhood against Blacks, much of Bridgeport was redlined as well. The reports for the areas of the neighborhood are illuminating: they mention the ethnic makeup, the housing stock, the defended nature of the neighborhood—"There are no colored people, Wentworth being the barrier to colored infiltration; the Irish would not allow them across" (Nelson et al. n.d.)—and over and over again, the noxious smell from the stockyards, especially when the wind blew from the south. The area is consistently described as blighted. The reports point in the same direction: Bridgeport was poor, ethnic, and utterly dilapidated, yes, but it was at least still white.

Bridgeport's status as a defended neighborhood *par excellence* was intensified during the middle part of the twentieth century, as the formerly mostly white South Side transitioned quickly to being mostly African American [see Figure 3.1], which is a state of affairs that persists to this day.

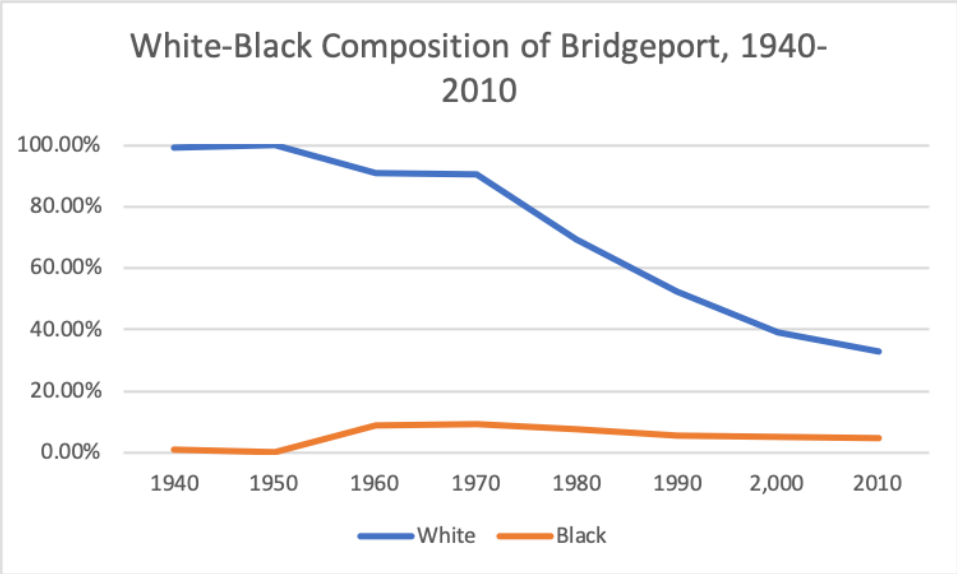
Figure 3.1: White-Black Composition of the South Side, 1940-2010



This rapid transition in the South Side's racial composition has to do with a number of factors—suburbanization and the rise of the automobile (Jackson 1985), along with the previously mentioned HOLC maps and a GI Bill that offered favorable lending opportunities to whites and not Blacks, gave whites with more financial resources the *pull* factor out of the city. A *push* factor came in 1948 when the Supreme Court ruled that restrictive covenants were unenforceable in *Shelley vs. Kraemer.*[3] All of the sudden, the South Side of Chicago changed demographics radically, as formerly white neighborhoods became predominantly African American almost overnight in a process exacerbated by redlining and blockbusting.

[3] Restrictive covenants were mechanisms in real estate contracts that prevented the buyer from selling the property in the future to certain proscribed groups. In 20th century America, these groups were typically African Americans and sometimes Jews. For a discussion of the use of restrictive covenants in Chicago, see Hirsch (1983).

Figure 3.2: White-Black Composition of Bridgeport, 1940-2010



Bridgeport was an exception [see Figure 3.2],[4] and it largely had to do with the fact that it had become the center of political power in Chicago. The last year Chicago had a Republican mayor was 1931, when Al Capone ally William Hale Thompson lost to Anton Cermak from Pilsen, a

[4] To gather Census data for Bridgeport for 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010, I used the 2010 Census tracts 3403, 3404, 3405, 3406, 6004, 6006, 6007, 6009, 8397, 8398, 8399, 8400, 8401, 8402. For Censuses for 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000, I used data from Social Explorer for data from those years on 2010 geographies. For the Census for 1960, I used the 1960 Census tracts 526-Z, 527-Z, 532-Z, 534-Z, 760, 761, 762-Z, 764-Z, 765, 767-Z, 768, 769, 770, 771-Z, 773, 777, 778, 779, 780, and 781. For Censuses from for 1940 and 1950, I used the Census tracts 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781. Given the long timespan of the years I looked at, terminology and groupings changed, eg before 1990, the category "Persons of Spanish Origin" existed instead of "Hispanic" or "Hispanic or Latino." While this change in terminology did not have serious effects on how the data relevant to my analysis was organized, what groups were counted and how they were organized did. In the 1980 Census, Asians were collapsed into a category with Pacific Islanders, American Indians, Eskimos, and Aleuts. An examination of this group disaggregated into separate categories reveals that, in the Bridgeport census tracts, it is comprised almost entirely of those of Chinese origin, at rates above 90 percent. In censuses prior to 1980, however, *all* individuals that were neither white nor Black were collapsed into the category "Other." There is a "Count of Spanish American Persons" in 1970—just under 5,000— but unlike in other years, there is no count of white non-Latinos, so there is no way of knowing how many of the 38,785 people counted as white in Bridgeport that year were Latino. The "Other" category that year counted only 192 persons, or 0.5 percent of the population.

neighborhood immediately north of Bridgeport then dominated by Czechs. Cermak went after Capone and his syndicate, but died when he was shot in Miami in 1933. There are still questions as to whether the bullet was meant for him or the man he was shaking hands with, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Bridgeport's Edward Kelly was then elected mayor that year. In the eighty-seven years between 1933, when Kelly began serving, and 2019, there have been only eighteen years during which a Bridgeporter was *not* mayor for at least part of the year. The most dominant stretch occurred from 1933 to 1979, which saw an uninterrupted stretch of four Bridgeport mayors: Kelly, Martin Kennelly, Richard J. Daley, and Michael Bilandic. The fifth Bridgeport mayor, Richard M. Daley—son of Richard J. Daley—was elected after a Bridgeport interregnum in 1989 and served until retiring in 2011.

One of the benefits of Bridgeport's position at the center of political power in Chicago for much of the twentieth century is that the local Democratic Machine offered patronage jobs. "All this political clout means nearly every family has got somebody on a government payroll," Chicago writer Mike Royko (1968) explained in a column the week of the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago that ended in protests and police violence. "In the East, some families register a newborn son at Harvard or Yale. In Bridgeport, they sign him on with city water department." As a result, Bridgeport had enormous numbers of residents with lucrative city jobs, and "it once was estimated that a quarter of the city's 20,000 patronage workers came from Bridgeport or its surrounding precincts" (Lipinski 1989). These jobs are contingent on their holders maintaining residence within the city, which created an incentive for a large number of Bridgeporters who might otherwise have joined in the white flight to the suburbs of the middle of the twentieth century to stay in the neighborhood. As a result, Bridgeport remained stubbornly white while most of the rest of the South Side changed over to predominantly African American. As a result of this fact, and its history

of racist activity, Bridgeport became even more symbolically white, both to the African Americans who now dominated the rest of the South Side demographically if not politically, and also to the whites who lived in the neighborhood and developed a sort of siege mentality of the kind documented by Suttles in his work on the defended neighborhood (1972).

Persistent Reputation

This reputational state of affairs was passed down from generation to generation—affirmed anytime I told a person of color from Chicago I lived in or was studying Bridgeport[5]—and was occasionally reaffirmed throughout the twentieth century by explosive cases that suggested things in Bridgeport were very much the same as they had always been. When comedian and civil rights activist Dick Gregory led a march against racism in schools to Richard J. Daley's home in the 1960s, "he was hosed down by Mayor Richard J. Daley's Bridgeport neighbors, who turned their sprinklers on him and chanted '2, 4, 6, 8, we don't want to integrate!'" A 1989 newspaper article documents a few more recent cases, like how "a Black man was run over by a car and hit with a stick because he dared to rent a wedding tuxedo in a Bridgeport store seven years ago, and a Black woman was jeered and tormented for the crime of joining white friends in a softball game at McGuane Park ten years back" (Smith 1989). In the 1990s, there were reports that "the first Black family to move into the Bridgeport Homes [public housing] . . . was forced out by egg throwing and harassment" (Marx and Martin 1997). Talk to people in the neighborhood, and everyone has a story. Perhaps the most

[5] Research by Krysan and Bader (2009) suggests that, though knowledge of neighborhoods is racialized, African Americans are more aware of white neighborhoods than whites are of African American neighborhoods. In a media report on Krysan and Bader's (2009) research on this topic, Bridgeport is in the category of neighborhoods African Americans are least likely to know nothing about. The research does not specify *what* African Americans know, but I would suggest that what they are likely to know is the neighborhood's reputation for being hostile to people like them.

notorious case in recent history is that of Lenard Clark, an African American thirteen-year-old who was beaten into a coma by three older white teenagers in 1997 (Schreuder and Lally 1997). The year before, Bridgeport's then-alderman Patrick Huels had complained about the persistence of the reputation, saying "we are unjustly always accused of being racial" and "we have every racial group. It's just the label we've worn for 80 years and can't seem to shake it" (Hanson 1996).

Reputational Awareness

Respondents tended to be quite aware of the historical and contemporary reputation Bridgeport has for racial hostility. In my interviews, I would not ask about the reputation for racism, but would rather let my respondents bring it up if they wanted to. More often than not, they did. Often, respondents were very aware not only of the reputation for racism, but the historical context from which it emerged. Witness Michael, an artist and entrepreneur who has lived in the neighborhood his entire life, who gave me a detailed description of the 1919 riots:

> Michael: We have a reputation that what—you know, a lot of racism going on. Which did happen.
>
> Jeffrey: It did?
>
> Michael: Oh, yeah. Yeah, it was bad. And it started like in, I don't know, you probably heard about the riots in 1919.
>
> Jeffrey: I know that they happened, but tell me about this neighborhood and—
>
> Michael: Yeah. Okay, so yeah, this neighborhood had sort of like an integral part of that, you know? Which is, you know, you know, I still know people that are of color, African Americans that still won't come to Bridgeport, because they think it's racist, although it's changed.

Not only does he know the story about how the riots started, but as he goes on, he gets the numbers of deaths exactly right, based on those reported by the Chicago Commission on Race Relations (1922), and knows about the involvement of the Hamburg Athletic Club and the potential involvement of Richard J. Daley. "And they say that, you know, Mayor Daley—the first Mayor

Daley and some of his cronies might have been involved." While this attention to detail might be unique to Michael, who prides himself on his knowledge of the neighborhood's history, it comports with my general observation that people in Bridgeport tend to be acutely aware of its history.

To a great extent, this is because a lot of the people in the neighborhood grew up here and have families that go back multiple generations in Bridgeport, so the lore of the neighborhood gets passed down. Fred is a fifth generation Bridgeporter. He is a landlord in the neighborhood, but historically, his family has owned funeral homes. He tells me a story about how in 1919, a funeral home owned by whites—in this case, his family—refused to help with the burials of African Americans who had died during the riots:

> Fred: I mean, you had the race riots in 1918, um, and uh, there were a lot more people killed in that than, you know, the history books say.
>
> Jeffrey: Really?
>
> Fred: Yeah. My dad told me that as a kid, uh, he was eight or nine years old, my grandfather wouldn't take any of the Blacks that the cops would bring to the door, killed in the neighborhood. At the funeral home, yeah. So, it was a pretty prejudiced area.

Ed did not grow up in the neighborhood but spent a lot of time in it as a young adult because his mother operated the bar Kaplan's, which later became Maria's. He explains how hostility to outsiders is built into the neighborhood's history.

> Well, you know, there are Lithuanian clubs, Italian clubs, the Italian American club. There were social clubs for every ethnic group. Every ethnic group built their own churches, right? Every ethnic group had their own bars, their own restaurants, their own foods. Everyone just basically was just pushing their own people to succeed. It was the story of the so-called American dream. Work hard. Make a business. Build a business and serve your communities, and at those times people stuck to those specific ethnic communities, right? And then over time you—of course demographics changed, new waves of immigrants come in, the neighborhoods changed, the values changed. People leave the neighborhood. Families leave. Traditions are lost. But the sense of history is there for a lot of people, so you know, you have families who probably have drank at a bar for three generations. These kids probably went there and bought their mom and dad's cigarettes when they were ten, you know, given notes. Back in the day you could bring a note and get a pack of squares. For grandma, right?

While there is certainly a tinge of nostalgia to this story, Ed interrupts his reverie to talk about the darker side of these neighborhood institutions:

> But you know, but there's also that some bars are just kind of stuck in a xenophobic stage. You'd go to a bar, if you were the wrong color, the wrong ethnicity, the bartenders might be polite or may not be polite, or they'll be just people just stare you down until you kind of have them warm up to you if you're lucky.

This was a constant refrain: neighborhood taverns and bars were places where symbolic boundaries were enacted, where if you did not belong, people would let you know about it.

Views differ on the roots of racism in Bridgeport. Michael attributes much of the racism to economic anxiety, saying, "Basically the deal was these are real poor people. They wanted to protect their homes, and they were afraid that once Blacks get in here that they're going to take over the whole neighborhood." Still, he quickly adds, "but also the way people are brought up, there were so-called—I call them so-called good women of Bridgeport—that somehow thought that [African Americans] were like less than human. I'm serious."

On the other hand, more than one person talked to me about the general tribalism that defined the neighborhood. Jamie explains

> I had people come up to me and say they had never lived anywhere else than their block or somebody would say, "Oh, my sister moved away," and you'd be like "Where to?" "Oh, Throop." They talked about it like it was a foreign nation. It's two blocks over. But that's how territorial and how tight knit also Bridgeport was.

This sense of tribalism and territoriality could lead to hostility to outsiders. While white on Black racism is what Bridgeport is most notorious for, and the most historically extreme version of hostility that marks the neighborhood, my respondents continually emphasized how it impacts interactions among other groups, as well. Ed notes:

> I started learning that everything is pretty tribal this—when we used to decry the racism here in Bridgeport, I learned that, you know what? It's just not White people hating Black people here. Everyone just hates everyone. Like the Italian guy hates the Irish guy, the Irish guy hates

> the Italian guy, like that guy hates the dude in front of him, right? I mean, there's all these grievances based on minor, um, well, transgressions.

The reputation for white-on-Black racism in Bridgeport is certainly the dominant one, according to my respondents, but it fits into a larger history of general animosity toward other ethnic groups—including other ethnic whites—among the different white ethnic groups of the neighborhood.

Deployment of Diversity and Denial of Racism

There is also a great deal of pride in the polyglot history of the neighborhood. Just as Ed talked nostalgically about neighborhood taverns serving food and culture from the old country, others in the neighborhood emphasized the historical diversity of the neighborhood, albeit a diversity of people socially constructed as white.

It needs to be noted that not everyone thinks racism is a problem in Bridgeport. Even those who talk about Bridgeport having a problem talk about it as part of a larger issue, in Chicago and the country at large. "No, this is citywide," Ed says. "It's probably everywhere in the US." They are still able to identify ways the problem is uniquely bad in Bridgeport, even as it manifests everywhere. For example, Won brings up the number of "doorbell bars" in Bridgeport where you have to ring to get in as a particularly explicit example of persistent racism and discrimination in the neighborhood.

This brings up an important point, though: opinion on the issue of racism in Bridgeport is not uniform, as not all merchants believe the neighborhood is racist. There is diversity in opinions on the neighborhood regarding both the *actual* racial environment in the neighborhood and the reputational racial environment. In terms of those who deviate from the narrative offered by those seeking to undefend the neighborhood, there are two major groups: people who do not even mention race and racism when discussing the neighborhood, and people who acknowledge that the neighborhood has a reputation for racism, but that it is unfair and unearned. The first group comes from merchants across dimensions of difference in the neighborhood, notably old-timers and

newcomers, and East Bridgeporters and West Bridgeporters. The second group comes mostly, though not exclusively, from East Bridgeport—the wealthier, mostly Irish and Italian part of the neighborhood (discussed later in this chapter) and merchants with deep familial ties in the neighborhood.[6]

There are those who mention the neighborhood's diversity without mentioning anything about racism at all, like Omar, who owns a restaurant on the east side of Halsted. He notes, "This neighborhood has always been known and recognized as working class, and you know, moving over to South Loop it's just like so diverse." Similarly, Chelsea, who owns a savory pie shop that used to be in the neighborhood, mentions the diversity of customers along a number of dimensions without bringing up any issues of racism or a reputation for racism in the neighborhood. Peter, an Italian American man in his fifties who owns a deli, talks fondly about growing up in Bridgeport around "a lot of Italian people," but does not mention anything about the segmentation or discrimination other people mention when discussing historical ethnic enclaves in the neighborhood.

Others go beyond this absence of discussion about racism to explicitly say it is not a problem in the neighborhood and that Bridgeport has gotten a bad rap. For example, Frank, who owns an Italian restaurant, grumbles about the conflict between Blue Lives Matter and Black Lives Matter, suggesting issues of racism are not really relevant to the neighborhood. Perhaps the most unsurprising holder of this particular view, though, is Patrick Daley Thompson, a business development lawyer and the current alderman for the neighborhood. He comes from the Daley family—he is the nephew of Richard M. Daley—and is proud of his Irish heritage. "A friend of mine, he used to talk about his gram, his Irish grandmother used to say Halsted is the most beautiful

[6] It is worth mentioning that not *all* East Bridgeporters and merchants with deep familial ties in the neighborhood feel this way; just that it is rare for West Bridgeporters and merchants without deep familial ties in the neighborhood to claim that Bridgeport's reputation for racism is unearned.

street, because it's Green [Street] on one side and Emerald [Street] on the other." He sells the diversity of the neighborhood hard, saying

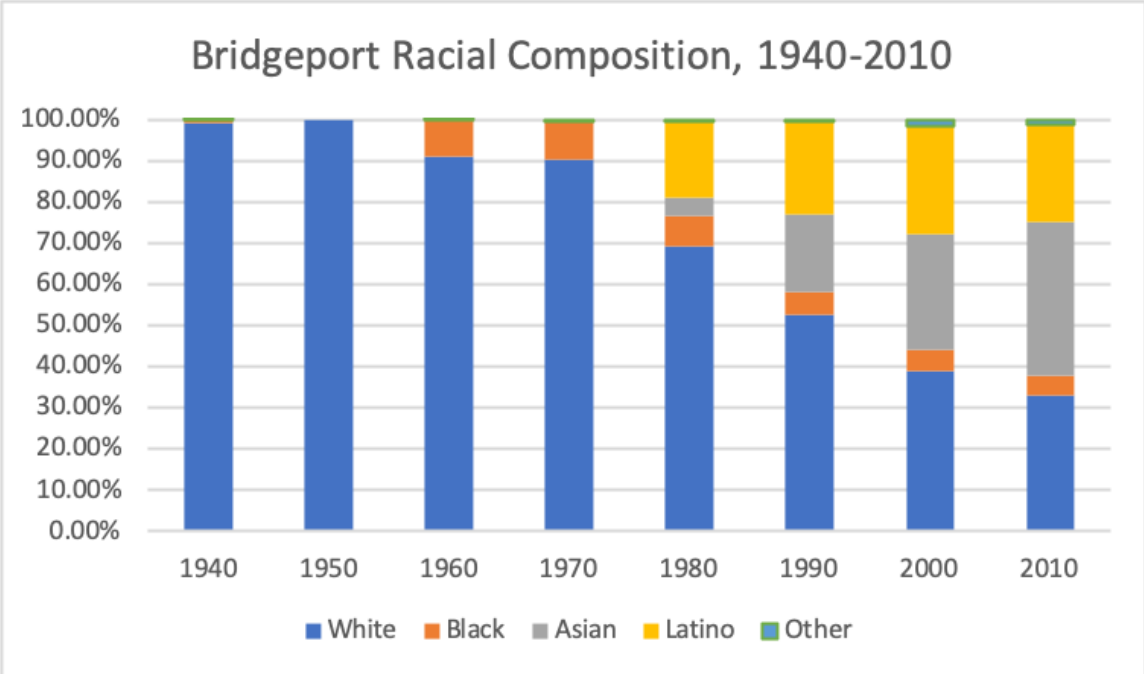
> It's not sort of this vanilla, everyone's the same, homogenous. It's diverse as hell. It's great. The latest immigrant group now are Chinese that have come through. You had Mexicans, and you had Croatian, you had Italian, Irish, German, and I always talk about the diversity here in this part of the ward, it was diverse before diversity was *en vogue*, and you can tell by all of the churches. You know, there's parts of the pockets of the city that were all Italian, and this section was all Polish, this section was all German. Well, you know, you could tell the steeples, because you had St. George, which was Lithuanian. You had All Saints, which was Irish, Croatian church of St. Jerome, Santa Lucia is Italian. You know, Nativity was sort of a mix, but predominately Irish. St. Barb's was Polish. St. Mary's of Perpetual Help was sort of a mix, but also Lithuanian.

In addition to emphasizing the historically polyglot nature of the neighborhood, respondents also talk about contemporary changes in the neighborhood, particularly the influx of Mexican and Chinese families that has reduced the percentage of whiteness in Bridgeport [see Figure 3.3]. Ann is an architect in the neighborhood, working with her partner Craig, who is also an architect. Part of a mixed-race couple—Ann is Asian and Craig is white—Ann talks about the racial dynamics at play in Bridgeport. She notes that "the fact that we live in, like a deeply segregated city, like still resonates here," and she is unhappy with certain aspects of the politics of the neighborhood. At the end of the interview, she leaves to attend a meeting "to try to get a new Democratic congresswomen in the primary," as she believes the current congressman is a "Democrat in name only."[7] That said,

[7] The current congressman representing Bridgeport is Dan Lipinski, who essentially inherited the seat from his father Bill Lipinski. Bill Lipinski was the congressman for the district from 1983 to 2005, when he won the Democratic primary and, as Democratic committeeman for the ward, convinced party leaders to name Dan Lipinski as the new candidate. The ward is heavily gerrymandered—"it like kind of picks up Bridgeport and like a small swath of the southside, and then is like a small narrow, um, geographic area going out to the suburbs, then kind of expands again," as Craig explains—making it an incredibly safe district for Democrats. Lipinski is one of the most conservative Democrats in the House; he is anti-choice on reproductive issues, anti-LGBTQ+ rights, and anti-DREAM Act, but he has never faced a serious threat in the general election. Republicans often don't bother to run anyone in the same district as the Machine. In 2016, he was almost defeated by progressive challenger Marie Newman—presumably the woman Ann was going to the meeting to support—but ended up winning a close race, before going on to soundly defeat

she says, "I find Bridgeport to be like more diverse than many other neighborhoods, and I love that there's a robust Chinese community here. I love that there's Chinese food in the grocery stores. I love that people we work with come from like a really big range of socioeconomic backgrounds."

Figure 3.3: Racial Composition of Bridgeport 1940-2010



NB: Prior to 1980, "Other" includes everyone who was not classified as white or Black.

Similarly, Alderman Thompson contrasts contemporary Bridgeport with other parts of the city, like more uniformly Irish neighborhoods farther south, and other places where "it was all this, it was all that." In Bridgeport, he says, "it's always been this mix of people, which I think is the best." He does not stop at talking about the diversity in the neighborhood, though. He acknowledges Bridgeport's reputation for racism head-on, and he is adamant that it is unfounded. He says,

> One thing that bothers me is this notion of that it's racially not tolerant, that we're a bunch of white racists that live down here. I'm like, that is so far from the truth. I say come on down here. I've even had some of my colleagues from the city, some of the African American aldermen, like "Oh, come on down, get lunch." Like "I had no idea Bridgeport was like this." I'm like, "I know. You've got to come down." And then you know, they'll see

neo-Nazi Arthur Jones in the general election, who had managed to win the Republican nomination because no one else had bothered to run.

> an African American walking out of their apartment, and they're like "Oh my God," [laughs] It is so different than what that perception [is].

He acknowledges that just because you can see Black people walk out their apartments now does not mean the reputation is baseless, but believes it is based on the neighborhood's past, not the present. He says, "Well, I think it was there were probably a lot of white racists that used to live here like 100 and some years ago, but not only here, throughout the city and United States. But I think that it's such an old and for whatever reason perpetuated incorrect stigma." Notice at the end of this quote he utilizes another rationale for historical racism in Bridgeport—that it is not very different from other places in the United States.

Thompson obviously has a very personal investment in denying Bridgeport is a racist place as part of his job as an alderman is to sell the neighborhood. Still, he represents a part of the neighborhood that believes that Bridgeport has gotten a bad rap. It is worth noting, though, that even if he thinks Bridgeport is *not* racist, he recognizes that it has a reputation for racism just the same and takes part in behaviors one might call "undefending the neighborhood," like bringing Black alderman to Bridgeport to see that it is not as hostile as they imagined. While people who do not mention race and racism one way or another might see no need to "undefend the neighborhood" as it was never defended for them in the first place, both those who think Bridgeport *is* racist and those who think it is merely being smeared as racist have an investment in changing that reputation. The only difference is the first group wants to change what they see to be the racism that accurately undergirds that reputation, while the second group views such racism as an illusion that does not exist in Bridgeport, or at most a ghost of something that used to exist and is now gone. This explains how Ed, who believes racism *is* a problem in Bridgeport, and Alderman Thompson, who believes people just *think* it is a problem, can be allies, as they can agree that, at the very least, the reputation itself is destructive.

That said, outright denial that there is racism in the neighborhood was rare among my respondents. Even among respondents who think the neighborhood is not as bad in terms of racism as it once was, many acknowledge racial hostility still exists in pockets of the neighborhood. Jamie describes himself as being the first Jew in the neighborhood when he moved there in 1996 or 1997, and being astounded at the things people would say around him:

> They would say all kinds of crazy racist anti-Semitic things to me, like one of my neighbors said to me one day, "Oh, you know, these fucking kikes are taking over the world." I'd been there for years. "What the fuck are you talking about? You know I'm Jewish." And he'd be like, "You know, I don't mean you. You're alright, but—"

I also heard stories about people whom respondents did not believe were hostile to other ethnic groups but used slurs because they did not know any better. Claire, who owns a bicycle shop in the neighborhood, tells a story about someone trying to help another person in the neighborhood, but using multiple racial slurs because that is the language she had to describe these other people:

> This is an amazing story. A few years ago in the summer, this woman like comes tearing in here, a middle-aged, not even that old, white lady, comes in and she go—she said "A Chinaman just got hit on his bike and the colored guy that was there is going to bring his bike in to you." And I was like, "Yep, thank you."[laughs]

Claire tells this story as a demonstration of people who mean well but "just don't know better," but also talked about a more malevolent form of racism. For example, she also says "I mean, there was—and there still are—a few like just straight up fucking racists here. We had a guy, one of our regulars, dropped a fucking N bomb in here the other day." Even as racism comes up regularly among my respondents, they are able to identify gradations in it, moving along a continuum from benign ignorance to malevolent prejudice.

Attributions of Racism to Other Bridgeporters

For the most part, though, my respondents describe this behavior as rare, and often geographically isolated. Mike, the owner of Bridgeport Coffee, explains that racism in Bridgeport is

mostly nestled in the eastern half of Bridgeport, east of Halstead Street. "If Bridgeport has this reputation, this extreme racist reputation, even though it doesn't exist today, especially in our—in our segment of Bridgeport, you know, and when we talk about—there is that old Bridgeport [that] still lives in a small section, close to the highway east of Halsted." It's not always framed explicitly in terms of racism. Historically there has been more money east of Halsted. Owen, who owns the bicycle shop with Claire, explains "whether that's legitimate—legitimate business money, illegitimate city money or illegitimate mob money, all of them live on that block and they want that block to be quiet" [laughs].

Alluding to the traditional power structures of the neighborhood—the businesses, the Democratic Machine, and the Chicago Outfit mob—Owen identifies East Bridgeport with money and power. Richard J. Daley's house was there, and it was largely defined by the Irish and the Italians, whereas West Bridgeport was more of an ethnic mix. Perhaps because of this historical power, many of my respondents talk about Bridgeport east of Halsted as more traditional and less inclined to be open to new things in general. Carrie, who owned a savory pie company with her husband Jay in West Bridgeport, explains that "there is a real separation between the original Bridgeporters and uh, the east of Halsted crowd, and the west of Halsted crowd in every way." When I ask what she means by "every way," she explains,

> Oh, so whether it's geographical or mental, there's new Bridgeport and there's old Bridgeport, period. And old Bridgeport isn't going anywhere, and it's those houses are handed down through the family, and they go to the same schools as their parents and sometimes their grandparents did, and they're not leaving. I think one of the challenges is if you're on one side of the fence, is making the connections into the other one, and I don't know how much the people on the other side, the old Bridgeporters are trying to connect.

There is a sense among my respondents that there are significant differences in the neighborhood once you cross Halsted. Mike, who owns Bridgeport Coffee, emphasizes the differences.

> I would mention the fact that, first off, Bridgeport isn't that—we're in West Bridgeport. It's not the Bridgeport of the past. We are the most diverse community in the city of Chicago now. Come see what West Bridgeport's like. It's not like what your parents thought it was like, and it's not like East Bridgeport.

East Bridgeport does a lot of work rhetorically for people explaining how Bridgeport has changed, by providing a place they can point to and say, "That's where the bad stuff from our history is still happening." Owen laughed when he mentioned the "illegitimate city money or illegitimate mob money," but there is truth to the matter that there are four dominant historical institutions in Bridgeport: the Catholic Church, the police, the Chicago Democratic Machine, and the Chicago Outfit, which is the name for the local Italian mob. As discussed by many, the Catholic Church and its ethnically-defined parish system contributes to the segmentation and territorialization of the neighborhood across the board, but the other three institutions are more associated with East Bridgeport, with the police being seen as a subsidiary of the Machine because of patronage jobs. Because of its geographical association with the Machine and the Outfit, East Bridgeport is more historically ethnically homogeneous, more established in terms of money and political power, and more associated with the reputation of "old Bridgeport."

The fact that people even talk about "old Bridgeport" is an indication that they believe there is a "new Bridgeport," and they often point to demographics to support this assertion. Respondents constantly bring up the fact that, statistically, Bridgeport is now one of the most diverse neighborhoods in Chicago, which is true, largely because of the enormous influx of Mexicans and Mexican Americans from nearby Pilsen, and Chinese and Chinese Americans from nearby Chinatown. In fact, as of the 2010 census, whites are slightly outnumbered in Bridgeport by Asians, although in general the neighborhood is roughly a third white, a third Chinese, and a third Mexican, while still having very small numbers of African Americans (See Figure 3.3). Setting aside the fact that a place can be demographically diverse but still suffer from what Hyra (2017) calls "diversity

segregation," there is also the glaring fact that my respondents usually sheepishly acknowledge: in a city that is approximately one-third African American, on a South Side that is even more so, Bridgeport maintains a remarkably low level of African Americans among both residents and what Greene (2014) would call "vicarious citizens." People are very aware of why this is the case, as demonstrated by Mike, who owns Bridgeport Coffee, a coffee shop in the neighborhood. He says,

> In the Black community, and especially in the southside, Bridgeport has this reputation for being an enclave for racism, and you know, moms will tell their kids, their, you know, young Black kids, don't go to Bridgeport. But that's not what the modern Bridgeport's like, but that is still a perception, and it lives.

Though the shop on 31st and Morgan is the original, Bridgeport Coffee has expanded to multiple locations, many of them in African American neighborhoods on the South Side of Chicago. Mike says in hindsight he might have chosen a different name because Bridgeport carries reputational baggage in these communities. He was recently at a meeting with people involved with the Obama Presidential Center in Woodlawn who were interested in him making a coffee and mug gift set for donors. The people from the project were worried about the name, though. "And so in that meeting I had to answer that—I had to answer that objection," he says. "You know, the reputation of Bridgeport racism."

Variations on this story are told over and over again by my respondents. Hannah, who works part time at Co-Prosperity Sphere and is Mexican but describes herself as white-passing, says "my best friend, she's Black, and she's from Hyde Park, like born and raised and was told growing up like 'don't go to Bridgeport after dark,'" evoking the specter of "sundown towns." Even respondents who think Bridgeport is not racist in the way it is portrayed—notice Mike insisting "that's not what modern Bridgeport's like"—know that the reputation persists. To change that, there needs to not only be a decline in racism in the neighborhood, but an active push to welcome populations that have previously been excluded.

Undefending the Neighborhood

This is the reputational context that Bridgeport exists in today. Respondents express awareness of it by telling stories about the neighborhood, both in the past and in the present. They express a desire to shift it by describing the concrete steps they have taken to make Bridgeport a welcoming place for people it has traditionally excluded through a process I call *undefending the neighborhood*—making an explicit effort to undo the "forbidding reputation" that Suttles talks about as a marker of a defended neighborhood. In Bridgeport, one way this is done is by a subgroup of merchants who signal inclusiveness, particularly to those who were formerly excluded with some measure of hostility, in a few key ways. This process of undefending the neighborhood has drawn both praise and criticism from within the neighborhood, and much of it has been focused on a group of customer-facing businesses that have appeared in the neighborhood in the previous few decades. Specifically, focus has been placed on one neighborhood tavern, Maria's Packaged Goods and Community Bar, as the site where debates about Bridgeport's past, its reputation, and its future take place.

Undefending the neighborhood is not an uncomplicatedly altruistic process, though. While many of these merchants are themselves people of color or members of the LGBTQ+ community who have personal memories of the neighborhood being an unwelcoming place and are undertaking the project of undefending Bridgeport for personal and political reasons, it is also undeniable that those who do so typically stand to benefit economically from a reputational transformation of the neighborhood. Undefending the neighborhood opens it up to more people to be sure, but it is also worth noting that it opens the neighborhood to more money, both from people who have been excluded before and by people who might not personally have been kept out but stayed away because of a stigmatized reputation. Bridgeport is thrown around a lot in conversations about

Chicago's new hip neighborhoods,[8] and a reputation for overt racism is potentially problematic for the lucrative place branding (Lloyd 2005; Greenberg 2008; Parker 2018a) that such a label represents.[9] Just as Maria's Packaged Goods and Community Bar is held up in the neighborhood and in the press as a positive force in Bridgeport's changing story, its proprietor, Ed Marszewski, is viewed with suspicion by some who point to his and his family's significant financial stake in the further development of the neighborhood. Moreover, not all neighborhood merchants express concern about the issue of racism in Bridgeport, although even those who do not tend to be aware of its negative reputational effects.

Finally, regardless of whether the intentions of the undefenders are altruistic or instrumental—evidence suggests they are both—the process they are undertaking in Bridgeport

[8] In 2017 when Choose Chicago, the city's "destination marketing organization" made a list of the city's "hipster havens," Bridgeport made the list along with northside neighbors Wicker Park/Bucktown and Logan Square (Ward 2017). The accompanying article/advertisement said, "This working-class South Side neighborhood has become a haven for artists and creative types," and among other things, advertised its nightlife specifically in hipster terms. "Rub elbows with the locals at Maria's Packaged Goods & Community Bar, a combination liquor store and tavern serving up artisanal cocktails, craft beers and Korean-Polish food in its Kimski eatery," the copy reads. "A true neighborhood bar, Bernice's Tavern is frequented by Bridgeport natives as well as hipsters checking out the nearby Zhou B Art Center. Order a cheap PBR and listen to a live acoustic act during the open mic session on Thursday evenings" ("Chicago's Neighborhood Hipster Havens" 2017).

[9] This is not to say that there can be no association of racism with hipsters. There has in fact been a great deal written—in the popular press mostly—about the problem of racism in hip subcultures (Bangs 1979; Ransome et al. 2017; West 2017), and Mark Greif even argues that the modern hipster finds his origin in a valorization of 1970s whiteness (Greif 2010), which turns on its head Mailer's earlier notion from "The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster" (1957) that the hipster emerges from an imitation of Black culture. Either way, hipster subculture is deeply associated with racial imaginaries and is certainly not immune from racism. There is also certainly an affection for and appropriation of working-class subcultural signifiers in some hipster scenes—witness the ubiquity of Pabst Blue Ribbon beer at hipster dive bars—and Lloyd comments that "participants in Wicker Park's arts community profess an ideological commitment to race and class diversity, although, as we will see, the practical definition of diversity is complicated and often fetishistic. Sharing the streets with working class and nonwhite residents, even if personal interaction remains superficial, is part of their image of an authentic urban experience" (77–78).

represents complicated moral claims about who belongs and who does not. While the strategies undertaken by these merchants are meant to diminish both the existence of and reputation for a problematic moral order that excluded certain people, in doing so they create a moral order of their own that has the potential to exclude longtime residents. Undefending the neighborhood in many ways slots neatly into Bridgeport's long history of territoriality and exclusion, raising questions about the moral status of exclusion undertaken at least in part for the purposes of encouraging a broader inclusion.

To the extent that they can, many respondents consciously try to combat racism and the stereotype that Bridgeport has for it by taking certain actions in the way they run their businesses. In trying to make their businesses, and the neighborhood in general, more appealing to people who have typically been excluded in Bridgeport, my respondents pursue signaling mechanisms that demonstrate that their places of business do not live up to the reputational racism and ethnic hostility that marks Bridgeport in the eyes of many. Specifically, they attempt to make their stores more inviting, to hire diverse and local staff, and to keep out people who would be hostile to outsiders.

Creating Inviting Spaces

The first signaling mechanism available to my respondents who are interested in undefending Bridgeport is making their places of business more inviting. January, who owns Jackalope Coffee with her husband John, talks about how important it is for her café to be a place that is welcoming to everyone, but she also remembers getting pushback from people when she opened it. "People will say to me 'I can't believe you opened up in Bridgeport, it's so fucking racist'," she remembers. "And I said okay, you can come to a neighborhood and you can say like oh,

this neighborhood's terrible, let me get the fuck out of here. Or you can say this neighborhood's terrible, let me see the difference I can make here."

January was familiar with the neighborhood before she opened Jackalope to try to make a difference. She grew up in Bridgeport—her great-grandparents came to the neighborhood from Poland, and she's the fourth generation of her family to be married at St. Mary's Church in the neighborhood— and remembers not really having a place to go when she was younger:

> One of the reasons I opened this place is because like I used to be here as a kid. You know, I used to end up going up to the North Side, where John lived and stuff, and so like before I was 21, you know, you hit that age where you're like eighteen to twenty-one, you're like what do we do? So of course, when I was a kid—I mean, we go by the tracks and like drink peppermint schnapps or whatever [laughs]. But I was always like, oh, there's just nothing else to do. You know, kids just basically are bored, can't go to a bar. So I wanted to open something that when I was younger, I could have went to.

She wants to provide that at Jackalope, particularly to people who do not otherwise feel welcome in the neighborhood. She talks specifically about trying to push back against Bridgeport's reputation. "One of the reasons I wanted to open up a business in Bridgeport was because I grew up here and there was a lot of negative things happening in this neighborhood growing up," she says. When I ask what she means, she goes into the history, specifically mentioning the Lenard Clark story, which she then relates to a general historical pattern in the neighborhood.

> When we were younger, right—in our park, they were experiencing a couple of like garage thefts and so forth and everything. And so what ended up happening was that these kids got together and they decided that they were—I think they were drinking in the park. Anyway, they called themselves the Armor Boys, and they would hang out in Armor Park. And basically what they would do is if anybody came across this way that didn't look like they should be in their neighborhood, by their terms, they would chase them out or they would threaten them or they would possibly do physical harm to them. So that's a history that's kind of like stuck with Bridgeport. I will say one of the reasons being is that Bridgeport's a South Side neighborhood that has been surrounded by a lot of like socioeconomic issues and so forth. So I think that there's been—you know, I think that there's some old thinking of, you know, we've got to protect what's ours, we've got to protect what's happening and oh, they're all coming to get us, you know. And there's some old people who think that way. One of the reasons I wanted to open up a business is because I wanted to be a place that the more diverse people who are coming into the neighborhood felt safe at.

She means safety in terms of both being welcoming and supportive, and also in the literal sense, as she says:

> I know for a fact that I've been in this neighborhood my whole entire life, and there's bars I won't even walk into. Because I know that like within probably fifteen minutes, someone's going to try to start a fight with somebody. You know? So I know there's some bars in this neighborhood that I won't bring people who aren't from the neighborhood, because they're probably—someone will probably say like where are you from, you know, and it's one of those things. But I always wanted to be a place that everybody could come here, you know.

She works to make Jackalope welcoming partly by making her space explicitly available to the community, including LGBTQ organizations, but she also does it by what she decides to put on her menu. In addition to all the high end coffee drinks one might expect at a café, January says she made a conscious decision to include other items that evoke mockery from coffee snobs because she knows that knowledge level can be a barrier to entry for some people, and she wants to be as inclusive as she can be:

> Our menu is the way it is, it's choreographed, is curated, I should say, the reason that we have like frozen frappes and shakes and malts and stuff is because we try to be something for like everyone. So it's a lot of times there's folks who find coffee like kind of, um, they feel like they're stupid, like they feel like they don't know much about it. So like they'll come in and they're like—you know, they'll be like oh, I don't like coffee. And I'm like you understand like we have like [coolers] full of Filbert's [soda], you know, all that other stuff. So a lot of the folks who grew up in the neighborhood, sometimes they don't really want like a cappuccino or a cortado or something like that. But then they'll come in, you'll be surprised to know that like after they come in three or four times, they'll be like so like what's good here, you know? And then I love that. I'm like you know, let me tell you, let me try to—let me make you something, you know?

A big part of making a local business welcoming to outsiders is considering little details like this.

Conscientious Hiring Practices

Another way my respondents signal that they are welcoming is by who they choose to employ in their places of business. Just seeing a person of color, particularly in a front-of-house position, in a Bridgeport business makes it a more welcoming place for people worried about its reputation. I did not talk to any respondents who specifically said that they hired the people of color at their establishments for this reason, but people did often make a commitment to inclusiveness in

hiring, and they often talked about the effect that it had on the way people viewed their business. Mike at Bridgeport Coffee, says, for example, "You need people of all colors and from all walks of life, and all education. What we're looking for is good people. Doesn't matter if they're you know, green with red lipstick." January talked about the fact that they have people from multiple backgrounds behind the counter gives people a signal that Jackalope is a safe space. She says, "I also really want to drive home that if you are one of these asshole-like Bridgeport people who don't like stuff, you're going to walk in and you're going to see that we have a diverse staff, and if you don't like it, you can leave." In a neighborhood where the presence of certain groups of people has historically been policed, it is a statement in and of itself for businesses to not only welcome their presence as customers, but to implicitly support it through hiring practices.

Active Hostility Towards Intolerance

Finally, respondents talk about making sure their places of business feel safe to their customers by kicking out people who would threaten that safety. "Once I kicked a guy out for racial slurs, and after I got out, he came after me with some drills," Ed says. "He wanted to attack me with—with drills." Most of the stories of discrimination in the neighborhood had to do with race and ethnicity, but other dimensions of difference get brought up, too. For example, while Jason, the front-of-house manager at Kimski, is Black, the story he shares about what they will not tolerate from their customers touches on issues of sexuality and gender presentation. He emphasizes the importance of setting a certain standard of behavior at his restaurant and shares a story that demonstrates not only what they will not tolerate, but the firm way they respond to it.

> Uh, I actually had some guy was trying to talk down about a person that was clearly on her own, his own shit, you know what I'm saying, doing his thing, you know what I'm saying, maybe transgender, maybe gay, who cares, does it matter? But he started talking shit to him, and I was like, "Oh, bro, you can't do that shit here." I mean, he looked—and this motherfucker had his own shit. He was all fucked up. And I was like "You should look at yourself before you start judging motherfuckers," and that person came up to me a couple

> days ago and was like, "Hey, man, I really appreciate you saying that to him, you know what I'm saying? It actually means a lot." And I was like, "Hey, motherfucker you do—you live your life, motherfucker." I mean, no one deserves to talk to someone like that, or even coming in here and disrespect anybody, you know what I'm saying? That's fucked up. We don't go about that here. We don't allow that shit. So uh, I'm very happy with the crowd here. You know, very happy.... You've got artists, you've got feminists, fucking bad ass girls, and you've got [inaudible], you've got Black people, you've got Spanish, you've got, there's not one like specific crowd that comes here.

Although Bridgeport's reputation is for racism, respondents are able to signal inclusiveness by refusing to tolerate hostility toward groups of people marginalized for other reasons, like sexuality or gender presentation. Punishing hostile behavior from historical insiders, my respondents worked to make their places of business more open to historical outsiders. Nowhere was this conflict between the two groups fought out as publicly as at Maria's.

The Bar as a Space of Inclusion *and* Exclusion

Mary Douglas (1966) tells us that boundaries are crucial for helping us define the very nature of society, that society's "image has form; it has external boundaries, margins, internal structure. Its outlines contain power to reward conformity and repulse attack" (114). Boundaries help people to differentiate in-groups from out-groups, and marking them allows people to effectively say "this belongs to me, not to you." With this in mind, it is not difficult to see territoriality everywhere one looks in Bridgeport. Blue Lives Matter ribbons decorate the trees of major thoroughfares and neighborhood borders, indicating whose side the neighborhood is on in questions of criminal justice reform. The use of "dibs" during winter months makes clear the sanctity of private property in the neighborhood (see Figure 3.4)].[10]

[10] Dibs is a process in some neighborhoods of Chicago, but not all, whereby people will "reserve" their parallel parking spots when it snows. To do this, they dig out their cars, and when they leave for the day, they put an item—often a lawn chair or a plastic box—in the space, indicating that no one else should use it. This leads to suboptimal parking conditions in the neighborhoods where dibs are prevalent—there are potential parking spaces that go unused throughout the day because they have been "dibbed." It is a collective action problem, and the dibs system, despite objections,

Figure 3.4: Dibs in Bridgeport (Photo credit: Jeffrey Parker)

Drawing lines between insiders and outsiders and making explicit Suttles' "cognitive maps" of who belongs and who does not is a constant exercise in the neighborhood. Nowhere is the ongoing neighborhood conflict about the degree of territoriality in Bridgeport manifested more clearly than in the neighborhood taverns.

Places people drink have long been recognized as socially significant. Habermas (1962) finds the roots of civil society in the coffee shops of Europe, and urban sociologists have long recognized

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persists in neighborhoods across Chicago, largely on the South Side, including in Bridgeport. Dibs has actually been the subject of an academic article about the Lockean implications of the practice (Silbey 2012) as well as a lively debate on the Community and Urban Sociology Section of the American Sociological Association listserv (Ticer-Wurr 2014). More to the point, the system is constantly debated *in Bridgeport*; during the aldermanic election, candidates were asked about their stance on dibs during a debate, and Richard M. Daley went on the record as supporting dibs while he was mayor (The Economist 2018). The practice got city-wide attention for Bridgeport in 2015, when parents of a sick five-year-old girl who required 24-hour medical care had an in-house nurse threaten to quit because the couple's neighbors had placed two trashcans on her car when she accidentally violated their dibs to park near the home. This event was even documented in an article entitled "'Dibs'-Loving Neighbors of Sick Bridgeport Girl Trash Her Nurse's Car" (Cora 2015), drawing negative attention to the practice, but it continues to persist in the neighborhood.

the importance of the neighborhood bar or tavern as place where social conflicts play out (Cressey 1932), identities are asserted (Anderson 1978), and art scenes are nurtured (Lloyd 2005), among other crucial social activities. The neighborhood tavern is historically crucial to neighborhood organization in Bridgeport, behind perhaps only the parish as the dominant organizer of social life in the neighborhood. Michael, a local artist and entrepreneur, took me for a walking tour of Bridgeport, and at one point just started identifying all the places taverns used to be: "Um, you had taverns. So when I was growing up there was a tavern here. That was a tavern, uh, that house there [inaudible 7:48] corner there, that was a tavern, so man, that—that was your social life." It is not a surprise, then, that a neighborhood bar would come to stand in for Bridgeport's potential reputational transformation in the eyes of both those who desire it and those who do not. It *is* a bit of a surprise *which* neighborhood bar came to do this.

Maria's Packaged Goods & Community Bar was not always the likeliest destination to lead a reputational transformation of Bridgeport. For years, it was like a lot of other taverns in the neighborhood. Founded in 1939, it was known for decades as Kaplan's Liquors. A book of historical photographs of Bridgeport features an undated black and white photograph of Kaplan's with a street car going by. In the middle of the 1980s, Maria Marszewski bought the bar and began running it as a slashie, or a location that served as both a bar and a liquor store. Maria is from Korea and had moved to the United States and married a Polish-American police officer named Marszewski.

"That Place? It's a Dump."

By all accounts, Kaplan's was a hole in the wall. Graham, a bartender at Maria's, remembers his parents' reaction when he told them he'd be working there.

> Graham: So they used to work down the street, and when I told them where—that I got this job at Maria's they were like, where? 31st and Morgan. They're like that—that place? It's a dump. I'm like yeah, I know, it's a dump. It's cool. Um, but like a year before I started there, it was a super old man bar.

Jeffrey: Right. Was it still Kaplan's at this point?

Graham: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Just like super dumpy, shotgun bar, you know, package goods from behind the bar, Maria running it. Um [sighs] I never really hung out there, um, but I went—We'd be partying at the gallery, and we'd like go buy smokes. You know, at like 9:00 pm there'd be like four dudes watching *Jeopardy* in the bar, like that's it.

Maria's son, Ed, would occasionally bartend at Kaplan's and concurs with this assessment, right down to the detail about *Jeopardy*, remembering, "There would be old men who would sit there all day and watch *Jeopardy* and baseball and drink nine PBRs."

The bar also had a reputation for violence—not because of the bar itself, but because of where it was located. The corner at Morgan and 31st is the historical boundary between rival gangs in the neighborhood, and Ed describes the impact that had on the bar:

It was a lot rougher place. The neighborhood was very rough. There were—on Morgan Street in the '80s and '90s and 2000s, it was a pretty violent street of gang activity with gangs shooting each other frequently, almost seemed like it was weekly. Uh, several people were shot in front of that bar, shot in the parking lot. Bullet holes are in the door and the windows of the existing place right now to remind us of those times. Um, it's a very tough neighborhood, and my mother, who is Korean American, and her friends, were also mostly Korean and some old um, neighborhood group of ladies, worked that bar and kept these dudes in check.

Part of the way they kept people in check was by controlling who had access to the bar. As Ed explains,

I mean, here's the thing, if you were in a bar culture, if you're a guy who is going to bars every night, if you're a jerk and you continue to be a jerk to other guests or the place, you're banned from that bar. And you're never allowed to come in. So many of these people did not want to be banned from Maria's and banned from being able to make purchases there, so there's that kind of rule in place, but also Maria, you know, and the ladies there. And I think this happens in almost all bars, most bartenders and owners are just giant babysitters for old men.

Getting banned at Kaplan's had larger ramifications in the neighborhood because it occupied the lowest spot in the bar hierarchy of Bridgeport, meaning that by the time you got kicked out of Kaplan's, you had probably already gotten kicked out of the all the other bars in the neighborhood.

Jamie, who helps run the WLPN low frequency radio station in the neighborhood, says "If you got banned at Kaplan's. I believe if you—you got kicked out of Kaplan's it was literally the bar of last resort. I saw guys go in there with like shopping carts and handfuls of pennies." Jamie also recounts a story about the first time he met Ed at Kaplan's, which features one patron stabbing another patron with "one of those little sporks you get at Popeye's." Similarly, January tells a story about an altercation she witnessed when she was buying beer at Maria's when she was younger:

> So it's all open space. So walk in, I'm here buying booze. These two guys are fighting with each other and one guy pulls a knife on the other guy. And I'm like holy shit. And I'm just like holy cow. And it's like getting crazy in there.... Maria like literally walks away from like taking my money, walks over here, comes out from behind the bar, starts yelling at both of them. Grabs them both, shit you not, brings them outside. I walked out and finally like she—like I finally came out with my beer or whatever. And she brought them outside and she like "You're not allowed in here, one week." (laughs) She kicked them out. For one week. They have a knife fight in her bar. And she kicked them out for one week. [laughs]

Community of the Future

It was against this general backdrop that in the early 2000s, Maria was ready to stop running the bar. Ed had been active in the Wicker Park arts scene of the 1990s (Lloyd 2005), and ran *Lumpen*, a culture and politics magazine named for the members of the proletariat that even Marx detested (1867). In Bridgeport, he also ran the Co-Prosperity Sphere, a building a few blocks south of the bar on Morgan Street that served as an all-purpose events space for art exhibits, concerts, talks, meetings, and shows of all sorts. After spending much of the 1990s and early 2000s on the North Side, Ed had moved to Bridgeport with his wife and daughter, where his mother ran Kaplan's. There was a burgeoning arts scene in the neighborhood, with internationally-known artists the Zhou Brothers taking over an enormous formerly industrial building on 35th Street, and smaller galleries and workspaces dotting the neighborhood. In 2006, *The New York Times* sent a writer to report on the neighborhood, and the result was an article called, "In Chicago, Art Where You Least Expect

It," complete with a quote from Ed saying that "if the future is the apocalypse, then Bridgeport is the community of the future."

Eventually Maria got tired of running such an establishment, the story goes, but instead of selling the bar, she got convinced by her sons, Ed and Mike, to let them turn it into a place that they would want to spend time in. "We converted an old-school kind of working class slashy, which is a half liquor store, half bar, and kind of updated it for the twenty-first century," Ed says. They changed the name to Maria's Packaged Goods and Community Bar—an official name change that followed local custom, as even the *New York Times* noted that "other artists hang out over beers at Kaplan's Liquors, 960 West 31st Street, 773-890-0588, an all-in-one bodega, liquor store and dive bar known to locals as 'Maria's'" (Chen 2006). They refurbished the bar with sleek wood and chandeliers made of beer bottles made by Ed's artist wife. Eventually they expanded the bar by building an addition in what was formerly a parking lot next door and adding a counter-service Polish-Korean fusion restaurant called Kimski. They created an ambitious cocktail program and expanded the beer list well beyond the cheap domestics that Kaplan's used to sell to focus on craft beers. Ed recounts, saying

> We were given the opportunity carte blanche to just create a menu and beverage plan and beverage program that suited our interests, uh, which were a lot different than just selling the Miller High Life. My mother had never been to another bar in her whole life. She doesn't drink. She doesn't smoke.

For many, the bar became a sort of oasis in Bridgeport. It became a "third place" (Oldenburg 1989) for younger people in the neighborhood interested in art and progressive politics. Ed had been trying to foster this sort of environment with Co-Prosperity Sphere and other cultural spaces and events in Bridgeport, but found nothing was more effective than having a place people could come together and drink with each other.

> But then when we opened up Maria's, we realized what's really the most important thing for people who are seeking culture is a bar. And the bar became what it always was for me, a meeting place to have conversations, hatching plans, and it became a lot more successful in bringing more people to the neighborhood than our art space and these art festivals. And it kind of blew my mind. It kind of freaked the crap out of me. I was like wow, we tried for decades to make art as a way to communicate radical ideas and concepts of resistance, and community engagement and like you know, socially engaged art practices where we would promote utopian ideas or just crazy psychedelic weirdo stuff, and it has less impact than a bar.

Maria's became a social hub in Bridgeport, and more than that, began to attract city-wide and even national attention. Graham, a bartender, recounts, "We were the number one bar in *Chicago Magazine*. We've been on *Esquire*'s best bars in America twice. We've been in *Bon Appetit*. Like I mean, it's almost like you know, national level stuff."

Positive Reaction

A lot of the people in the neighborhood who *like* the change going on in Bridgeport—the diversification, the increased prominence of the arts, the lefty politics—give credit to Maria's, and specifically to Ed, for helping to transform the neighborhood. Ann, who owns an architecture firm with her partner Craig, says, "I think there are social infrastructures and there are you know, kind of like more civic infrastructures that support us, so I mean, I think in terms of social infrastructures, like Ed from Co-pro[sperity Sphere]." She refers to him approvingly as "the mayor of Bridgeport." Jamie gives the Marszewski brothers credit for taking a risk that has benefited the neighborhood and attracted others to it.

> So you know, there is a sense in the community of people, you know, now, and I think it's something that certainly in my circle of people we talk a lot about is, you know, hey, if you need something, let's get it in the neighborhood if we can, and let's figure out a way to do that. And it started there, and you know, when Eddie and his brother took a risk on Maria's, you know, everybody said this is never going to work.

Part of the draw of Maria's for people was that it was explicitly inclusive of populations that had traditionally been excluded in Bridgeport. One reason for this is that the staff at Maria's is diverse in terms of ethnicity and sexual orientation. Graham, a bartender at Maria's, is gay, and says,

"I think largely in part because of me, but also like everyone I work with, like we totally stamped out a lot of homophobic stuff at the bar years ago." Graham describes Maria's as a safe space along all dimensions, not just sexuality.

> Jeffrey: You said a second ago that it had always been a safe space. Do you mean that in terms of um, like people of color, queer people, just general weirdos, like—
>
> Graham: All three.
>
> Jeffrey: All three?
>
> Graham: All three. Fags of all colors.
>
> Jeffrey: Okay.
>
> Graham: Like we uh— I've been saying actually [laughs], I guess jokingly I used to say that Maria's was the hottest Mexican lesbian Connect Four bar in Chicago.

The seeming incongruity of the categories in this joke—lesbians, Mexicans, Connect Four players—speaks to a real image those associated with Maria's have of what it represents. Ed says, "I think Maria's prides itself even back then as being a sanctuary for all people of all classes and ethnicities and is that way today. I don't think there's many bars in Chicago where you see you know, whites, Hispanic, Asian, African American people all hanging out in the same place together." Not everyone feels comfortable hanging out in the new Bridgeport, though, and in many ways, this is by design.

Mutants

In the same way Ed and Maria's are given credit by those who like the changes going on in Bridgeport, they are the focus of animosity among people who do not like the changes. Part of it certainly has to do with money. The folks behind Maria's are seen as thriving economically in Bridgeport. The Marszewskis do own a lot of land in the neighborhood, and they have a hand in running a number of operations. Besides the bar and Co-Prosperity Sphere, there's a brewery, *Lumpen* magazine, WLPN radio station, and all sorts of magazines and other printed material, much

of it under the auspices of a non-profit organization he runs, the Public Media Institute. Partly because Maria's has been a big success and partly because he has a knack for self-promotion, Ed in particular has become a very visible sign of the changes going on Bridgeport. People in the neighborhood sometimes worry about gentrification, and Maria's is the rhetorical stand-in for this concern, even among people who otherwise feel positively about it. Jamie says,

> You know, Maria's and Kimski's, I think you could fairly or unfairly say they've driven what some people see is the gentrification of Bridgeport. You know I think they've added enormously to the quality of life, and if that's gentrification then fuck, I'm all for it. You know, I'm on Morgan street specifically, now with all this beautiful streetscaping, that I couldn't even imagine 20 years ago, if we get one you know, Soluri's Italian Deli coming in, you know, I know it sounds like small beans to people, and people may listen to this and say, you know what, why is this fucking guy talking about bars and delis for? Those things make your quality of life go up, though. If you don't have them in walking distance of your neighborhood, it's pretty tough.

Hannah, who works part-time at Co-Prosperity Sphere, also recognizes the Marszewskis' role in gentrification.

> And you know I love the Marszewskis, and they've been really good to me, and I'm trying to like get my shit together so I can work for them for real, but they're definitely contributing to that. You know, in addition to having the bar, and the restaurant, and the gallery, they own a lot of land. And so they dictate a lot of that stuff, which is, you know, it's weird. And being in Bridgeport and dealing with that kind of class thing is like I am both a gentrifier, but also the people being pushed out as it's being gentrified, so it's really weird to deal with that. Like I have a friend and him and his wife moved to Bridgeport from Lakeview like two years ago. And I was just like that's it. It's done. It's done. Like we're done. We're going. We're done, you know?[11]

That said, while there is some anxiety about what the gentrification could lead to, for the most part worries about displacement in Bridgeport are minimal. This is partly because there is such a high homeownership rate in the neighborhood that there is not much anxiety about people getting displaced. Progressives whom Brown-Saracino (2009) identify as social preservationists do not really

[11] Notice the last statement—people from the north side moving to Bridgeport might mean "we're done." Reputation is relational, as I will discuss more in-depth in Chapter Five.

exist in Bridgeport in any significant numbers simply because there is not significant worry about "old-timers" being pushed out of the neighborhood. If the worry is not about actual displacement, then, what is it about?

To begin, the price of beer—and what it represents—is more of a concern than the price of real estate to some people. When Maria's upscaled, Ed says, "Some people felt alienated from that. It was too nice." Beers at Maria's are nicer than they were, but they are also more expensive. "And then of course like we didn't have $1.50 drafts anymore," Ed says. "We had craft beer, right? We still kept the shitty beer at, you know, $2. You could still get the same product there." Indeed, to this day, Maria's lists "random shitty beer" along with all their craft beers, at the price of $2.

It is not just about price, though, but about what Maria's has come to represent: a perceived exclusion of old-timers. To some people in the neighborhood, this "random shitty beer" was just regular beer, and the new Maria's was no longer for regular people who wanted regular beer. Kevin, a chef in the neighborhood and a sixth-generation Bridgeporter, remembers:

> And you know, you've got the old clientele is walking in and like we'll do shots, no shots, we don't sell shots. Where's the raspberry vodka? We don't have that. I want a can of Icehouse for $1.50 or $2 or whatever. It's like we don't have that. I watched them come and maybe have a drink and leave or maybe come and ask and talk and then leave because they're not getting what they want.

For some, the bar had become pretentious and out of touch. When Ed describes Kaplan's—the former incarnation of Maria's before he and his brother changed its style—he describes it as a neighborhood joint that served a wide variety of people, not all of them described lovingly:

> It served every demographic of person that was living in Bridgeport or was visiting it, so working class people, people on pensions, unemployed people, people probably involved in gang activity, ex-gang members, ex-felons, just working dudes coming there after work, getting out of the plant or whatever, uh, and of course younger people, like what they now call Millennials.

When I talk to Won, the chef and partner at Kimski, about the clientele at Maria's and Kimski, he tells me it is mostly North Siders who treat the location as a destination, and that for the most part, people actually from Bridgeport don't patronize the location. The tavern at the corner of 31st and Morgan has gone from being a location frequented by locals to a symbol of neighborhood change that people from the neighborhood do not feel welcome at but that does bring people in from outside the neighborhood—and indeed sometimes from outside the city and the country, given the press Maria's has gotten. There is a feel among some that old-timers are being pushed out of certain public spaces, and furthermore, that this is a good thing.

I began this chapter with stories people of color would tell me about exclusion in Bridgeport—the Black professor who said she couldn't go to the neighborhood, the South Asian Uber driver who felt unsafe while living there, the Latino man who wore a White Sox cap as a compensation for his lack of whiteness. Another story I heard about racism in Bridgeport sticks out for a slightly different reason, though, that speaks to the establishment of a new moral order in Bridgeport associated with the undefending of the neighborhood. In the early fall of 2016, I attended my friend Samantha's birthday party in the South Side neighborhood of South Shore. Immediately south of Woodlawn and one of the original 77 community areas, South Shore is a predominantly Black neighborhood. At this particular party, my roommate and I were the only white people in attendance. There was craft beer from Half Acre, a North Side microbrewery, to go with good music and conversation as attendees came and went over the course of the night. We talked about biking on the South Side and the recent premier of the new Donald Glover show *Atlanta*.

At some point in the evening, I got to talking with Aaron, a Black teacher in his thirties. I told him that I lived in Bridgeport—that is where I had seen Sam and been invited to the party the night before—and he reacted immediately. As with the professor, this was not a surprise to me—

most people of color I know in Chicago have stories, either their own or those passed down from their parents, about the wisdom of staying out of Bridgeport. Aaron told me a story, too, but his was a little different. He had gone to Bridgeport Coffee on the corner of 31st and Morgan to do some work one day. He was there most of the day and did not have any uncomfortable run-ins with racism, which he was worried about because he had been warned about Bridgeport's attitude toward Blacks from older folks he knew. It got to be the end of the day, and as he was preparing to leave, he noticed an older white woman giving him a strange look. "Great," he thought. "Here it comes." The woman came up to him and leaned in conspiratorially. She glanced sideways at the white hipsters in the coffee shop—a group growing in visibility in the neighborhood over the previous decade—and said to Aaron, "These people are ruining the neighborhood." Surprised and relieved, Aaron had found out that at least for some people, it was now worse to be a hipster in Bridgeport than it was to be Black. The neighborhood had been sufficiently undefended for Aaron to feel safe coming there, but it had also been sufficiently undefended to be plausibly branded as hip.

In many ways, hipsters get treated like an ethnic group, both in Bridgeport and in broader imaginations about urban life. Their movement across neighborhoods is discussed in much the same way early urban sociologists talk about invasion and succession (Park, Burgess, and McKenzie 1925). Witness a detailed article published in a weekly Chicago newspaper in 2013 entitled, "The migration of the hipster: A Chicago history, 1898-present" (Levitt 2013). It would make sense that they would be thought of as a solidified group in Bridgeport especially, as the neighborhood has long been defined by sharp boundaries between groups, even among groups that might just be thought of as

"white" elsewhere.[12] Hipsters in Bridgeport, I would argue, operate in the local imagination as just another white ethnic group.

As with other white ethnic groups in the neighborhood, people called hipsters in Bridgeport are both the recipients of animus from others, as seen in the story about the woman at the coffee shop, and actively antagonistic toward others.[13] In my interviews and in my daily experiences in Bridgeport, a certain level of contempt for some old-timers emerged among people who might be referred to as hipsters. They described some old-timers as racists, as "mutants," and as people whose antiquated views are holding the neighborhood back, but not for much longer because they are an older population who will die in the near future. In looking to abolish one specific moral order that has defined the neighborhood, or at least people's perception of it, some of those associated with the undefending of Bridgeport have created a new moral order, which raises questions about inclusion, exclusion, and citizenship at the neighborhood level.

More than just an academic concern, this question of who is welcome in Bridgeport is a live issue in the neighborhood, and it often manifests on neighborhood Facebook groups. I was told over and over again over the course of my interviews to avoid the Facebook groups because of hateful things that are said on it. There are different Bridgeport Facebook groups, and some of them

[12] There is of course a long history of racial politics in America that contribute to the social process of becoming white (Waters 1990). In Bridgeport, there has been a persistence of the importance of specific ethnicities within a broader category of people many outsiders would just refer to as white.
[13] This tortured construction—"people called hipsters" instead of just "hipsters"—is an indication of one important way this group of people is *not* the same as other white ethnics: few people would *claim* to be a hipster. It is used mostly as a pejorative by people to classify a group of others—humorously lampooned in the Onion (2006) headline "Two Hipsters Angrily Call Each Other 'Hipster'"—and unlike with other groups, there is nothing perceived to be genetic or hereditary about it. In this way, "hipsters" fits better within the category of subculture (Fischer 1995), and indeed early sociologists (Zorbaugh 1929; Firey 1945) identified sociospatial components to groups oriented around subculture or sentiment. That said, in neighborhoods like Bridgeport defined historically and contemporaneously by understandings of ethnicity and clan, hipsters as a strain of white ethnics makes sense interactionally if not in terms of claimed identity.

are largely composed of mundane messages announcing bingo nights at a local church or putting used clothes up for sale. Some of the groups do get hostile, though, and the sides are largely defined by what their insult of choice is: racist or hipster. The side that calls other folks in the group racist would probably not identify as hipsters, and the side that calls other folks in the group hipsters would probably not identify as racists—these are both identities people are hesitant to claim. While certainly not monolithic, there is a good chance that anyone complaining about hipsters on the Facebook group has it out for Maria's, and Ed in particular. Arguments get heated, with one notoriously leading to someone making a veiled threat to firebomb Maria's.[14]

Maria's is not the only place in the neighborhood people complain about as a proxy for complaining about hipsters and the changes going on in the neighborhood. January talks about people discussing Jackalope that way, too. She mentions one person saying, "enough with these fucking hipster fucking shitty coffee shops in this neighborhood, we don't fucking need this." This attitude is somewhat ameliorated when people realize who she is and that she has been in the neighborhood and they know her. She mentions another person complaining about Jackalope because he thought it was run by North Siders interloping into Bridgeport before he got corrected. "Like, eight people from the neighborhood were like Fred, it's January, you know her," she remembers. "And he was like 'Oh, I'm sorry, Jan.' Like, he tagged me, because I'm friends with him on Facebook." In many ways, hipsters get conflated with Norths Siders as they are both viewed as outsiders worthy of mistrust.

[14] January brings up this incident specifically when discussing conflict in the neighborhood between old-timers and hipsters. "I got really upset," she says. "I got upset about it, because some of it was like 'Yeah, somebody needs to like throw a Molotov cocktail in that place,' remember that? I screenshotted those. Because I was like if anything ever happens to Maria's, I'm going to tell—let Ed know that I have these."

> January: But yeah, I got a lot of flak when I first opened, people thinking that, um, I was, you know, an interloper.
>
> Jeffrey: Why did people think that, like a coffee shop opens and they assume....
>
> January: I don't know. It's like the equivalent of—it's making a lot of different things the same, right? It's like oh, it's a coffee shop, so it has to be North Sider, it has to be hipster. And those are the same somehow.

Maria's is, however, the most common target, both because it is the most visible representation of the shifts in Bridgeport's reputation and because Ed is understood—correctly, I would argue—as a figure with an enormous amount of clout in the neighborhood. If Maria's feels exclusionary to people, then it is reasonable for those people to fear that the rest of the neighborhood could be moving in the same direction, given the visibility and political position of Ed.

Though he is a committed leftist—the magazine he has run since his days as an undergrad at University of Illinois is called *Lumpen*, after all—Ed is not only a large property-owner and merchant in Bridgeport, but friendly with members of the local Machine. At a 2015 aldermanic debate at First Lutheran Church of the Trinity, he was vocal in his support of the current alderman, Patrick Daley Thompson, and also had a good working relationship with the previous alderman, another member of the Machine. When I'm interviewing him, he has to take a call, which turns out to be someone from the local Ninth Police District wanting to host a neighborhood appreciation night at Maria's. None of this seems inauthentic, as Ed is upfront about his allegiances. His father was, after all, a police officer, and he mentions the fact that his mother running a bar allowed him to get by in the neighborhood when he was younger, saying, "Because I was a business person's son, I immediately get a pass. I am now a mutant guy, a half breed who can now walk amongst people who would beat the shit out of me normally." He is also a business owner and is generally in favor of more businesses in the neighborhood. He has historically run an event called Version Fest in Bridgeport through his Public Media Institute, and at the 2006 edition of the event, he got stores from Wicker

Park—including Quimby's, a comic book store, and Dusty Groove, a record store—to open popup stores in the neighborhood. To hear Ed—and others in the neighborhood—tell it, this was exciting, as there is a general consensus that Bridgeport is being underserved commercially, but if you are worried about gentrification, hip pop-up stores are signs of danger. And it is not just sites of hipster commerce Ed has supported in Bridgeport—along with Thompson, he is currently supporting plans for a Starbucks with a drive-through on 35th and Halsted, a proposal that has caused much consternation in the neighborhood among people who think it will make the intersection dangerous and take business away from local coffee shops in the surrounding area. In an article about the debate over the Starbucks (Stoner 2019), Ed's support is emphasized:

> Marszewski also believes it will bring more business to the neighborhood. "If a Starbucks opens it means that the neighborhood or location it is in denotes an area that is ready for additional retail commerce," he wrote in an email. "It brings more persons to the area in which the cluster exists creating more street traffic and multiplying the customer base of other retailers." (Marszewski came out strongly against the project on Twitter when it was first announced, saying it represented "a total lack of vision." He changed his mind after doing more research into the project, he said in an email.)

It can seem surprising to outsiders that the living emblem of Bridgeport hipsterdom is tight with the powers that be in the neighborhood and in favor of development. I have heard people giving tours of the neighborhood talk about him in opposition to the Machine, but he is a businessman, albeit one who peppers his conversation with references to avant garde performance art and posts about Noam Chomsky on Facebook. Most importantly, he is very powerful within Bridgeport, both in terms of the property he and his family own and in terms of that old Chicago metric of clout, to the point that he gets referred to by some in the neighborhood as the mayor. He likes Bridgeport, and though he tells me a story about having a gun pulled on him and told to "get the fuck out of here, you chinks" and that "these are very common things in that part of the neighborhood, that kind of brutality and that kind of weird kind of violent behavior," he maintains,

(like most business-owners I talk to) that *most* of Bridgeport is not like that, at least not anymore. "But even in the other side, if you went to those bars and you weren't welcome unless you said, 'Hi, I'm Eddie from Maria's,'" he says. "Code for, 'oh, you'e okay,' right? You know, you absorb this, and then so it's also then refreshing when there are just normal people around who aren't racist, who aren't, you know, being idiots, and lots of people—most people are like that. Most people are not ignorant fucks. Most people are not racist assholes. You know what I mean?" But some of them are, he thinks, and he does refer to people as mutants (although it should be noted, in the above quote he refers to himself as one, too).

What happens if the "mayor of Bridgeport" thinks you're a mutant? You might not feel comfortable at his bar, and this is a problem for some people because as he himself says about the patrons of the bar's former incarnation, "They're there because they want someone to talk to. They're having, you know, it's the third place. It's a semi-public place. They're looking for interaction. They're looking for escape. They're looking for respite from their daily grind, right? And this was a great place for that." The problem with the defended neighborhood is that certain groups of people were excluded from these public and semi-public spaces—the benefits they offered—because of their race or ethnicity. Now that the space is being *undefended*, are other people being excluded? Almost certainly. It is an open question about whether this exclusion—in many ways done in pursuit of a broader *inclusion*—is socially beneficial for the neighborhood on balance, but it no doubt raises an uncomfortable question: ultimately, how different is an undefended neighborhood from a defended neighborhood? Is it just a matter of who gets excluded?

Businesses as Bellwethers and Vanguards

As discussed in the introduction, merchants are ideal people to talk with about neighborhood reputation because they have to have a sharp understanding of it in order for their

businesses to thrive, or even survive. They serve as bellwethers of neighborhood reputations—leading indicators, as it were—because, more than anyone else, it is in their interest to understand exactly what outsiders think about a neighborhood. In this capacity, merchants are passive receptors of neighborhood reputation, taking in what people think about their neighborhood so that they might sell accordingly.

Merchants can be active, too, as this chapter demonstrates. Suttles recognized that a "forbidding reputation" is one of the most powerful components of a defended neighborhood, and I contend that where reputations are often made is in storefronts and bars. If defending a neighborhood is about signaling to outsiders that they are not welcome, then much of the work along those lines is done in the places that outsiders might wander. These places include territorial boundaries, sure, but not all defending of boundaries is done by roving gangs making sure outsiders do not cross a street. "Third places" can also do a great deal of work to draw a line in the sand to an outsider, and indeed have historically done that work in Bridgeport. Over and over again, the specter of the unwelcome bar came up in my interviews. Ed's account is a common one:

> I really don't know except it goes along with a general Chicago culture where you know, you grow up, and you go to a school, whether it's a public school or parish Catholic school and you identify with those schools, you identify with your block, and you kind of hate everybody who doesn't go to your school, doesn't live on your block. Right? The neighborhood bar served the same purpose. That was your corner bar, right? So that was your base. These cats had their own base, and if you were an outsider, you had to be accepted. You had to enter that kind of, like, social scene of whether or not—you'd be someone allowed to hang out here without scrutiny. And it was very interesting to see how people developed those patterns of, like, settling in at Maria's. But a lot of bars are really hostile. I mean, whatever, I would go into neighborhood bars and everyone in the bar would look at me and want to kick my ass. It's just very common.

When I ask why, he says, as if it is the most obvious answer in the world: "Because you're not from that bar. You're not from that neighborhood. You're not from that block. No one's seen you before. No one knows who the hell you are. Like what the fuck are you doing in my living room? This is my

place, you know?" Neighborhoods get defended at the neighborhood bar where people glare at you, or the coffee shop where you get worse service than everyone else because no one knows you.

Neighborhoods can get undefended at these institutions, too. The reason places of commerce—and particularly places of commerce and conviviality, like bars and coffee shops—are so important for the reproduction of place reputation is that they are often the public face of a neighborhood. In many ways, they are the frontlines of neighborhood reputation management. To the extent that an outsider has any actual experience with a neighborhood, it is likely to be at one of these places. So, if these places are hostile and racist, it reinforces the view that the neighborhood is hostile and racist. If these places make a proactive attempt to be inclusive of those who have typically been excluded, though, it can challenge the reputation and help to transform it. It can help to undefend the neighborhood. As this chapter demonstrates, though, undefended does not mean non-exclusive, as the process of undefending Bridgeport has involved the creation and maintenance of new boundaries.

The undefending of the neighborhood is a unique process that demands attention, not just in Bridgeport, but across America. It is important for the simple reason that the defending of white neighborhoods has been such a prevalent phenomenon throughout American history, even before Suttles identified the phenomenon in the 1970s. American communities have a long history of territoriality and exclusion, whether that means ethnic neighborhoods in the Midwest, sundown towns in the South, or all-white suburbs in New England. Reputations die hard, so if these places are going to diversify—for reasons altruistic or instrumental, it does not really matter—there needs to be a concerted effort not only to create the structural conditions for that possibility, but to diminish the reputation that has been one of the strongest bulwarks against integration. This is what undefending the neighborhood does, for reasons generous and cynical, and this is why it is a

phenomenon of exceptional importance for understanding the changing landscape of American cities.

CHAPTER FOUR

WHO BENEFITS FROM A BAD REPUTATION?: DISORDER AND DEVELOPMENT IN WOODLAWN

I pulled into the church parking lot, parking behind a new silver Mercedes Benz that was parked in the middle of two reserved spaces. The personalized license plate read "BTB." It was a Thursday night late in February of 2018, and I was going to a meeting at the Apostolic Church of God in the eastern section of Woodlawn close to Jackson Park and the lake. Apostolic is one of the larger churches in the neighborhood—I've been told that at its height, it boasted 20,000 members. The Benz presumably belonged to the man who has shepherded the church since 2008, Dr. Byron T. Brazier. He succeeded his father, Bishop Arthur M. Brazier, who had been pastor there for almost fifty years. Like his father before him, Brazier is the most significant and public figure of Black political power in the neighborhood.

That night, they were holding a public meeting through their community organizing branch, 1Woodlawn, to address community concerns about development and the potential for gentrification and displacement that could result from the opening of the Obama Presidential Center (OPC), which will be built a few blocks away from the church. Much of the debate related to the OPC has centered around whether or not there will be a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) with Woodlawn. A Community Benefits Agreement is a pact between an incoming institution and the neighborhood it is inhabiting that makes certain provisions to guarantee the protection and prosperity of the people in the neighborhood. CBAs are meant to prevent exploitation of vulnerable communities, and historically their tenets have included tax freezes, employment guarantees, and other mechanisms to economically benefit the often disadvantaged neighborhoods that are impacted by a given development. The Obama Foundation has been adamant that there will be no CBA, as

has Dr. Brazier, who has publicly suggested it would be "an insult to the first Black president" to ask for a CBA when no such request has been made in the past to the nearby University of Chicago or Museum of Science and Industry. Yet, there is a sense among some in the community—discussed later in this chapter—that Apostolic's opposition is rooted less in respect for President Obama and more in a desire not to see their position as a neighborhood power diluted by others. That said, from very early on after the OPC was announced, Apostolic has organized meetings focused on gentrification and displacement under the auspices of the Network of Woodlawn (NOW) and 1Woodlawn, its community organizing arm. They held a six-week Urban Planning Seminar, complete with certificates at the end for community members who attended all the sessions where urban planners discussed how development in low-income neighborhoods works and how displacement of current residents might be forestalled.

The night's event was framed in terms of soliciting input from the community on the potential changes the Obama Presidential Center could bring. The poster for that night's meeting read:

> Plans for growth are moving quickly and our continued collaboration is critical to ensure we have a community-led development plan for our great neighborhood. We need the voices of all residents at the table to ensure that Woodlawn becomes a community of choice for all. Your participation is needed and necessary!!!

At the meeting, Dr. Brazier continued to emphasize the importance of having a unified voice representing Woodlawn, for the good of Woodlawn. Dr. Brazier is fond of repeating the line, "If you're not at the table, you're on the menu" and suggesting that him being at the table offers Woodlawn the best shot at prosperity. This issue—who gets to represent Woodlawn, and to what end—has been especially contentious in the neighborhood since the OPC was announced as there is disagreement about what the neighborhood's stance toward the institution should be, particularly in regard to asking for a CBA. It is this political background that underlines a lot of the conversation at

these meetings. That evening, a person associated with 1Woodlawn suggested that it was time for other organizations in the neighborhood to come together with them, which was a contentious ask given that members of some neighborhood organizations not only disagree with 1Woodlawn, but fundamentally distrust it.

The room that night had hundreds of people in it, seated at dozens of round tables around the enormous auditorium, with the speakers in the front. The turnout was huge, but it was clear that not everyone there trusted the intentions of 1Woodlawn or Dr. Brazier. They were there not because they agreed with Apostolic's vision, but because—for better or for worse—this was an important clearinghouse for neighborhood information. The meeting began with an identification of all the people in the crowd who were running for local office, and the numbers suggested that the candidates knew this was a seat of power in the neighborhood.

People gossip at these events, about the people who are there and the people who are not. That night people at my table talked to me about how *at least* the last two aldermen in the ward have been indicted and suggested conspiracy theories about who *really* snitched to the police and FBI to get Fred Hampton killed.[1] What people *really* like talking about, though, is Apostolic itself. After finding out I was studying the neighborhood, an older Black woman at my table named Eleanor gave me a running commentary on the night as it unfolded. She questioned whether the night was *actually* a chance for community input, distinguishing between "input" and the "appearance of

[1] Fred Hampton was the twenty-one-year-old deputy chairman of the Black Panther Party when he was killed in his bed on the West Side of Chicago during a raid involving the Cook County Attorney General's Office, the Chicago Police Department, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation in 1969. Hampton had been instrumental in forging what he called a "rainbow coalition" for poor people among the (Black) Black Panther Party, the (Puerto Rican) Young Lords, and the (white) Young Patriots Organization. The death was ruled justifiable homicide, but the City of Chicago, Cook County, and the federal government would later agree to a settlement over the death of Hampton and others involved in the raid, and there is a general belief among people I talk to in Woodlawn that Hampton was assassinated.

input." She pointed out the money that poured into Apostolic—"this meeting is funded by grant money"—and indeed Dr. Brazier seemed to acknowledge this later when he suggested that foundations had "taken Woodlawn off their lists" for money because they had been so successful at reducing violence. He joked, saying, "I said 'We have to go back to 23 [homicides per year, closer to numbers earlier in the decade] before you'll give us some money?' And they said 'Yes.'"

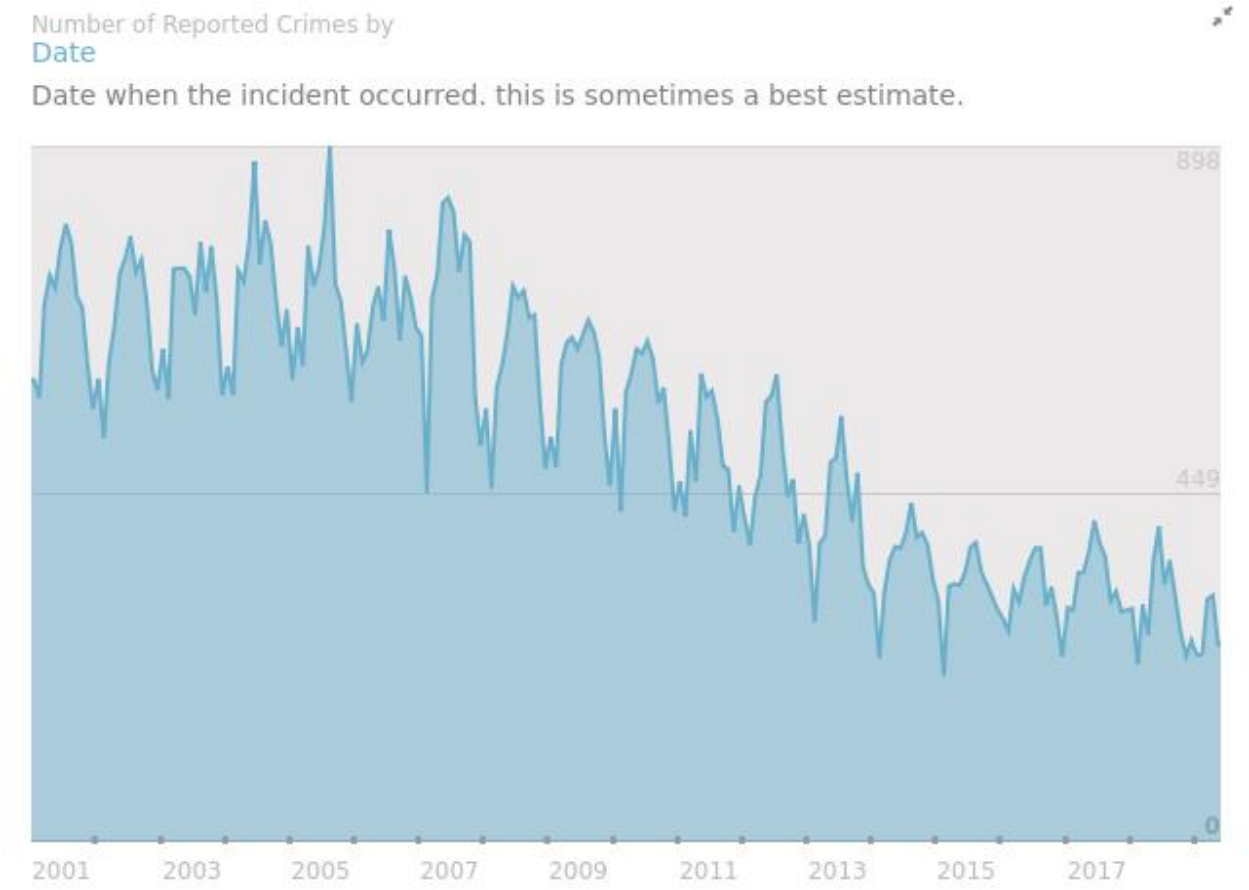
The moment that evoked the most controversy that night—and the deepest roll of Eleanor's eyes—came late in the meeting, when a person presenting mentioned that Apostolic under the auspices of another one of their arms, the Woodlawn Partnership for Economic Development, would, with a qualified partner, be asking that the City of Chicago turn over control of all the vacant properties in the neighborhood that the city owns. This is not an insignificant amount of land. During one meeting at Apostolic, a map was put up showing that Woodlawn contained a total of 106 acres of vacant parcels, with 52 acres owned by the city. Given that Woodlawn is approximately two square miles in area, and there are 640 acres in a square mile, this means that over 8 percent of Woodlawn is made up of vacant parcels, and that is not taking into account the fact that much of the eastern half of the neighborhood is parkland. When I emailed an architect doing work in the neighborhood to ask how much of Woodlawn is comprised of vacant lots and/or abandoned buildings, he said that while he did not know the number off the top of his head, he estimated it was 30 percent of the developable land in the neighborhood.

People in the audience seemed shocked by Apostolic's proposed land grab, and some, including neighborhood activist Naomi Davis, stood up and asked pointed questions. It was framed, on Apostolic's side, as "putting brakes" on the sale of land assets to groups without the interests of the community at heart. The alderman at the time, Willie Cochran—who would plead guilty to wire

fraud in March, 2019 (Meisner 2019)—stood up and defended the plan, but the evening still ended with a sense of unease among the attendees.

Why did discussion of the vacant lots cause such a stir? In part it is because, in Woodlawn, it seems as if they are everywhere, and in many ways, they represent both Woodlawn's problems and its promise. That is to say, while they represent the danger and blight that Woodlawn's reputation is built on—both a reminder of the violence that created them and a specter of the violence that might go on in them today—they also represent financial and political opportunity to those who control them. Reputation for violence outruns reality in Woodlawn. Crime overall is down in the neighborhood over the course of the twenty-first century per the city of Chicago's data portal (City of Chicago 2019) (see Figure 1). Per the *Chicago Sun-Times* count of all the homicides in the city (*Chicago Sun-Times* 2019), there were eight homicides in Woodlawn in 2018 and six so far in 2019.

Figure 4.1: Screenshot of Crime Data on Woodlawn from the Chicago Data Portal



The fact that Woodlawn is *not* at 23 homicides per year anymore does not register for many people, even if it apparently does for the funding agencies Dr. Brazier approaches. There are a number of reasons for this. Part of the issue is the basic process of reputational lag—once a reputation emerges, it is difficult to get rid of it. This is true for negative *and* positive reputations and is related to social mechanisms having to do with status and the expensiveness of information. Another issue is that Woodlawn is subject not only to the effects of its particular reputation, but also a broader stereotype about Black neighborhoods that shows that people use Blackness as a proxy for violence (Quillian and Pager 2001). Finally, the salience of Woodlawn's reputation as an individual neighborhood and its stereotype as a Black neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago is amplified

by things like President Trump's rhetoric about Chicago, news reports about the South Side, and even music about Woodlawn and nearby neighborhoods by rappers like Chief Keef, Lil' Durk, and King Louie. The vacant lots represent this persistent reputation for violence in Woodlawn, but they also represent the possibility of economic transformation. Complicating matters further is a neighborhood fear that such a transformation might leave the current residents behind. There is a palpable tension in Woodlawn between wanting a better neighborhood (and a better reputation that comes with it), and a fear that such a change might bring displacement. The vacant lots are objects of this anxiety.

Background: Emptiness and Violence in Woodlawn

One of the first things you notice when entering Woodlawn is indeed just how empty it is. Whether you arrive on the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) Green Line that terminates in the neighborhood or drive down the major commercial strip of 63rd Street—the street dappled by the sunlight shining through the CTA tracks above—it is impossible not to notice the emptiness. And it's not just boarded up storefronts that populate many neighborhoods, including Wicker Park and Bridgeport, but block after block of totally empty blocks, devoid not only of commerce, but of any buildings at all. These vacant lots constantly get brought up by people in the neighborhood as the embodiment of Woodlawn's reputation for danger, disorder, and decline. For all the physical characteristics that might stereotypically define low-income Black neighborhoods in the public imagination—liquor stores, storefront churches, and housing projects, for example—the most noticeable thing about Woodlawn is an absence: an absence of stores, of buildings, of the sort of visible commercial and civic life that typically appears on major thoroughfares like 63rd Street.

Such life used to animate 63rd Street. The CTA tracks that run above 63rd Street were extended there to transport people to the 1893 World's Fair Columbian Exposition (Appelbaum

1980: 5), which was sited at the Midway Plaisance at the northern border of the neighborhood. Daley's opened to serve the workers at the fair site in 1892, and commerce boomed in the area thereafter, as "there was a large number of restaurants, cafés, teahouses, lunch counters and refreshment stands on the grounds for those who eat their way through shows." (Appelbaum 6) The neighborhood's international fame might have peaked with the World's Fair, but it persisted far into the twentieth century as a major commercial corridor.

A great deal changed between then and now to make Woodlawn what it is. In 1920, the year after race riots rocked the city, only 2 percent of Woodlawn's population was African American, according to the U.S. census. That number increased to 13 percent by 1930, but Woodlawn was still a predominantly white neighborhood in the 1930s (Pacyga 290–91). It was kept that way by *de facto* segregation in the form of restrictive covenants. The nearby University of Chicago was instrumental in perpetuating this situation, attempting to keep Woodlawn white as a sort of buffer against Black neighborhoods on the South Side of Chicago (Hirsch 1983). The Supreme Court declared restrictive covenants to be unenforceable in its decision in *Shelley vs. Kraemer* in 1948. Combined with other factors, like the rise of the automobile and the expansion of American suburbs, many of the white ethnics who had dominated the South Side of Chicago for decades emptied out of Woodlawn. Like most of the rest of the South Side, Woodlawn became a predominantly Black neighborhood (Pacyga 291).[2]

[2] The story of the racial transition of Woodlawn is portrayed most famously in Lorraine Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun*. Hansberry's family was involved in an earlier restrictive covenant case, Hansberry vs. Lee, that made it to the Supreme Court in 1940, and she documented the experience of her Black family moving into an (at the time) all-white section of Woodlawn and dealing with white opposition. The house still stands on South Rhodes Avenue, and though it has been designated a Chicago landmark, looks inconspicuous on the residential street.

If the demographic story of Bridgeport during this time period was white resistance to change leading to ethnic stability in the face of the South Side's shift to being predominantly African American, then Woodlawn's story was a transition that outpaced even the already drastic change going on in the rest of the South Side's neighborhoods during that time period (See Figures 4.2 and 4.3). While most of the South Side transitioned from predominantly white to predominantly Black in the middle of the twentieth century, Woodlawn was an extreme case that went from over 80 percent white at the time of the 1940 census to almost 90 percent Black at the time of the 1960 census.

Figure 4.2: White-Black Composition of the South Side, 1940-2016

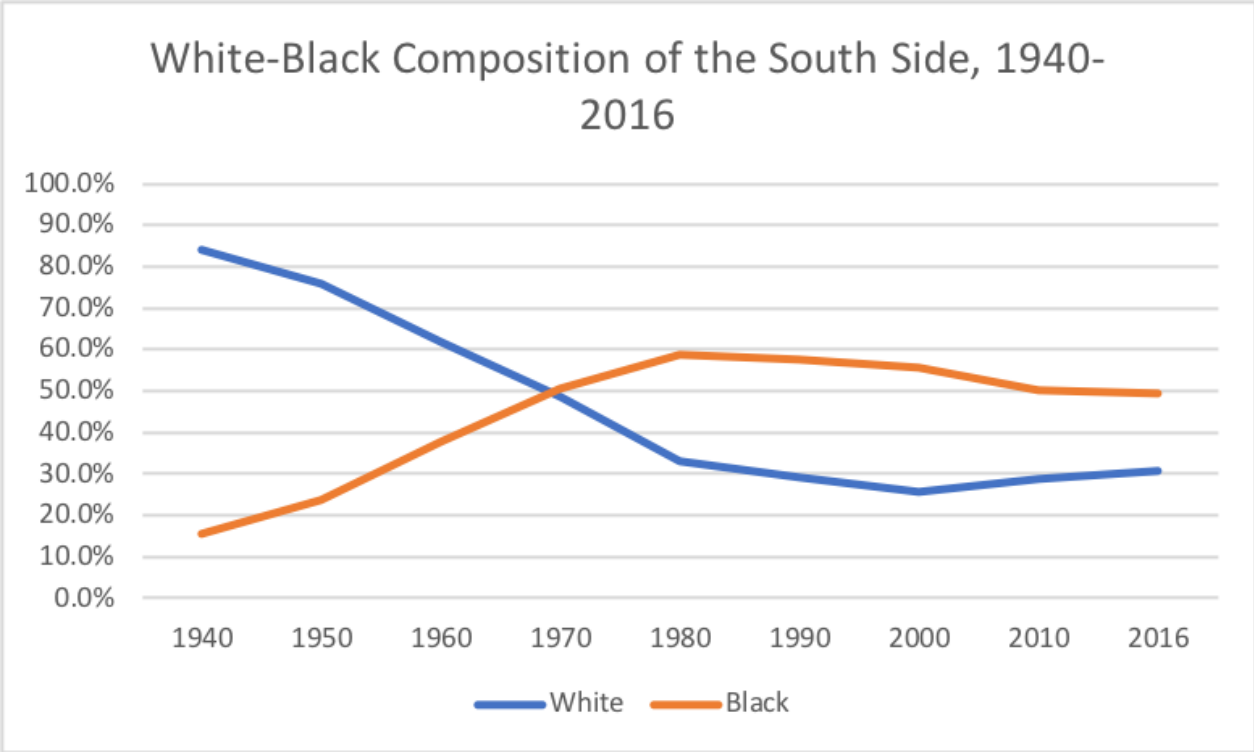
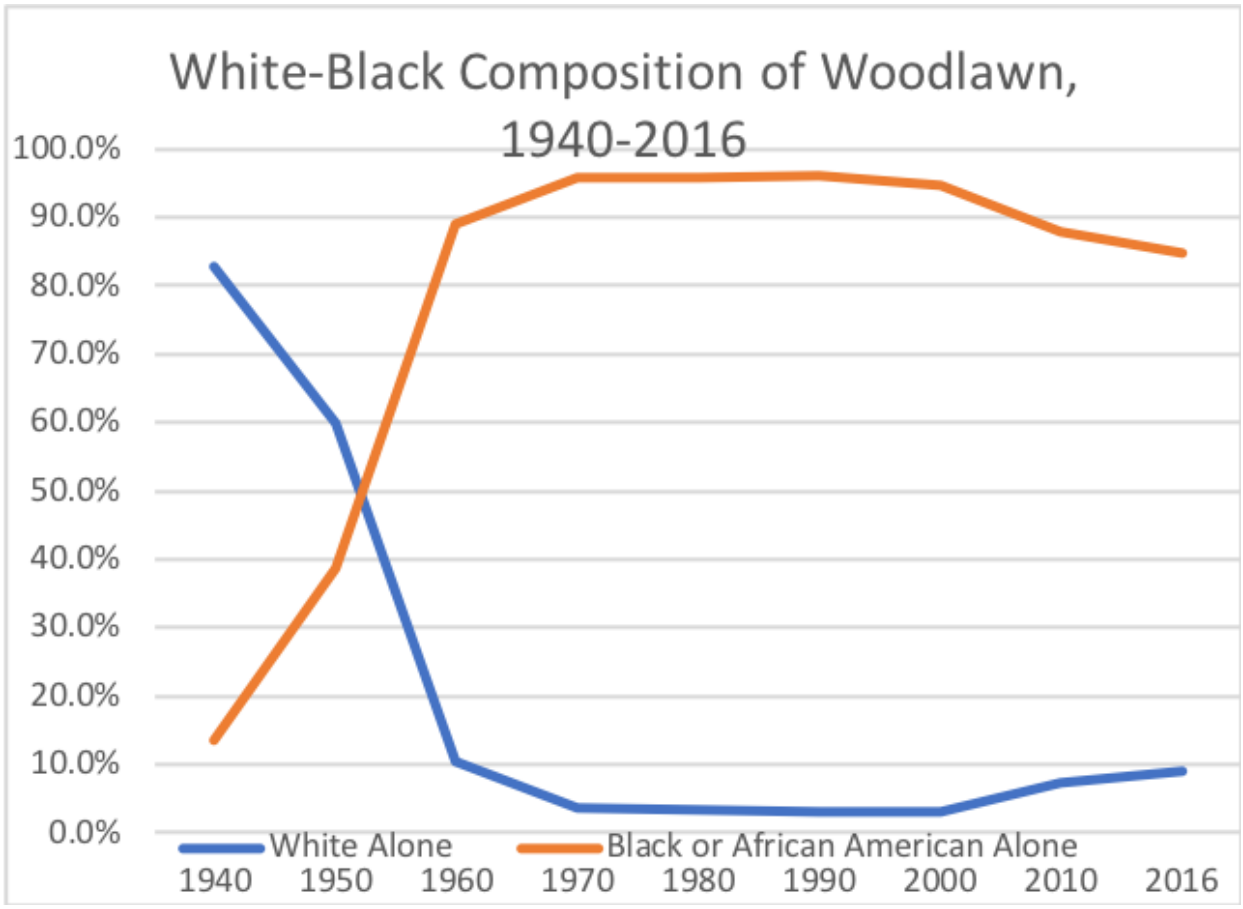


Figure 4.3: White-Black Composition of Woodlawn, 1940-2016

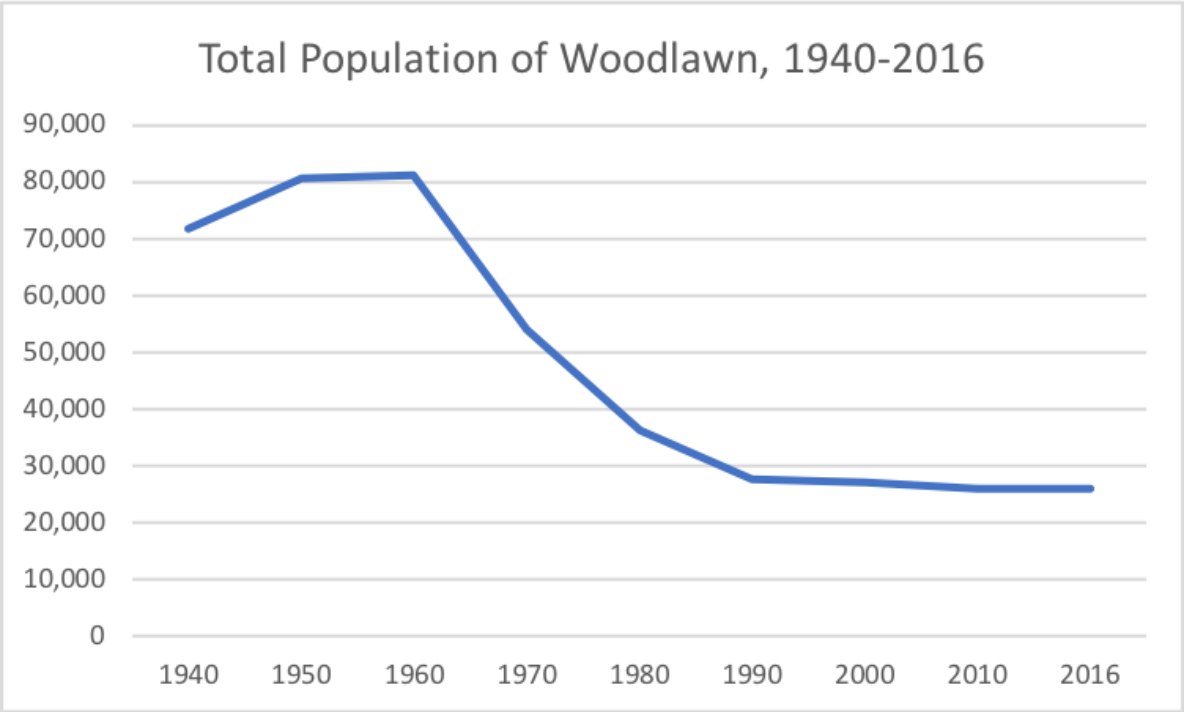


When Bishop Arthur Brazier described Woodlawn in the 1960s, the problem was not emptiness but rather its opposite: crowdedness. In describing the neighborhood, he observed that "a net density of almost 250 persons per acre" made "Woodlawn one of the most densely occupied communities in Chicago" (1969:10).

The rapid transition from white to Black does not explain the emptiness that characterizes Woodlawn now in terms of population (see Figure 4.4), in terms of commercial density, and in terms of literal, physical emptiness as represented by the blocks and blocks of empty lots that span 63rd Street and other major thoroughfares in the neighborhood. The current population of Woodlawn is roughly a quarter of what it was at its peak. Even if we take into account the fact that

at its peak, Woodlawn was overcrowded, the neighborhood is currently nowhere near its carrying capacity.

Figure 4.4: Total Population of Woodlawn, 1940-2016



To understand that, one needs to know about what happened in the neighborhood *after* its racial transition. The neighborhood continued to be a center of commerce on the South Side, now serving a largely Black population. Then two things happened in the late 1960s that would come to define the neighborhood for decades to come. First came the riots that swept through Chicago and much of the nation following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968. This rioting, some of which occurred in Woodlawn but mostly decimated the West Side of the city, had serious repercussions for the willingness of businesses to locate in Woodlawn. Seeing what had happened in the rest of Chicago, "most white business owners, fearing repeats of the riots that devastated the West Side, left the neighborhood after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr." (Seligman 886).

Second came a rash of arsons in the neighborhood (Seligman 886)—some of them for insurance purposes (Wacquant 2004: 21)—that scarred the already emptying commercial corridor.

Vacant Lots, Abandoned Buildings, and Urban Disorder

Empty or otherwise, unused or unobserved space is a source of concern among citizens, territory where creation of public dis(order) and contestation over what sort of place a space will be happen. These locations are also conceived of as a theoretical problem for urbanists. Theorists have long concerned themselves with a spatial component to urban disorder and crime. Thrasher (1927) connects disorder to liminal social spaces, saying that "threads of social disintegration tend to follow alongside rivers, canals, railroad tracks, and business streets whose borders are manifestly undesirable for residential purposes and permit gangs to thrive in the interstices between very good residence areas" (19). Operating at the seams of the city, Thrasher observes gangland in places where there is not a stability of a different kind of land use. In fact, he says this is the major contribution of his work is that "*gangland represents a geographically and socially interstitial area in the city*" (22; emphasis in original). Even empty spaces with more socially pleasant connotations than vacant lots have come in for scrutiny from urbanists. Jacobs (1961) identifies parks as places where vice can flourish away from the mutual surveillance that characterizes city streets.

Empty spaces are dangerous socially because they come to be viewed as belonging to no jurisdiction. Sampson and Raudenbush (1999), in discussing the pervasive interest in disorder among urbanists, note that "the streets, parks, and sidewalks still belong to no one and therefore to everyone" (604). This designation is perhaps even more true for vacant properties and abandoned buildings, which are not only public spaces, but public spaces defined by abandonment of public interest. A street can be monitored by "eyes upon the street" (Jacobs 1961), a park can be peopled by visitors, and a sidewalk can be cleaned by the merchants attempting to make their storefronts

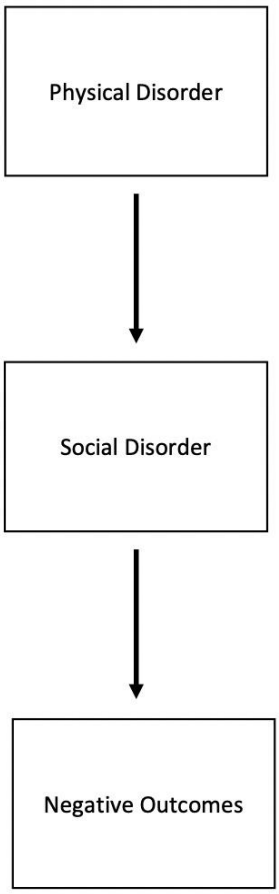
attractive. A vacant lot or an abandoned building is defined by the absence of such care. The two prevailing perspectives on such physical disorder—the broken windows paradigm and the neighborhood effects paradigm—both connect such physical disorder to social disorder and crime, although the underlying causal mechanism differs between the two perspectives.

Broken Windows

Wilson and Kelling (1982) connect physical disorder—a category that includes vacant lots and abandoned buildings—with social disorder more broadly. They observe that actual crime is not the only thing that matters to people in neighborhoods, and that "outside observers should not assume that they know how much of the anxiety now endemic in many big-city neighborhoods stems from a fear of 'real' crime and how much from a sense that the street is disorderly, a source of distasteful, worrisome encounters." In other words, when considering what makes a neighborhood feel safe, it is necessary to consider disorder in addition to actual crime, partially because disorder creates a situation in which actual crime is more likely to take place. This is because Wilson and Kelling also identify a causal link between physical disorder and social disorder. Specifically, they claim that "disorder and crime are usually inextricably linked, in a kind of developmental sequence," further explaining that "social psychologists and police officers tend to agree that if a window in a building is broken and is left unrepaired, all the rest of the windows will soon be broken" and that "one unrepaired broken window is a signal that no one cares, and so breaking more windows costs nothing." This is a sort of slippery slope argument, wherein one crack in the physical order of a place invites more, and before long conditions deteriorate across a wide range of dimensions (see Figure 4.5). The consequences of broken windows theory have been extensive. The findings that motivated the original article were based on a government intervention in Newark, New Jersey, and ultimately led to an extension of broken windows policing in departments across America, most

notably in New York City (Sampson and Raudenbush 1999: 604–605; Childress 2016). Broken windows policing has come in for criticism for being racist (Jefferson 2016) and ineffective (Harcourt 1998; Harcourt and Ludwig 2006). Still, in terms of policy implementation, the broken windows paradigm has become prevalent.

Figure 4.5: Broken Windows Model (Wilson and Kelling 1982)



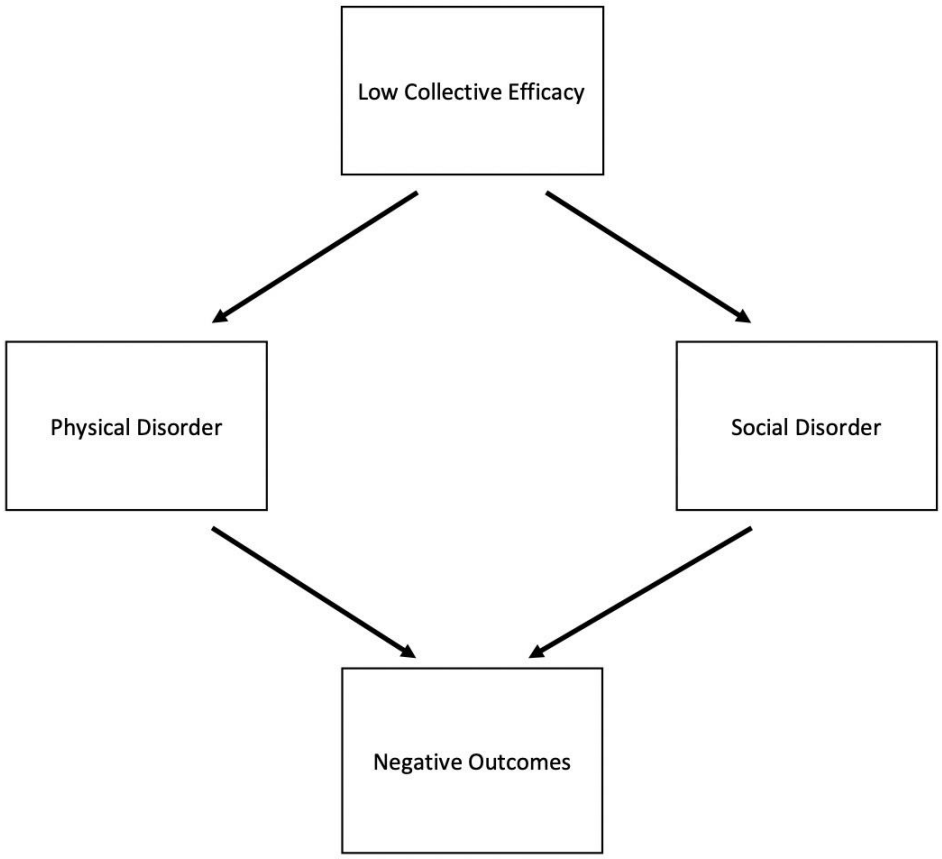
Neighborhood Effects

The neighborhood effects paradigm similarly assumes that place matters for outcomes in a neighborhood—not just crime, but also "poverty, child health, protest, leadership networks, civic engagement, home foreclosures, teen births, altruism, mobility flows, collective efficacy, or immigration" (Sampson 2012:6). Physical disorder of the kind that Wilson and Kelling address is

relevant in this paradigm as well. Much of the early literature that formed the basis for the paradigm, for example, is specifically concerned with the connection of physical disorder to social disorder and crime. However, it makes an important intervention into the broken windows paradigm. Specifically, Sampson and Raudenbush (1999, 2004) reject the claim that physical disorder *causes* social disorder. Rather, they link the two phenomena in a different way. Specifically, they claim that "a reasonable hypothesis is that public disorder and predatory crimes are manifestations of the same explanatory process, albeit at different ends of a 'seriousness' continuum" (608). The problem with the broken windows paradigm, according to the neighborhood effects paradigm, is not that it draws a connection between physical disorder and social disorder. Rather, it is that it gets the causal arrows wrong. Instead of the former causing the latter, they are both caused by the third variable of low "collective efficacy," or "the linkage of cohesion and mutual trust with shared expectations for intervening in support of neighborhood social control" (612–13) (See Figure 4.6).

Since the neighborhood effects paradigm represents an enormous component of urban research in sociology over the past few decades, the connection between physical disorder and social disorganization has become a prominent feature in quantitative and qualitative accounts of neighborhood life.

Figure 4.6: Neighborhood Effects Model (Sampson and Raudenbush 1999)



Political Economy and Gentrification

One result of this emphasis on the connection between physical disorder and social disorganization is that we have come to see vacant lots and abandoned buildings solely in these terms. Applying a political economy of place paradigm to the same objects presents us with very different lessons. I propose that multiple strands of gentrification scholarship—particularly Logan and Molotch's (1987) growth machine paradigm—should get us to view these empty places in a different way. Specifically, while they are sites of disorder and crime from one perspective, from another perspective they are sites of economic potential.

A major concept in gentrification literature relies on the kind of "degradation" physical disorder theorists connect to social disorganization. In explaining gentrification, Smith (1979: 545)

proposes the concept of the rent gap, or the difference between actualized and potential rent extracted from a piece of property. Only when this gap grows large enough for a developer to gain enough profit after rehabilitation will development—and subsequent gentrification—happen. Decline and degradation are not unfortunate side effects of a general land use cycle in this model, but absolute prerequisites for the accumulation of capital. That said, while there is gentrification literature that focuses on places where abandonment and decline become sites for growth, it is fair to say that a great deal of gentrification literature is focused on the visible signs of gentrification, which involve *less disorder and more investment*, than on the disorder or disinvestment that create the circumstances that make gentrification possible in the first place. Brown-Saracino (2017) points out that "qualitative scholarship ... emphasizes the outcomes of gentrification" (518), and outcomes are of course visible in the present. A great deal of gentrification literature—both scholarly and popular—conceives of it as an event as opposed to a process, so the moment it gets attention is the moment things start to "develop" in the neighborhood. The most visible signs of gentrification—and the ones that present social problems of inequality and displacement that sociologists are often concerned with—are most visible once a neighborhood is the site of investment, not in the decades before when the situation became ripe for such investment. Of course, these sites of disorder are not only sites of financial judgment, but moral judgment as well.

Moral Order and Place Reputation

There are also moral dimensions and consequences to physical disorder. Theorists have long associated ritual cleanliness and contamination with moral judgments (Durkheim 1912; Douglas 1966). What Wacquant (2008) calls "territorial stigmatization" and Werthman and Piliavin (1967) before him call "ecological contamination" is a process whereby just living in a "bad" neighborhood opens one up to moral judgment from others—both figures of authority like police officers as well

as fellow citizens—regardless of individual actions and characteristics. Murphy (2012) discusses the moral component of litter and who gets socially constructed as a litterer, explaining how Black and white homeowners in a suburb develop folk theories of who litters and blame it on poor Black renters, to whom they then attribute negative moral characteristics (211–12). Conversely, Kefalas (2003) discusses the positive moral dimensions residents of the "Beltway" neighborhood of Chicago associate with tidy homes and gardens.

Physical disorder can have multiple voices in moral terms, though. Prickett (2014) notes that disorder need not come with a negative moral connotation as her respondents "saw specific signs of physical disorder as links to their collective past as well as placeholders for a future they hoped to construct" (Prickett 214). She goes on to argue that "seeing the physical landscape through this local-historical lens, a process I term 'contextualizing from within,' allowed them to perceive progress where outsiders may have only seen decline" (215).

Ultimately, this line of research is concerned with disorder not as a mechanism for social disorder, but a mechanism for moral order. Specifically, the mechanism that helps create a moral order is one of reputation. That is to say, signs of disorder produce understandings of a place, and the aggregation of those understandings help to create a place reputation, or "a collective understanding about a place based on stories people out in the world tell about it" (Brown-Saracino and Parker 2017). Once a reputation is created, it is often persistent, or "sticky" (Fine 2012). Because of the power of reputation, direct knowledge about a place is not necessary for someone to come to some sort of understanding of it—the reputation is enough.

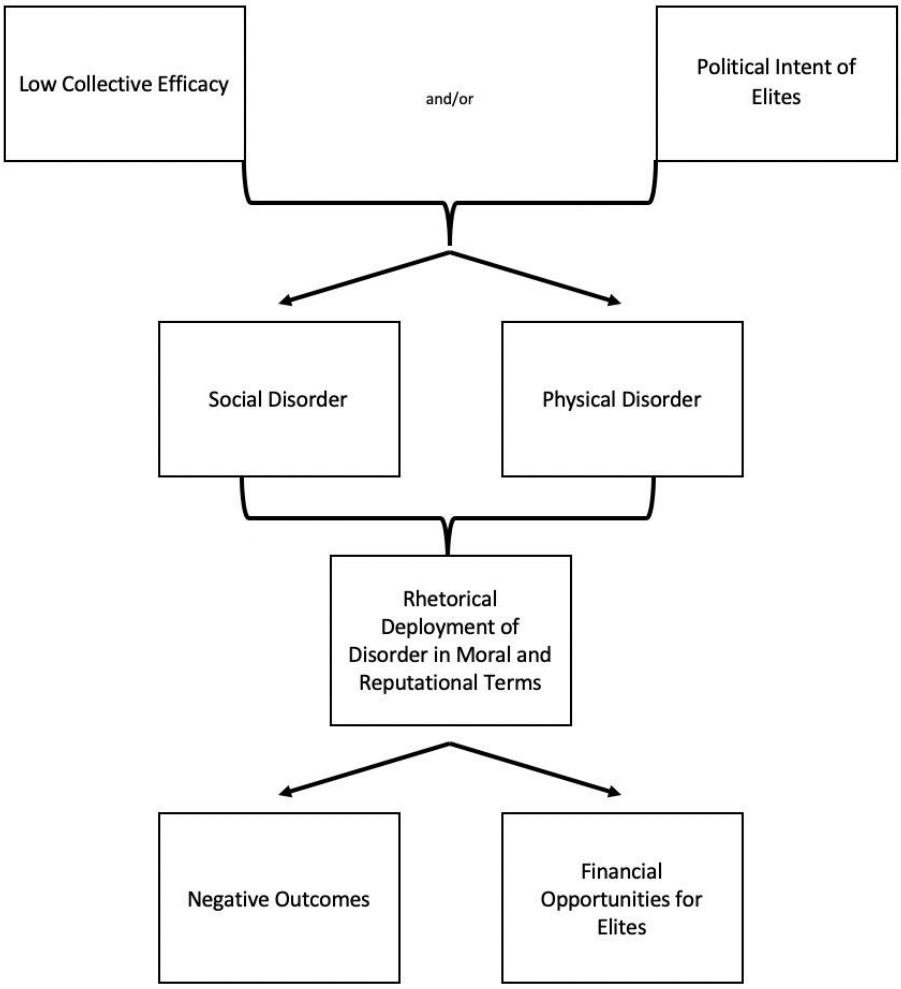
Of course, "contextualizing from within," as Prickett encourages, will lead to different findings in different neighborhoods, depending on exactly where one is contextualizing from. In Woodlawn, "contextualizing from within" does not lead to community members finding progress in

what looks like disorder—in fact, non-merchant residents tend to just see disorder. However, another set of respondents—the merchants and financial stakeholders in the neighborhood—do see the disorder differently, as a source of potential profit. This potential profit is related to basic rent gap processes identified in the gentrification literature, but it is also related to the financialization of the moral dimensions of place reputation by elite actors. The rest of this chapter explores what it means when physical disorder, even as it leads to social disorder and crime, is beneficial for some.

Opportunistic Disorder

So, what happens when we do not separate disorder and political economy in our evaluations of poor neighborhoods but instead recognize their intrinsic connection in the production of financial potential? Physical disorder, even as it leads to social disorder and crime, is beneficial for some. For the merchants, developers, and neighborhood stakeholders I spoke with, conceptions of physical disorder based on crime and social disorder are not only inadequate in explaining their understanding of vacant lots and abandoned buildings, but ultimately beside the point. Rather, they understand them primarily as real estate opportunities. I propose a different way to understand urban disorder, which focuses on the property as a site of potential development (Becher 2014), calling this new perspective the opportunistic disorder model. (See Figure 4.7)

Figure 4.7: Opportunistic Disorder Model



This model is built on the observation that in Woodlawn, "broken windows" (Wilson and Kelling 1982) enter the service of a growth machine "that can increase aggregate rents and trap related wealth for those in the right position to benefit" (Logan and Molotch 1987: 50). This new paradigm does not contradict crime-focused perspectives, but does provide an important alternative way of understanding the multivalent social processes at work in urban disorder and crime. By doing so, it suggests processes we as urbanists may be missing because of a focus on particular measurable outcomes at the expense of a more holistic picture. By focusing only on disorder and not on economic opportunity, we lose sight of the question, "Who benefits from the way things are?" I

answer the question for Woodlawn, and in doing so, demonstrate that disorder and crime, and the reputation for it, can be used as an effective tool of urban development. There is contention over the vacant lots in the neighborhood because for one set of stakeholders, they are most productive as a reputational signal of blight, while for another set of stakeholders, they are most productive as space for business agglomeration. Specifically, for residents and outside observers, the vacant lots represent danger, while for merchants and neighborhood elites led by Apostolic, the vacant lots represent financial opportunity, which they compete for. The elites have been able to leverage their moral and institutional authority in the neighborhood to take control of the vacant lots at the expense of others who view them in financial terms, leading to a case where economic development is not controlled by merchants, as in Wicker Park and Bridgeport, but by a different set of neighborhood actors.

As the decades have gone by and Woodlawn has emptied out, the vacant lots have come to represent violence to its residents and outsiders alike. Part of this has to do with the history of gang activity in the neighborhood and the persistence of crime in certain pockets of it. People who have been in the neighborhood for decades remember a time when it was "rougher." Gail, a Black community activist in the neighborhood, notes that there are very real crime problems in a section of the neighborhood near a public housing project, describing it as "notorious for unfortunately violence, drug dealing, and it's even made the news, and people know about it nationally." As mentioned in the introduction, much of this perception is driven by national narratives of violence on the South Side of Chicago, fueled by major media sources and politicians like Donald Trump.

Residents

As part of a different project, I interviewed mothers of young children in the neighborhood, and they talked about not only the neighborhood's history of violence, but its persistence in the

present day, to the point that many do not even allow their children to play outside (Parker 2018b). Among the mothers in Woodlawn I spoke to, *the* overarching concern in their lives is the safety of their children. This is not a general concern and desire for well-being that all mothers have for their children. Rather, mother after mother expressed specific fears that their child would be a victim of violence related to the gangs in the neighborhood. Often, mothers had experience with loss to intensify this fear, relating stories of friends, partners, and relatives who had died in gun-related deaths in Woodlawn and surrounding neighborhoods. Within this context, the vacant lots and abandoned buildings that populate the neighborhood represent disorder that holds the potential to harm their children. Within this category, there are two related, though distinct understandings. For some mothers, the vacant lots and abandoned buildings are symptoms of the problems of the neighborhood, or perhaps scars. They are the result of disinvestment and reminders of what used to be there. For other mothers, the vacant lots are subjects not objects insofar as they are a causal mechanism for disorder in the neighborhood.

Merchants

If mothers' primary preoccupation with vacant lots and abandoned buildings is safety and disorder, merchants and commercial stakeholders primarily concern themselves with the potential for development. This happens in two different ways. One set of actors discusses vacant lots purely in terms of economic opportunity, while another set of actors holds on to the reputational power of the vacant lots but attempts to exploit this reputational power for financial ends.

One thing to note about the merchant class in Woodlawn is that they are more likely to have social service objectives in mind than merchants in Wicker Park or Woodlawn simply because when merchants left the neighborhood en masse after the riots, many of the people that filled the vacancies—to the extent that they were filled—were churches and social service organizations.

Many of them have commercial arms—Green Line Coffee, for example, is a coffee shop run under the auspices of Sunshine Gospel Ministries, which also runs a business incubator next door to the coffee shop. The point is, when I started to interview merchants in Woodlawn, I realized I had to expand my conception of what a merchant was, both because the neighborhood is less commercially dense than the other neighborhoods I was studying and because commercial outposts that did exist often had a social mission.

This manifests in a number of ways. For one thing, people are more likely to talk about their business goals in explicitly community-oriented terms. For example, Ethan at Green Line Coffee, talks about what drives him:

> I think what we tend to overly attribute to success in America on the basis of the individual. I think what we sort of under attribute to the virtue of the network of relationships. You know? I think about that all the time, both in my own life as well as thinking about as a community development practitioner in the neighborhood, as well as an entrepreneur. I think about what can we do to help both empower and inform others in the neighborhood that are aspirational by nature? Because you look at neighborhoods like this one, across the South Side, across the West Side of Chicago, neighborhoods that have historically been sort of marginalized and left out for a number of reasons. What's remained I think consistent over time is people are driven and then people have aspirations and dreams, though those dreams may have changed in order to reflect reality. There still remains there sort of this tenacity.

While I was interviewing him about Green Line, he talked about Sunshine Enterprises, the business incubator that is right next door:

> So the first is just to identify those people, of which there are dozens and dozens, and then it's about providing sort of a level of knowledge and sort of expertise around it so then we've created a program to—to both bring in outside knowledge to impart about sort of the—the fundamentals of business. So we're going to take you through a rigorous sort of, you know, 12 week, you know, 3 months long program where we go over sort of the—on a fundamental level um, you know, in a room full of 20 plus people that are just like you, over things like uh, break even analysis and cash flow, and um—and book keeping, and marketing, and so you get all those tools in your toolkit to understand sort of your business model. And then—and then once you go through that process, um, we start to think about how do we pair you just with the other resources that you need, so both—both the capital that you need and then the relationships.

A big part of this is because Green Line Coffee is under the umbrella of a religious social service organization, so it would make sense that this would be the framework Ethan brings with him to work.

On the other hand, Laine's Bake Shop is not operated under the auspices of a social service organization, but its founder Rachel still frames her business explicitly in terms of mission. When I ask her to tell me about her business, she is prepared with a detailed explanation of their social enterprise aspirations:

> Laine's Bake Shop is a family-operated artisan bakery with a social mission. Our mission is to be a catalyst for revitalization in urban communities starting with the South Side of Chicago. We do that in three ways. One is by who we hire. We try to hire from communities both geographically and by background of people that are chronically unemployed or under employed. The second way that we try to accomplish that mission is by sourcing from companies that share similar values to us that we're hoping to with each purchase to create an equal system of socially conscious companies. And then the third way that we do that is through our community partner program, which we'll revamp when we open the retail location, and essentially what that program is, is that we have found a lot of organizations who are doing really impactful work throughout the city in areas that we think are the absolute root causes of a lot of the crime and violence that we're seeing, so instead of just saying we want to get rid of crime and violence, we're saying 'What causes that and how do we address those issues?' and these organizations are doing that work. So our community partner program uses our platform to amplify their voices and to funnel money to their causes, and then to share the results of what they're doing with our customers. So for example, with our loyalty program in the retail store that will be in Woodlawn, whenever someone makes a purchase, if they sign up for our loyalty program, they get to choose one of those organizations to support, and then every single time they make a purchase automatically, a percentage of those proceeds go back to that organization to help support that work. So we make it easy, and painless, and try to use our position to really catalyze this change that we're hoping to see.

Talking to others in the neighborhood whose businesses are *not* technically part of social service organizations or a mission-driven endeavor, I often heard the same concerns based on equity and inclusion. Hannah owns a different coffee shop in the neighborhood and talks about how her goals are not strictly economic. Right before she opened her business, she talked about wanting a two-tiered pricing model so everyone in the neighborhood felt welcome.

> I want there to be at least a couple things that you can eat or drink very cheaply there, right? So that's the drip coffee, and then hopefully it's going to be—it might end up being basically like toast. We're probably going to have cereal. But something that you can have, and you can eat very cheaply, and that sort of just keeps the admission to the space incredibly low. But then I'm hoping you'll be able to buy [local] Pleasant House bread there, loaves, you'll be able to buy [local] Halfwit coffee there. Lattes and stuff like that, that's going to be market priced, right? Not giving anyone a break, um, because it's going to be really, really good. And the idea is that all of that—like being pretty rigorous about making sure like if people have the means to spend money on that stuff, it'll be a fair price, not like ripping anybody off. It's going to be the same price you'd get somewhere else.

It goes beyond pricing, though. She talks about the coffee shop in explicitly social terms, saying

> I want to be a resource. We'll have like good Wi-Fi and we're going to have a PrintWithMe station, hopefully, which is not economical if you're printing a lot, but if you're just trying to print a resume.... You know, there are ideas that, I don't know if this'll happen, but I like the idea that like if you print a resume you get a free cup of coffee, right? If you're on your way to a job interview or something like that. That's like a particularly directed impulse. I don't know if it's a good one, but more than that it's mostly just that on the most simple level I want to be a space for people to be that feels good. That's kind of it. All the other stuff like is trying to think of really concrete ways to make that true. The goal is really just like you have you know, if you're just sort of thinking about what your work looks like in the world, um, for me, for the next while, it's all concentrated on this case, right? And so it's like cool, we've got like 740 square feet. How can we just make it the best possible space? How can this be a space for creation, and a space for respite, and I know that none of that is particularly technical, and it's harder to measure than like how much profit you're going to make this quarter.

As we saw in Bridgeport, people in other neighborhoods do talk about larger social issues, but it is often in reference to *how* they run their business, as opposed to *why* they run their business. In Woodlawn, more people I spoke to frame their business mission as inextricable from a social mission.

All that said, these merchants still talk about reputation as a significant impediment to their business goals in the neighborhood. Jake owns a coffee shop in the eastern section of the neighborhood. He's white and Jewish, and his family lived and owned businesses on the South Side going back generations. He talks about being very aware of the reputation of Woodlawn when he opened his business.

> There is the perception of Woodlawn as the hood or that Woodlawn is violent, or that it's just not a great neighborhood, you know what I mean? Even the university you know has stories that they tell, you know, about Woodlawn or what's gone on in the neighborhood, and you know, older people, like people on staff or older residents of Hyde Park, will say don't go south of the Midway, we had heard about that right away. We knew that that was a stigma to deal with.

Jake talks about proximity to Hyde Park and the incoming Obama Presidential Center as having ameliorating effects on this reputation, but it is still something he thinks about.

Mike is even more explicit about what the reputation does for merchants in the neighborhood. Like Jake, Mike is a young white man in his thirties whose family has a history that goes back generations on the South Side, and specifically in Woodlawn. He owns Daley's, a restaurant in the neighborhood that has been passed down through his family over the years and has nostalgia for what the neighborhood used to be like before it was empty. "My grandfather had a restaurant down the street," he says. "My uncle had another restaurant, um, on the same block around the corner." He eventually compares its past incarnation to other, more commercially robust neighborhoods in Chicago, like River North and Lincoln Park "with all the stores all the shops, all the bars, all the restaurants and all that." He adds, "It was the same thing happening over here."

It is not Lincoln Park anymore, though, and what used to be a dense commercial corridor is now comprised largely of unused space. Some people see potential in it, though. Corey is a pastor in the neighborhood who also runs a 501c(3) called Project HOOD (Helping Others Obtain Destiny) that is involved with economic development in the neighborhood. He identifies vacancies as an opportunity in the neighborhood—vacant warehouse buildings near the railroad "would be good for places like Amazon," and restaurants and grocery stores could move in since the area is a food desert. Corey sees the vacant properties as ways to improve the neighborhood. That said, it is important that he frames these vacancies not as problems, but as business opportunities.

Similarly, coffeeshop owner Jake talks hopefully about the economic resurgence of Woodlawn in explicitly reputational terms. He says:

> But the reputation of the neighborhood has definitely increased. I mean, it has for a couple of years. And I know that um the people from POAH, Preservation of Affordable Housing did a study or had at least the statistics from a study that showed that there were more people for the first time in like decades moving into Woodlawn than moving out. And so I thought that was pretty great you know that they had that info on hand.

When I mention the de-population of the neighborhood over the second half the twentieth century, he responds:

> For sure. And you know, it's a shame that so much of the neighborhood was bulldozed or destroyed by fire or something, whatever happened, because there are— you know, there's so much potential here now, and now everybody's trying to capitalize on it, but I feel like if there was infrastructure here to begin with that it would be that much easier and we would already be two steps ahead of where we're at.

While maybe not two steps ahead, the developers are coming. Jane, who works for the South East Chicago Commission, a community development organization, says that in fact "developers are starting to look into the vacant properties more and more." She notes "the challenges people talk about with vacant lots being, you know, unsightly blights, and uh, you know, obviously vacant lots can bring negative attention to a neighborhood," but also how a city program where individuals can buy a vacant lot for a dollar represent "opportunities because vacant lots can be community gardens. Vacant lots can be, you know, purchased or maybe new properties can be built, or new businesses, so I think that there's a lot of opportunities for growth." She even mentions recently working with developers to renovate two properties that are now ready for commercial usage.

Development talk leads to discussion of gentrification. Dawveed, an urban planner, discusses how the enormous amount of vacant land in the neighborhood could potentially ameliorate against that problem. He says,

> It's a little bit different here because of the vacancy issue, right? Even if you were to renovate all those 500 vacant buildings, you would still have 100 acres of vacant land to

> actually fill in. So there's space to grow, capacity, so I think that's going to slow that gentrification push.

That said, he acknowledges that "there definitely needs to be mechanisms that people [who] own land or people who rent there have a space in the community as well that's affordable for them."

Elites

Many of the people I spoke to in Woodlawn discussed how the neighborhood's negative reputation had been financially remunerative for certain stakeholders in the neighborhood, specifically the Apostolic Church of God. They discuss past actions of the church—specifically their involvement with the Blackstone Rangers gang in order to obtain federal funding and their advocacy for tearing down public transportation tracks on land they later purchased and developed—as examples of the church exploiting the perceived and real disorder in the neighborhood for their own financial ends. They suggest that the potential financial windfall they stand to make from development once the Obama Presidential Center is built is part of this pattern.

While the University of Chicago is historically the dominant institutional force in the neighborhood (Hirsch 1983), Apostolic Church of God is the dominant institution in Woodlawn that is actually from the neighborhood and not perceived to be a hostile outside force (see Brazier 1969 and Hirsch 1983 for a comprehensive history of the myriad ways the University of Chicago has alienated Woodlawn and its residents). The current reverend of the church is Dr. Byron Brazier, mentioned in the vignette that begins this chapter. Apostolic, through NOW, makes a claim at being the primary representative of Woodlawn's interests to those outside the community, which has elicited controversy in the community over who gets to claim to represent the neighborhood (Fan n.d.). This state of affairs is very much rooted in the history of the church in the neighborhood, as the argument for a strong central organization to represent the interests of poor communities is part of the DNA of Apostolic. Bishop Arthur Brazier argued that not only do Black communities need

to take control over their own destinies, but they need to do so under the auspices of a single powerful organization. It is worth quoting at length his diagnosis of the Black community's "two problems with organization":

> It is organized from the outside by white society for the political and economic interest of whites. It is splintered from within by a multitude of organizations that have only fragmentary influence but no real power. Black men must make united, organized efforts to deal with every facet of their own interests in the face of resistance from the Establishment outside and from narrow divisive forces inside. (6)

The problem, according to Brazier, is not just alien white control from without, but disorganization from within that dilutes Black control. The solution is a single "total organization" that can stand up for the community to outside control without the distractions of competing Black organizations. This strategy was developed in light of Woodlawn's relationship to the University of Chicago and its plans for urban renewal.[3] Brazier contends that TWO is what stood as a bulwark against this possibility (52), although others have argued that "once a staunch opponent of University expansion in the 60s and 70s, TWO [worked] closely with the University in developing Woodlawn, and is a major developer in its own right" (Ivester 2006: 154).

The Financial Consequences of a Bad Reputation

The vacant lots and abandoned buildings of Woodlawn are salient reputational objects in the lives of the people who live and work there. People deploy them rhetorically to talk about their understandings of and visions for Woodlawn as a whole. Respondents talk about vacant lots as one of the things that contribute to Woodlawn's reputation for danger and disorder, and there is

[3] Indeed, respondents in Woodlawn talked conspiratorially about a deal—presumably the one Brazier documents—struck among the University of Chicago, then Mayor Richard J. Daley, and Brazier that structured where the University of Chicago could and could not develop in Woodlawn. While Brazier presents it in the book as a way to give the neighborhood power and agency, some of my respondents framed it in terms of Brazier acting in concert with outside interests. For another example of suspicion in African American communities about white intentions regarding urban planning, see literature on "the Plan" in Washington, DC (Gillette 1995; Ruble 2010).

evidence that residents of Woodlawn themselves conceive of these vacant lots and abandoned buildings as both places of danger and visible reputational markers. For the most part, merchants dispense with the everyday experiential value of the objects and focus on their generative value. For merchants and commercial stakeholders, vacant lots and abandoned buildings represent opportunity, both financial and political. Instead of focusing on them as engines of danger or disorder, they discuss them as neighborhood resources, and what gets done with them is a matter of great importance for how the neighborhood develops over the coming years. They are cognizant of the role of vacant lots as reputational objects, and thus frame their cases for what should happen to them in terms of improving the conditions of the neighborhood, reputational and otherwise. Ultimately, though, the vacant lots are understood to be territory to be won or lost, contested among competing visions of Woodlawn. Specifically, they are subject to designs by businesses on one side, and the coalition led by Apostolic Church of God on the other.

People in Woodlawn talk about how it is dangerous, but they also talk about how it is not as dangerous as it is portrayed. The neighborhood *is* less dangerous than its perception seems to be. Bill, a white man who heads the Woodlawn office of Preservation of Affordable Housing, notes the way perception lags behind reality.

> You need those people and folks from within the community to make real change on the ground, number one, but number two, make sure people know about that change. So for example, the last eight years, you know, violent crime is down more than 40 percent in Woodlawn, right? Well, that's a fact, right? That's not a wish.

Who benefits from that? In point of fact, a bad reputation can be financially remunerative. Many of the people I spoke to in Woodlawn discussed how the neighborhood's negative reputation had been financially remunerative for certain stakeholders in the neighborhood, specifically the Apostolic Church of God.

Brazier describes TWO's position in the 1960s as "being confronted by a giant that struck fear, hostility, and despair into the hearts of the people. The giant was the University of Chicago. Its weapon of destruction was a plan for urban renewal in Woodlawn." (50) Brazier entered into negotiations with the university and the city to forestall a feared takeover of Woodlawn by the university using the tactic of urban renewal (50–58), but he points out that "many [still] believe that the university has hidden plans to take over the entire community via the bulldozer, with no concern for the human problem that would be left in its wake" (57).

The work of TWO did not stop at opposing urban renewal as they worked to effect change in the neighborhood, though. By Brazier's own account, TWO worked on issues of education, housing, police issues, business issues, and youth training (23). This last issue—youth training through a grant from the Office of Economic Opportunity—came in for quite a bit of controversy. Essentially, in an effort "to come to grips with the most significant problem in the ghettoes across the nation—alienated youth," TWO created a program largely run by and for the local gang, the Blackstone Rangers, by applying for federal funding from the Office of Economic Opportunity for a job training program, the Youth Demonstration Project. It received funding in 1967 for a year in the amount of $927,341 (94). Gang members not only received training but were members of the program's board (83) and received stipends (88). This program caused controversy, and Brazier claims that "every alarm system in the white Establishment in Chicago flashed red and clanged loudly at the prospect of Woodlawn's obtaining funding by its own efforts, for its own project, without the aid or approval of the powers that be" (92). Brazier also claims they were harassed by the police (98–101) and the press (105–109). There was a Senate investigation, and Blackstone Ranger leader Jeff Fort—who would later become the first American to be convicted of terrorism for allegedly conspiring to bomb government buildings and commit other acts on behalf of Libya's

Moammar Gadhafi (Brune and Ylisela, Jr. 1988)—was subpoenaed but refused to testify (111). The program was terminated, and with gang leaders in prison, the gang became more fractured, with different block "crews" ostensibly organized under the same gang feuding with each other. As Papachristos (2009) observes, conflict can arise in a gang context in situations of leadership ambiguity and status threat.

Brazier claimed "the project was killed because the political establishment could not tolerate an independent community organization such as TWO receiving federal funds that were not controlled by the Establishment itself" and because "white society refused to permit the indigenous leaders in the Black ghetto to deal with problems of alienated youth—a problem that white society itself but its indifference and racism has forced on the ghetto" (125). Critics had a different perspective. They accused Brazier and other people involved in the program of being too close to the gangs and offering them power because working with them was the key to obtaining federal funds. Natalie Moore, a Black local reporter who grew up on the South Side and wrote a book about the Blackstone Rangers, summarizes the criticism:

> TWO, the Woodlawn Organization did a lot in terms of going after slum landlords and trying to deal with the school issues, but then, with the Stones, they got the War on Poverty money, and I'm not saying that Brazier, the elder Brazier should have gone to jail, but you had a program in which you were defrauding the money, and where was the adult oversight? And then it seems they went from being agitators against the University and against maybe some of the power structure to being in bed with the power structure.

Herein lies two criticisms. First, Apostolic allied with the Blackstone Rangers, which is significant as she also says, "conventional wisdom says that the Blackstone Rangers made everything in Woodlawn miserable." In other words, TWO took advantage of disorder and crime in order to get money from the federal government. Second, Moore notes that Apostolic went from opposing to allying with the conventional power structure. This is where the contemporary story comes in.

Franklin explains to me the power structure in Woodlawn one day at the newly formed Woodlawn Chamber of Commerce. He speaks very plainly, saying, "The Woodlawn power structure consists of Byron Brazier and formerly his father, the University of Chicago, and the alderman. And the alderman is—is—is basically a surrogate for Byron Brazier." What Brazier and Apostolic have done with this power is a matter of debate in the neighborhood.

Brazier puts himself forward as a representative of the neighborhood. Others in the neighborhood are not so sure. Much of their concern has to do with the vacant land, which brings us back to the meeting at the beginning of this chapter. Apostolic is a huge landowner in the neighborhood. It is also known that Apostolic was instrumental in tearing down elevated train tracks that used to run from Cottage Grove all the way to Stony Island, giving people from the neighborhood and all over Chicago easy access to a beach at Lake Michigan. Apostolic decided they wanted East Woodlawn to be residential and middle class, so they tore down the El tracks, and with it access to Lake Michigan and the storefronts that populated the eastern part of the neighborhood. Apostolic got what they wanted, though, as single-family homes now line 63rd Street in this part of the neighborhood. The elder Brazier emphasized the importance of being a "total organization," and certainly part of that totality is being a real estate power.

Indeed, in that area of the neighborhood, anchored by Jackson Park and Apostolic Church of God, there are now single-family homes, making East Woodlawn more prosperous and less dangerous than West Woodlawn. Of course, not everyone can afford to buy them. This is also part of the plan, according to Franklin, who says "Byron Brazier's father supposedly said, you know, Woodlawn can no longer be a neighborhood for nothing but the poor, okay? Uh, and as early as the late '80s the senior Brazier started envisioning a residential Woodlawn that would consist more of middle-class people." He goes on to suggest that the historical lack of a chamber of is a result of

control from Apostolic. "My speculation is that because Byron Brazier didn't want one," he says. "So you don't want a—you don't want business growth and development when you're trying to keep things slow enough so that you can always be in control." He speaks even more frankly when discussing Brazier's connection to the former Rahm Emanuel mayoral administration, saying "Brazier is the head nigga in charge, the HNIC, or, I would say the overseer, okay?" Ironically, this charge is a modern echo of how the elder Brazier described one aspect of white domination of urban life:

> Political exploitation took such forms as appointing a Black man to a specific office. The mayor of a city would appoint a Black person as a director or deputy director of something or other. Seeing this appointment being made, the people in the ghetto would say that "the mayor is all right" because he appointed a Black man to an office. This was misleading, however, because although the appointed Black man did have a good job and dealt with whites on an apparently equal level, yet he himself had no power. He took orders from the man who appointed him. This appointed Black person would, in many cases, be a front Negro who would always stand up for the particular administration that appointed him and speak in favor of it. This had the effect of lulling the Black masses into a sense of being represented when in fact they were not. (Brazier 1969: 16)

While his father lamented a sort of tokenization that would offer status for a leader in exchange for subjugation of the led, some people in Woodlawn accuse the younger Brazier of exactly this.

Franklin is not the only person to tell me stories about control the church has in the neighborhood. James, a Black community organizer in the neighborhood, talks about the church's history with the other big institutional force in the neighborhood, the University of Chicago:

> You have Apostolic Church and it's partnering with the University. That's how it's always been. That's what it's been. You know? Since you know this is the interesting thing about organizers and freedom fighters, right? Often times they get co-opted and corrupted by the systems that they fight against and they end up becoming the system.

I ask what that looks like in Woodlawn, and after listing a few things—gentrification, closed public schools, and no mental health centers among them, he brings up the vacant lots:

> James: You know? What it looks like is decades of empty lots.

> Jeffrey: Yeah. So you talked about how the empty lots became empty. Why do empty lots stay empty?
>
> James: Because certain people are holding it until this day.
>
> Jeffrey: Really?
>
> James: Waiting for this time period, right? To cash in. You know land is power. So yeah, so that—you know, somebody's going to make a ton of money off these empty lots.

Empty lots stay empty, according to James, not because of disorder, but because of land speculation. If this is the case, we come to an answer about who benefits from a bad reputation in Woodlawn: those who stand to make money on development of the land. James asks, "If I tell you that a certain area or neighborhood is bad, right? And if you live there, I allow it to be bad." I say "Right," and he unfurls the process:

> Right, operative word, allow, right? Then as investors, power players, stakeholders, we can buy up the land and own the land. Because that's what it's all about. That's what at the root of it, it's capitalism. So if I tell you an area is bad, I drive down my competition. I have more of a monopoly, right?... So yeah, that's what it is, you know? A few benefit when an area is bad. Right, and then not only that, but if I purchase in that area, I'll have to buy it at a higher price. So I'm also looking out for my own pockets, right? Like I want to get it, but I don't want to pay a lot for it. But I'm sure going to make a ton from it.

I nod along as he explains this to me, and once he's done laying out the process, he comes to a conclusion that is simultaneously judgmental and begrudgingly respectful of the hustle being run. "That's gangster," he says.

When mayoral candidate Amara Enyia needed a neighborhood to serve as a backdrop to talk about gentrification, she chose Woodlawn, which would have been difficult to imagine just a decade ago. Flanked by South Side natives and international celebrity rappers Kanye West from South Shore and Chance the Rapper from Chatham (see Figure 4.8), Enyia made it pretty explicit why she was there, stating

> We chose this location because, as many of you know, the Woodlawn community is ground zero for many things. When we talk about issues of displacement and gentrification, this will

> be the community where the Obama Presidential Center will be housed, and we want to make sure that the residents of this community can talk about why it is important that we talk about ways to prevent people from being pushed out of their community.

When he got the microphone, Chance the Rapper alluded to the power of churches in politics in Chicago, saying

> Here's a real thing that's been going on forever. And this is speaking less on politics and more on my own faith. I think the church, as a whole, as a living body of Christ, hasn't been involved in politics because it's been a corrupt, worldly thing in this city. But I think this is a time—now I'm getting goosebumps talking—now is a most important time for our churches to step forward and say what they believe, and say what's right and what weighs on their spirit and on their heart.

Figure 4.8: Amara Eniya with Chance the Rapper and Kanye West Talking about Gentrification in Woodlawn (Photo credit: Jeffrey Parker).

Though it is not possible to tell whether or not he was talking about Apostolic—Chance's neighborhood, Chatham, is a bit farther south than Woodlawn—his description of the church being "a corrupt, worldly thing in this city" certainly seemed to sound familiar to the people cheering in the crowd.

Conclusion

Violence and disorder are construed as negative in most accounts of urban life, and for most people it is. However, in Woodlawn we have a situation where an elite institution has benefited financially and politically, not in spite of Woodlawn's reputational violence, but specifically *because* of it. Apostolic got War on Poverty money in the 1960s because of the persistence of a gang problem that they helped support and were able to develop residential property after tearing down El tracks in the 1990s by making claims that the El tracks bred vice. In the current moment, they are attempting to control the development of the vacant lots in the neighborhood that are a source of pain and fear for many residents right as they become economically lucrative.

Logan and Molotch's (1987) growth machine paradigm is useful here because it pits use value, which is the utility a person or a community or people get out a piece of land, against exchange value, which is the financial value a land owner can extract from it. This abstract duality is manifested in contestation over real estate, as "an apartment building, for example, provides a 'home' for residents (use value) while at the same time generating rent for the owners (exchange value)" (1–2). In their paradigm, a growth machine coalition serves to encourage the valorization of exchange value against use value. The growth machine model is a useful step forward thinking about the vacant lots and abandoned buildings in Woodlawn, but it is not totally adequate to explain their peculiar role. While Logan and Molotch conceive of a piece of land as possessing a use value and an exchange value, both of these values are positive, and trade-off between them involves sacrificing

one positive value for another positive value. An apartment is someone's home, but more rent can be extracted by putting up new condominiums. In Woodlawn, it is not about a positive use value being set up against a positive exchange value. Instead, it is about a *negative* use value being a useful mechanism to achieve a positive exchange value. Instead of adjudicating between a piece of land as someone's home and a piece of land as a profit-making piece of property, we are faced with a piece of land that becomes *more* profitable as the use value of it declines, and even *because* it has declined. Logan and Molotch explain that "the sharpest contrast ... is between residents, who use place to satisfy essential needs of life, and entrepreneurs, who strive for financial return, ordinarily achieved by intensifying the use to which their property is put" (2). In the case of Woodlawn, the contrast is between residents who view a particular place—in this instance, a vacant lot or an abandoned building—as a *hindrance* to satisfying essential needs of life, and entrepreneurs who benefit from the property in decline.

Part of this is about the fact that different people are concerned with different time horizons in Woodlawn. Monte, in discussing the plans for the OPC, notes that even if one assumes the planning for the center happened the moment Obama was elected, that still puts it on a relatively short time frame for such a large project given the fact that "you don't have the kind of time frame for normal city planning, which is on average about 25 years." City planners, and those speculating on city planning, are often working in terms of decades, not years, when thinking about change in a neighborhood. Some of the people looking to make money off Woodlawn now might have owned large parcels of property in the neighborhood for decades, and the "broken windows" are part of the cycle of degradation and redevelopment that is required for them to cash in. While mothers might have a longstanding interest in the neighborhood, their more immediate concerns are with making sure their children make it through their childhood and adolescence without being

victimized by gang violence. For them, the relevant time horizon is much shorter, and they cannot simply write off the vacant lots and abandoned houses as the cost of doing business like those speculating on the long-term future of Woodlawn can.

Perhaps nowhere was this disparity in time horizons more evident than when Woodlawn won the "Curbed Cup" early in 2017. Curbed is a website dedicated to real estate and the culture surrounding it. It describes itself, partially, by saying "Unlike a glossy shelter magazine, we see homes, architecture, interior design, cities, neighborhoods, and properties for sale as related points on a spectrum." Every year, they have an NCAA basketball tournament-style bracket competition for "neighborhood of the year," where people vote on neighborhoods who are paired off against each other until there is a winner. Woodlawn won in 2016 and lost in the finals to the South Loop in 2017. While this win might foretell good things for people looking to develop Woodlawn in the long term, one of my respondents trying to make Woodlawn a more livable place *now* was bothered.

Naomi Davis, a Black woman who appeared at the beginning of this chapter asking questions about Apostolic's proposed takeover of the city's vacant lots, runs Blacks in Green. Blacks in Green is an organization meant to develop self-sustaining Black communities, and Naomi has visions for Woodlawn as a neighborhood for and of Black people, saying

> I say that a Black neighborhood is coming back strong when Black-owned businesses are surging and thriving, and I'm prepared to see that, be a part of that, and expect the world to adjust their perceptions about what ought to be happening in a Black community to that.

It is against this ideological backdrop that Naomi views the Curbed Cup, and those in Woodlawn who were pushing for a neighborhood victory in it.

> What could possibly validate this bombed out place as one of Chicago's greatest neighborhoods? And I have my own thoughts about the answer to that question, but there are two other questions. One question is what is it about Woodlawn that would have people in Woodlawn say or assert that it's one of Chicago's greatest neighborhoods? Because as much as I love Woodlawn, it ain't one of Chicago's greatest neighborhoods, period. If you think that it's fun walking down treeless streets with vacant lots and no stores, then yes. It

> ranks. But on any other standard, no, it's not. Now are you saying that it's the someday vision and then which someday vision are you voting for? Is it the someday vision where somehow the Black community is improved by adding more Whites or is it the someday vision where, you know, Black people return to the neighborhood? Two very different [sets of] calculus. Is it the perception that you know, don't look at us how we are now but how we're going to be versus [pause]—It's like that sign when you go to a website or whatever, excuse our dust, we're you know, coming to you soon. But strategically is it just like fattening frogs for snakes? Are you just making the world aware that there's this bombed out, boarded up, crazy looking neighborhood ripe for the taking, and hey everybody, we're down here, come get a piece of us? You know, the whole process was nauseating to me.

Naomi is acutely aware of the possibility that development in Woodlawn might not be for the benefit of the Black community that lives there right now and is wary of it being turned into a project for outsiders to benefit. She says, "The idea that Woodlawn is supposed to be inclusive, I frankly consider that to be a reprehensible concept. That's self-hatred clothed in a sheep's clothing." When I ask her what she means, she explains:

> Because nobody suggests that a Chinese community is improved by adding Greeks. Yet, it is a conventional wisdom, and it's a go-to strategy that the way to fix a Black neighborhood is by bringing in people who are not Black. That is fundamentally offensive. It's hateful of Blacks. It's deprecating of our genius, our skill, our commitment, our rights, and the idea is so pervasive and generally accepted that, it's all the more disturbing. Do you get that?

While not all the merchants I spoke to frame it explicitly in terms of race like Naomi does, they do all concur with her concern that something good happen for Woodlawn *now*, for the people living in and running businesses in the neighborhood *now*. For them, the vacant lots are an almost living embodiment of the problems with the neighborhood and are reached for rhetorically to discuss the need for change. As we have seen, though, there is another set of stakeholders in Woodlawn—and a powerful set, at that—who do not conceive of the vacant lots and abandoned buildings as liabilities. For them, they represent opportunities along two fronts. First, as visible sites of blight, they are part of a historical neighborhood reputational fabric that has been the *root* of outside funding. Second, even if the lots cannot be sold to outsiders as reason to pump federal and philanthropic money into Woodlawn, they can be held and controlled by certain power brokers until such a time when they

can be used for development. Everyone in Woodlawn agrees that the vacant lots make the neighborhood look bad and give it a bad reputation, but it is also an uncomfortable fact that this bad reputation has not been bad for everyone.

CHAPTER FIVE

RELATIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS: THE REPUTATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF OTHER PLACES

In 2016, the developer Kate Ray debuted the location-based mobile app Where Is Williamsburg? Like Ghetto Tracker and Sketchfactor before it, it capitalized on a desire for reputational information, but instead of warning people to stay away from certain places, it was designed to help people figure out places they might like to go. Specifically, it helped people figure out the hipster neighborhood—the "Williamsburg," after the reputationally hip Brooklyn neighborhood—in any city they were in. Its description is as follows:

> Have you ever left Brooklyn and felt out of place? Or live in another city but want to know which neighborhood is the most like Williamsburg? Maybe you're searching for pour-over coffee amidst an ugly green sea of Starbucks(™) or maybe you have the uncomfortable feeling that the people around you don't get that your knuckle tattoos are ironic.
> Fear no more, "Where is Williamsburg?" is your handy guide to the Williamsburg of every city. Built on data curated by other people exactly like you, this app will ensure that you never end up too far from home.

The app is crowdsourced much like Ghetto Tracker and SketchFactor, although initial designations— before users had input—were determined by the developer based on criteria such as personal opinion, American Apparel stores, and a survey on the website Gawker. The application has a feature where you can agree or disagree with the designation, so as more people use it, the "Williamsburg" of a city could change. Amusingly, at the moment of writing, the Williamsburg of Brooklyn was not Williamsburg, but Bushwick.

Where Is Williamsburg? is interesting because it reveals something fundamental about the way people socially and cognitively construct neighborhoods, and particularly reputations of neighborhoods. How do people come to understand the reputation of a neighborhood? I argue that other neighborhoods are a crucial part of this process. Specifically, in making sense of the

neighborhood in front of them, which I call the *focal neighborhood*, people keep other neighborhoods, which I call *relational neighborhoods*, in mind. These neighborhoods might vary spatially, and be near or far away. They might also vary temporally, existing in an imagined past or future. They form a collection of absent neighborhoods—neighborhoods that people do not see right in front of them, but that they keep in mind—that contribute to the construction of a focal neighborhood's reputation.

In this chapter, I aim to accomplish three things. First, I demonstrate the fundamental relational aspect of place reputation, delineating four categories of relationality that merchants use to construct a symbolic interdependence among "constellations" of neighborhoods: *doppelgängers*, *bête noires*, visions, and ghosts. Second, having established how reputation is constructed relationally, I identify the channels through which reputational information flows in three "M"s: migration, media, and material objects. Finally, having established the channels through which reputational information flows, I identify the specific bearers of this information for the general public in the form of "reputational objects" and identify such objects in Bridgeport, Woodlawn, and Wicker Park.

Relational Neighborhoods

Traditionally, neighborhood studies concentrate on single neighborhoods, establishing a "thick description" of the social processes that occur in a bounded geographic area (Geertz 1973). Not only does this lack the comparative logic of a great deal of quantitative work, it is also open to critique from qualitative scholars. In laying out his argument for relational ethnography, Desmond argues that his approach concerns itself not with, among other objects, "a location delimited by the boundaries of a particular neighborhood," but with "processes involving configurations of relations among different actors or institutions" (Desmond 2014: 547). I suggest that this is not an either/or proposition and argue for an urban sociology of neighborhoods that concerns itself with both

"location[s] delimited by the boundaries of a particular neighborhood" *and* "configurations of relations among different actors or institutions." The way to reconcile these two supposed theoretical opposites is by thinking of neighborhoods themselves as objects that relate to one another through the mechanism of symbolically interconnected reputations. Place is constituted not only by reputation, but also by *relational reputation*.

In order to really understand the way a particular neighborhood comes to bear on a particular reputation, it is imperative to also understand other neighborhoods that serve as relational objects in service of the construction of that reputation. More than considering comparative cases of other neighborhoods as a means of drawing inferences about the commonness or rarity of certain features of a neighborhood under study—which essentially replicates the logic of large-scale quantitative comparison and small-scale qualitative comparison—the relational understanding of neighborhoods I am proposing must take seriously the idea that conceptions of other places are imperative for the social construction of a neighborhood, just as the conceptions of other people are imperative for the social construction of a person (Cooley 1902; Mead 1934). A socially constructed object—whether a person or a place—relies on others to provide contours of difference to make it legible.

While a comparative case logic is useful—indeed, this dissertation utilizes such logic to identify how reputational processes operate in different kinds of neighborhoods—it is not the same as a relational logic. A comparative case logic conceives of other neighborhoods as test cases to see if something happening in the focal neighborhood is common or rare. A relational case logic conceives of other neighborhoods as essential components of the social process that brings the reputation of a neighborhood into being in the first place. As such, in studying a neighborhood relationally, it is not enough to gather a roster of statistically or qualitatively similar or different

neighborhoods to gauge a focal neighborhood against.

I explore the social construction of place unique to each neighborhood, and from the information gleaned from such research, identify a *constellation* of meaningful neighborhoods connected to what I call the *focal neighborhood*. A constellation is an intentional metaphor here. A constellation is a group of stars ascribed meaning by a collectivity. Stars in a constellation are drawn from a universe of many more stars and are grouped together because they form something legible to people who create them. The stars are not necessarily very similar or very different vis-à-vis each other, beyond their visibility—there are no rules that the stars have to be the same distance from earth or that they should have drastically different chemical makeups for the sake of comparison. Rather, they are cognitively grouped as they are because they mean something when viewed together. In the same way, neighborhood constellations mean something when viewed together. As a star can conceivably be part of more than one constellation and serve different purposes in each, a neighborhood can be part of more than one neighborhood constellation and serve a different purpose in each one.[1] For example, a neighborhood might relate to one neighborhood by being similar to it and another by being different from it.

I identify four types of "stars" in a neighborhood constellation, or four categories of understanding actors use to make sense of their neighborhoods in contrast to other neighborhoods: *doppelgängers*, *bêtes noires,* visions, and ghosts [see Table 2]. While all four types exist in each neighborhood, different stars are of different importance to different people, dependent on economic and cultural priorities *and* the contingent history of the neighborhood. After identifying

[1] The metaphor is additionally appropriate because, like neighborhood reputations, what we see in the sky lags behind what is actually happening to a star. Because of the need for light to travel across great distances before it reaches Earth, what we see in the night sky is actually a reflection of the star as it was in the distant past, just as information we accrue from a neighborhood reputation is often based on facts on the ground from long ago.

the typology of absent neighborhood types, I will explore how each one becomes associated with particular actions regarding neighborhood preservation or change. In doing research on each neighborhood, notions of relationality kept coming up in my interviews, to the point that it did not seem sufficient to simply discuss it piecemeal in each neighborhood chapter. So as a formal introduction to this crucial concept, the following section will describe the four analytical categories. The first three categories—*doppelgängers*, *bêtes noires,* and visions—will each be illustrated using one of the three neighborhoods, while ghosts will be illustrated using all. Specifically, I will describe the *doppelgängers* of Wicker Park, the *bêtes noires* of Bridgeport*,* and the visions of Woodlawn, before describing the ghosts of all three neighborhoods.

Table 5.1: Stars in a Neighborhood Constellation

Absent Neighborhood Type	**Associated affect**	**Associated scale**	**Associated response**
Focal Neighborhood	None	Same neighborhood	"We are this."
Doppelgänger	Desire	Faraway neighborhoods in different cities	"We are *like* this."
Bêtes Noire	Revulsion	Nearby neighborhoods in same city	"We are *not* that."
Vision	Hope or fear	Same neighborhood in the future	"We *could* be this."
Ghost	Nostalgia or anxiety	Same neighborhood in the past	"We *were* like this."

Doppelgänger

The first type of star in a neighborhood constellation is the *doppelgänger*. While the *doppelgänger* in literature is often the "evil twin" of a main character, as in Dostoevsky's *The Double* (1846) and

Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), in this chapter I merely mean a neighborhood that provides a sort of imagined mirror image to the focal neighborhood. In the same way that literary *doppelgängers* are often spiritually connected to their doubles, *doppelgänger* neighborhoods are understood to be spiritually connected to their focal neighborhoods, or to be the same *type*. This comparison can create a sort of desire on the parts of respondents to live up to the expectations set by the *doppelgänger* neighborhoods.

Respondents point to other neighborhoods they imagine to be spiritual doubles in explaining not only what they imagine their neighborhood is, but also what they desire it to be. For Wicker Park, *doppelgänger* neighborhoods tend to be other neighborhoods with strong reputations for hipness. They deployed an imagination of other neighborhoods in two different ways, though. Some owners talked about hip neighborhoods as a way to explain what made Wicker Park attractive to customers by drawing a parallel between Wicker Park and the imagined hip neighborhood. Other owners deployed the imagined hip neighborhood in another way, talking about it in terms of what Wicker Park no longer is.

Most of my respondents discussed the allure of Wicker Park in terms of its coolness or its hipness, and how that translates to business strategies. "I think, it's very like young and very like fun and like hip," said boutique-manager Mayra. "But, typically, I think the stores that have gone out of business [are] the stores that don't focus on that." Interestingly, though, when discussing the relative hipness of Wicker Park, some business owners deployed other neighborhoods outside Chicago famous for being bohemian, artistic, or hip as a way to talk about what makes Wicker Park more attractive to both customers and businesses. Ken, the manager of a shoe store, talks about Wicker Park as being like the SoHo neighborhood of lower Manhattan, which he claims makes it attractive to customers:

> I think a lot of people, because of the nature of the shops here ... I think to a lot of people, this is kind of like very cool, a hip area for them to come shop or eat, hang around. I think that's the image we have, and probably most, I guess, most popular. I think, that's what I notice coming here. Even, you know, I live in a suburb, I know people here, there, all over, but when they see me in our area here, they really think that this is a cool area. This is it. This is a happening area. I mean, it reminds him of kind of, like lower Manhattan, or like, I don't know, SoHo, areas like that.

For Ken, Wicker Park is like SoHo because it is "cool" and "a happening area." Rachel, who manages a clothing store, talks about New York as well when discussing why her business decided to locate in Wicker Park. She says, "We chose this neighborhood because we wanted a neighborhood that kind of had a similar feel to Brooklyn, or neighborhoods of Manhattan, and Wicker Park actually kind of has more of a Brooklyn, sort of Williamsburg kind of feel to it." Like Ken, Rachel alludes to New York City. Unlike him, though, she pinpoints the Brooklyn neighborhood of Williamsburg, which is considered a center of hipster culture.[2] Additionally, while Ken discussed Wicker Park as being similar to New York City's historical arts district SoHo and attractive to customers, Rachel framed Wicker Park as being like Williamsburg and attractive to her business. When I asked her to explain what she meant by a Brooklyn or Manhattan feel, she pinpointed the bohemian nature of it:

> Just kind of more of a sort of bohemian kind of feel, not really too upscale. Like, we didn't want to move our business to like the magnificent mile, because we've just kind of get swallowed up there. And we're kind of a neighborhood business, so we wanted to be somewhere kind of more neighborhood-centric and not really just another shopping spot in kind of a big lost area.

For Rachel, Wicker Park is different from other neighborhoods in Chicago, like the Magnificent Mile or the Loop, and to illustrate this, she draws a comparison to neighborhoods in New York City.

[2] Indeed, it is one of the three neighborhoods to finish ahead of Wicker Park in the previously mentioned "America's Hippest Hipster Neighborhoods" article (Brennan 2012).

Notice that in this case, the "star" in the neighborhood constellation is not physically proximate. Williamsburg and SoHo are both located in New York City, far away from Wicker Park and Chicago. For all this distance, they are no less symbolically present in the minds of my respondents. A *doppelgänger* can be near or far—the important point is that it is associated with the focal neighborhood in the minds of people. In this way, a constellation of neighborhoods can stretch across vast amounts of space.

Bête Noire

While the *doppelgänger* relates to the focal neighborhood in terms of similarity, the *bête noire* relates to it in terms of difference. Meaning "black beast" in French, the *bête noire* is the opposite of a person. The embodiment of polar opposition, the *bête noire* does the work of defining a person in the negative. When Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1938) said, "I ask you to judge me by the enemies I have made," he demonstrated that one way to understand a person is to understand who they are not. Perhaps more to the point, when discussing the concept of reviled pop music, Wilson (2007) proposes a Bourdieuian (1984) analysis, saying "taste is a means of distinguishing ourselves from others, the pursuit of *distinction*" (89). In other words, we say who we are by saying who we are not, and we often say who we are not by saying what we hate (Bryson 1996). Paintings, films, books, records, *neighborhoods*—expressing disdain for a subset of any of these can help us define ourselves.

In Bridgeport, the *bête noire* is the generalized North Side of Chicago. People in Bridgeport conceive of themselves as unique among Chicago neighborhoods, and in order to do this, they constantly draw comparisons to other places. An implicit comparison evident in Bridgeport is between the neighborhood, with its historical symbolic whiteness, and the rest of the mostly Black South Side. However, in terms of how the merchants socially and cognitively construct their neighborhood, the relevant comparative case is "the North Side." Over and over again, in the course

of describing the neighborhood positively or negatively, Bridgeport merchants described their neighborhood as a parochial place—as a "real neighborhood" or a "neighborhoody place," or even more often, like a small town. Ashley owns a Mexican restaurant with her husband, who is from Bridgeport. The couple used to live in the neighborhood, and now have locations in both Wicker Park and Bridgeport, along with one in the Loop. Even though Ashley is from a Chicago suburb and her husband is from Bridgeport, their first location was in Wicker Park. She had apprehensions about opening there, which she expressed by comparing Wicker Park to Bridgeport:

> We kind of were like, oh, Wicker Park, that seems serious. Like Bridgeport seemed like, I don't know, just more small-town or we knew the neighborhood. Wicker Park, we were like there's like big businesses here, big chains. We didn't know. And obviously there was Big Star [a popular Mexican restaurant in Wicker Park].

Ashley conceived of Bridgeport as fundamentally different from Wicker Park—a more "small-town." She elaborated on this when discussing what it was like when she moved from the North Side to Bridgeport.

> Kind of feels like you're getting a little breath of fresh air from the craziness of like downtown or even some of the North Side neighborhoods. So it's very neighborhoody, like we have nieces and nephews there that go to school in Bridgeport, so you just—you know, I was able to just see that life there if you will, like just raising a family there.

She adds that "Bridgeport is like a small town." For Ashley, the neighborhood is associated with families and people who know each other intimately as opposed to the implicit strangers of the North Side.

This rhetoric about Bridgeport—of it being like a small town—was recurrent among my respondents. Kevin owns the Duck Inn, a restaurant and bar in Bridgeport. The name comes from an older neighborhood establishment that his grandmother ran decades ago. Kevin himself is a fifth-generation Bridgeporter, and the Duck Inn is located on the same street he grew up on. When

his parents divorced, his mother moved to the Gold Coast north of the Loop. I asked what his experience was like going back and forth between Bridgeport and the North Side.

> Like going to another planet. It really was. Well, I mean, growing up in Bridgeport, Bridgeport at that time was extremely small town. You know I could not walk from the bus to my house and get away with anything. I mean, every house I knew the families of every house that I walked past as I walked down Loomis. Hillock, Short, Eleanor. I knew every single family and every single house and they knew me, so you know there was that feeling of you know you're in a small town, everybody knows your name, you know everybody's name, and there was a, you know a comfort and safety in that and then also a stifling and—You know stifled by that knowledge and familiarity and gossip and small-town mindedness to a certain extent. You know, Bridgeport definitely had a strong culture and is much stronger than it is now.

I ask him what he means by that, and he says "Well, it just—it was a community. It wasn't just a neighborhood in Chicago. You weren't a Chicagoan. You were from Bridgeport." Like Ashley, Kevin identifies something fundamentally different about Bridgeport and describes going to the North Side "like going to another planet."

Kevin, and others who describe Bridgeport like a small town, interestingly raise issues that early urban theorists like Tönnies and Simmel discussed in their treatments of urbanization. The difference is, even though Kevin is talking about a neighborhood in the third largest city in the United States, his reflections on Bridgeport mirror early theorists' views of the towns people were leaving at the turn of the twentieth century, not the cities they were going to. Bridgeport's *bête noire* is the generalized North Side of Chicago because Bridgeport represents communal *Gemeinschaft* in a city defined by impersonal *Gesellschaft* (Tönnies 1887). Bridgeporters imagine their neighborhood as a bulwark against what can be lost in the anonymity of a city, with their claims to a small-town feel. In Bridgeport, without using fancy foreign words, respondent after respondent identified their neighborhood with communal *Gemeinschaft* in a city defined by impersonal *Gesellschaft*. In order to make this claim, they must contrast themselves with a place that represents what they are not. For my respondents, this place was the generalized North Side of Chicago. The North Side is

anonymous while Bridgeport is communal. As we will see in Chapter Three, just as Bridgeporters claim the virtues of *Gemeinschaft*, its reputation is also redolent of its vices. If community-minded parochialism is the virtuous frame, then exclusionary racism is the vicious one.

While *doppelgängers* and *bêtes noires* exist on opposite ends of a spectrum of difference and can thus stretch a neighborhood constellation across physical distance, we must also think about questions of time. We think of places as physical spaces, but it is also true that they are temporal objects that change, ascending and declining across multiple dimensions over the course of decades, and even centuries. Neighborhoods are constructed relationally to past and future versions of themselves, so "to recognize neighborhood identity construction as a dynamic process, the idea of place must be connected to the idea of time" (Borer 2010: 97). One such way of connecting time to place is through visions.

Visions

A vision is an imagining of what a place might become. In calling for a study of "collective imagination," Borer calls for us to think about "a place that does not exist yet" (2010: 98), and this is in many ways what visions entail. That said, a vision is not merely a dream of a new place, but a sort of estimate of what a place might be like in the future based on information on hand about the present and the past. A vision is the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come visiting Ebenezer Scrooge (Dickens 1843) and showing him what the future holds for him should he continue in his ways, but it is also God appearing to Moses as the burning bush to tell him He will deliver his people to "a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exodus 3). That is to say, a vision can be optimistic or pessimistic. What unites them is that all visions, regardless of valence, offer a glimpse of what things will be like in the future. While these examples are visions on what will become of individuals or of peoples, the same basic analytical structure appears in people's understandings of place. Specifically,

people understand their neighborhoods by constructing them in relation to a vision of what the future might be like.

The vision plays a strong role in Woodlawn, where much of the talk about the neighborhood is talk of the future. Bright green signs put up by local boosters line the neighborhood streets, proclaiming "Woodlawn: a vibrant community full of possibilities!" Possibilities, or things that do not exist yet but *could*, are especially important in Woodlawn, a neighborhood that has seen its population decline from over 80,000 residents in 1960 to just over 20,000 residents in 2010. The population decline has been mirrored in the built environment, as the once thriving commercial corridor of 63rd Street now features multiple empty blocks as a result of a combination of disinvestment and arson. Possibilities exist in all neighborhoods, but they are especially important for a neighborhood that has faced decline.

An obvious way visions are called upon is through the use of planning documents like master plans. 1Woodlawn, an organization under the leadership of Apostolic Church of God, has indeed worked with urban planners to create such a document for Woodlawn in 2017, and it is full of visions of the future—it literally describes itself as "a vision of the community, by the community, and for the community." Along with descriptions of this vision—"promote Woodlawn as a 'neighborhood of choice'," "create a new generation of neighborhood parks," "catalyze job-creating enterprises," etc.—there are actual visual representations of the vision, with renderings of what the neighborhood might look like with new developments. This visualization of a vision has a long history in Woodlawn, going back at least to a 1945 map entitled "Proposed Improvement Plan: Woodlawn Community" attributed to the Chicago Plan Commission and the Woodlawn Planning Committee.

Visions do not just appear in planning documents, though. My respondents discussed

visions for the future of Woodlawn time and time again. While visions of Woodlawn's future have been part of the environment of the neighborhood for years, recently they have focused on a particular institution: the Obama Presidential Center, the $500 million presidential library set to open in the neighborhood in 2021. The presidential library has been an object of interest and contention in the neighborhood, simultaneously standing in for potential economic growth in the neighborhood and also stoking anxiety about another large institution—like the University of Chicago—moving in without adequately giving back to the community.

Monte, a pastor in the neighborhood, says "obviously the center's going to be a big influence on this community," and when asked if he's excited, responds in the affirmative, saying he's glad it will be in Chicago—New York City and Honolulu also put in proposals for it—and that it will "be available, hopefully, to you know, the residents as well as the international tourism that is going to come." Sonya, who worked until recently in civic engagement for the University of Chicago, echoes the positivity. "I think um, well, one, the community is very excited about the uh, future home of the Obama Presidential Center," she says, going on to specify "and what that might mean in terms of community reinvestment and changing kind of negative perceptions and local business development and opportunities. So I think that's ... really positive."

Not everyone is as sure the Obama Presidential Center is going to deliver entirely positively to the neighborhood. Ethan, who works as the director at Sunshine Gospel Enterprises, a community organization that helps develop small business owners and entrepreneurs in the neighborhood, is more wary. He says that

> with other civic institutions, so it's like there's this you know, we're optimistic about the future, maybe what's possible, what could happen, but we're very cautious—cautiously optimistic and we're very distrusting of the outside in terms of what's going to happen, and so you think about sort of the implications of the Obama Library that's coming, and what that might mean.

Others wonder specifically whether or not the Obama Presidential Center is going to benefit Woodlawn given the fact that the way it is planned; visitors to the library would have to walk a few blocks to get to the major thoroughfare of 63rd Street. Moreover, one of the most contentious issues in the neighborhood since the announcement of the library has been whether or not to demand a Community Benefits Agreement—an agreement between the developers and the community that would make certain guarantees to the community regarding issues that could range from low-income housing to jobs—which the people behind the library say is not going to happen.

Whether people look to it with hope or with trepidation, it is undeniable that the Obama Presidential Center has become a focus for my respondents in Woodlawn, and the reason for this is that it stokes a vision of the future. What that future will look like is up for debate—current visions range from a revitalization in the community that benefits everyone to a rapid gentrification that prices current residents out—but the fact of the matter is that everyone is convinced that there is going to be *some* change.

Ghosts

Following Bell (1997), the last important absent neighborhood type is the ghost. "We moderns, despite our mechanistic and rationalistic ethos, live in landscapes filled with ghosts," Bell (1997) tells us. "The scenes we pass through each day are inhabited, possessed, by spirits we cannot see but whose presence we nevertheless experience" (813). In contributing to the sociology of place, Bell attempts to locate in ghosts a mechanism by which a physical space becomes a place, arguing that "we constitute a place in large measure by the ghosts we sense inhabit and possess it" (813). In this sense, ghosts are past versions of a neighborhood itself. "The past is never dead," Faulkner tells us. "It isn't even past" (1951). In making sense of the change that had taken place in their neighborhood, respondents constantly compared it to past versions of itself, evoking this still living

past. Often, this comparison is tinged with anxiety about what the neighborhood used to be, although it can be either anxiety that things were bad and they can become bad again, or anxiety that things were good and will not ever get back to that point. The former feeling might be thought of as the result of a collective trauma, while the latter feeling we can identify as nostalgia.

The particular manifestation of a ghost can take shape in as many ways as there are memories in a neighborhood, but the ghost of Wicker Park emerges primarily in two ways: as a dangerous neighborhood that has been made safer by gentrification, and as a hip neighborhood that has been made less hip by the same. As a result, the ghosts of Wicker Park stand to both provide support for gentrification and to rebuke it, depending on whether residents compared the relative safety of contemporary Wicker Park to the relative danger of its less developed past or talked about how the neighborhood *used* to be hip, but was not anymore.

Dan, the co-owner of a bar, evokes a ghost of Wicker Park that was a much scarier place than it is today. While the bar had only been open for around a year and a half when I interviewed him, Dan himself has spent much of his life in the neighborhood. When I ask him about how the neighborhood has changed, he says "Oh shit! It was bad." When I ask him what he means, he tells me a story:

> Gang bangers, constantly gang wars, I mean back in like the late 80s the cops wouldn't even come into this neighborhood they just wanted to contain it make sure that it didn't spill over. I'd literally remember when I was going to school out in Arizona, I used to come stay with my older brother on Division and Ashland, and there was one weekend when a guy died on Friday, like a homeless dude, in the middle of the road, and cars just drove around this dead body. Eventually somebody drove his body into the gutter, and nobody picked it up for like three days. There was just this rotting dead body.[3] It was a rough neighborhood back then.

[3] I have been unable to verify this occurrence. While this does not mean that it did not take place, it does mean that it is an example of a rumor with the potential to contribute to the reputation as opposed to a reputation itself. In this instance, Dan is rhetorically deploying a story to illustrate the sort of reputation the neighborhood had.

Dan contrasts this danger with what the neighborhood is like now. As mentioned earlier, Dan says he worries "more about getting run over by a baby stroller or a girl in her SUV on her cell phone." This was a particularly evocative observation about Wicker Park because it succinctly identified anxieties from the past, about physical safety, and the present, about cultural transformation of the neighborhood.

The specter of danger and violence was a prominent part of stories people told about past versions of the neighborhood, but there are other ghosts in Wicker Park, too. Merchant after merchant commented on how the neighborhood *used* to be hip but wasn't anymore. Respondents spun tales of artists and weirdos in previous decades to draw a comparison to the more staid, corporatized neighborhood it had become. For example, Chris, who owns an art gallery in the neighborhood, talks fondly about what the neighborhood was like when he moved in:

> When I first came to Chicago in 1990, this was definitely one of the neighborhoods people classified as up-and-coming, which is kind of a funny saying for its okay, but look out for gangs, look out for a lot of unsafe activity, if you looked around the streets, you would notice that, it being very hip, and edgy, but at the same time a lot of storefronts would have gates up in front of them, a lot of graffiti on the buildings, you know, which kind of added to the lure of it.

When I ask him to explain this, he says "Well, in the way that it was kind of scary, you know? That kind of adds like, ooh, I'm going into the forbidden zone." This particular kind of ghost sometimes manifested itself in opposition to chain stores in the neighborhood. People would talk about chains moving in or replacing older, independent stores in a wistful manner.

While respondents in Wicker Park often talked about a more run-down and violent past of the neighborhood to contrast it with the relatively prosperous and peaceful present, respondents in Woodlawn evoked ghosts of a bustling, safer neighborhood to contrast with the more recent decline. Gail, a longtime resident of Woodlawn active in community groups, talks about the vibrancy of the neighborhood:

> This area was known back in the '50s and '60s where you always had places to shop. Everything you wanted was in this community, and we're talking about small business owners where the businesses was turned over to family members. You know, the parents might start the business, and then it was turned over, you know, to someone in the family whether it was the son or the daughter, and you have other family members and community members who were your employees.

Ghosts of Woodlawn's commercial past are particularly evocative, considering the decimation of the major commercial corridor of 63rd Street. Once a center of commerce and community not only in Woodlawn but also for the larger South Side, its social decline is mirrored in its physical abandonment.

Ghosts exist in other areas of the neighborhood, too. Ethan notes that "you go back, you know, far enough, you had what was looked at as sort of this, you know, 61st Street was a commercial corridor, much in the same way that uh 53rd Street is one now." He describes how that must have been, compared to what it is now, saying:

> So you know, what did that look like? You had people coming and going at different times of day, and you had people walking by and buying stuff, and eating, and drinking, and you know, in the way that you walk down 53rd Street, you don't—you're not sort of naturally thinking about is something bad going to happen.

Moreover, Ethan elaborates about how this past is not just generic information, but lives in the memories of the people of the neighborhood.

> What's interesting is that you talk to people in the neighborhood and they can tell you what used to be here. You know, they remember back far enough. We found out from one lady that just up here in Washington Park, that it used to be an equine park where you could do horseback riding. You know, it's fascinating stuff, and she recalls, you know, as a young girl just walking barefoot, you know, up there to the park to—to you know, look at the horses.

The decline of Woodlawn has happened in the living memory of people who live here now, so ghosts need not be legends—they can spring from firsthand memories.

In Bridgeport, the ghosts of the past appear as both a more tight-knit neighborhood *and* as a more racist neighborhood. While these qualities have different valences—people tend to look back fondly at the parochial nature of the neighborhood, but not its racism—these are qualities that are

arguably related to each other, as in-group bonding and distrust of outsiders fuels both. In any case, while respondents often identified both qualities as still existing in the neighborhood, there was general agreement both were more extreme in the past.

If Bridgeport is still a neighborhood built like a small town, it was even more so in the past, according to my respondents. Omar owns the farm-to-table restaurant Nana in Bridgeport. He grew up in the neighborhood, where his father owns Tacos Erendira, a taqueria that has been open in the neighborhood for over fifty years. Lamenting how new forms of technology has changed the way people interact with each other, Omar remembers his own childhood in the neighborhood, saying "You know, the doors were never really locked around here. And it was the type of neighborhood even though we were like ten, fifteen minutes away from downtown, it had a small town feel here. Everybody knew each other." This comports with Kevin's memory of a neighborhood where he knew everyone. "I was probably ten or eleven years old before I realized that the majority of families living around me were not my family," he remembers. "Because I called them all you know, Uncle Tom, Auntie Fran, and Aunt Bea, and those were all—that's how I referred to everyone on my block."

People also remember the neighborhood as being more racist than it is today. Recall Ed's comment about the general sense of tribalism in the neighborhood:

> I started learning that everything is pretty tribal this—when we used to decry the racism here in Bridgeport, I learned that, you know what? It's just not white people hating Black people here. Everyone just hates everyone. Like the Italian guy hates the Irish guy, the Irish guy hates the Italian guy, like that guy hates the dude in front of him, right? I mean, there's all these grievances based on minor, um, well, transgressions.

This tribalism and racism get brought up again and again among my respondents, but they often talk about it as more of something that existed in the past. Ed talks about it in terms of education and social evolution. "So you know, kids come back [from college] and they question why their parents

say bad things, why do they say things like oh, there's a Black man over there in a car, be careful. They resist these—these old stereotypes, and they challenge them, and they make up their own minds about what they want to be, what they want to do." While many acknowledge it as a present concern—as covered in the previous chapter on Bridgeport—often racism is something that gets talked about as a ghost if it gets talked about at all.

It is worth noting that ghosts can have a sort of paralyzing effect. In some circumstances, the sight of them can blind the viewer to what's going on in the present, offering up a vision of the past that is better or worse, but at the very least more compelling. Suttles (1990: 250) tells a story about an encounter with Nelson Algren, a Wicker Park writer who memorialized the neighborhood in such works as *The Man with the Golden Arm* and *Chicago: City on the Make*, that offers a warning about what can happen when spending time with ghosts:

> In the mid-1960s I spent a drunken night with him wandering about the West Side. Our ramble took the course of an homage to those places he had been before. He was so occupied with telling me what they were "really like" that neither of us could notice what was going on. As he stood, absorbed, before an empty lot where his mother had run a boarding house, unmindful of the traffic around him, it came over me that he was trying to reink a dry pen.

It is a warning worth taking heed of, especially as researchers, but the point remains that ghosts are powerful figures for anyone making sense of a neighborhood. They inform how observers understand a place, and in some instances can constrain understandings of what a place might be or become.

Spatial Scales

The spatial scales associated with each absent neighborhood vary in specific, predictable ways. Ghosts and visions are associated with the same place as the focal neighborhood. *Doppelgängers* can come from anywhere, but often come from different cities. *Bête noires* come from the same city. There are distinct logics for this variation in spatial association.

For ghosts and the vision, the point of comparison is related to time, not space, so the point of comparison *must* be the same neighborhood. A ghost is a reminder of the past, whether it was positive or negative. A vision is a hope or fear for the future. For them to be effective, ghosts and visions must be as exact a reflection of the neighborhood in question as possible.

For *doppelgängers*, there is reliance on an understanding of a *type* of neighborhood. *Doppelgängers* are more likely to come from other cities because reputational ecologies are less likely to support two neighborhoods in the same place with identical reputations. For example, if Wicker Park is *the* reputationally hip neighborhood in Chicago, it is less likely there will be *another* similarly reputationally hip neighborhood in the same city, as it would diminish Wicker Park's claim on that particular reputation. Indeed, there *could* be claims that another neighborhood is the *really* hip Chicago neighborhood, but such a claim would be less likely to link the neighborhood to Wicker Park as a *doppelgänger* and be more likely to contest Wicker Park's claim to reputational hipness in the first place. In a given city, there is competition for reputational claims, especially in regard to a quality related to discernment like hipness. A reputationally hip neighborhood in another city, on the other hand, is not a threat to the reputational claim in Wicker Park. In fact, because of increasing media coverage of neighborhoods across the country, and in particular the proliferation of "listicles" dedicated to the top neighborhoods for some particular trait (eg., hippest neighborhoods,) it could be that people are primed to associate neighborhoods in different cities with each other in the manner of *doppelgängers*.

The existence of *bête noires* requires a sense of distinction: the idea that a particular neighborhood is explicitly different from another type of neighborhood in important, and even essential, ways. Freud's (1930) concept of "the narcissism of minor differences" is instructive here. Freud describes it as

> the phenomenon that it is precisely communities with adjoining territories, and related to each other in other ways as well, who are engaged in constant feuds and in ridiculing each other—like the Spaniards and Portuguese, for instance, the North Germans and South Germans, the English and Scotch, and so on.

Though Freud's examples are sociopolitical, it is not difficult to apply the concept to social groups and to think of "adjoining territories" not only as countries, but as neighborhoods, as well. The idea remains the same: group identity is contingent on insisting on differences between "us" and "them," and nowhere are these differences more important than they are at the boundaries. This is because at the boundaries, there are sufficient similarities between those on each side that it becomes more imperative to emphasize difference, and thus defend one's identity as part of a group. Bridgeport's *bête noires* are places that are similar to it in some regard. Instead of comparing Bridgeport to nearby, predominantly Black South Side neighborhoods, Bridgeporters contrast themselves with mostly white North Side neighborhoods. That they are a different *kind* of white neighborhood is what makes them so despised. The *bête noire* must be similar to the focal neighborhood, but different *enough*, which is why it is likely to be a neighborhood that is physically proximate.

Reputational Consequences

This all matters in at least three ways. First, it generates a better understanding of how respondents make sense of the world. Second, it suggests new strategies for those of us doing urban research. Finally, this better understanding is important beyond just making our data richer. It should also give us clues as to how people might be expected to act, as we know that how people feel about a place can have real effects on the actions they proceed to take—it is locomotive insofar as it motivates certain actions.

First, recognition of ghosts, *doppelgängers*, *bêtes noires,* and visions in urban neighborhoods allows us to gain a richer understanding of how our respondents make sense of the world. As urban researchers, more careful attention to the presence of absent places in our neighborhood studies

gives us additional ways to triangulate data to make sense of what we are seeing in the world. In the same way the most compelling answer to "Interviews or ethnography?" is "Both" (see Khan and Jerolmack 2013, for a discussion of this issue), we should be looking at reference neighborhoods in addition to focal neighborhoods because they enrich our understanding of the cases at hand and reveal things about focal neighborhoods that might otherwise go unobserved. Someone might not come out and tell you that they conceive of their neighborhood as a hip place, but if they compare it to other hip neighborhoods and talk unfavorably about places that are reputationally not hip, one can put the pieces of the puzzle together.

Second, recognition of the presence of absent neighborhoods among our respondents should fundamentally change the way we do urban research. When doing a neighborhood study, it is not enough to simply look at a single neighborhood. To get a complete picture of the social processes that inform, and indeed create, a neighborhood, we must also look to understand something about the reference neighborhoods that connect to the focal neighborhood. The ramifications of this insight are consequential for how we think about our work. If we must consider not only reputation, but relational reputation, then all of the sudden understanding what is happening in other neighborhoods is imperative if we are to understand what is happening in our neighborhood of focus. If part of the way Wicker Park's relational reputation is built is an antagonism to Lincoln Park, for example, then it matters quite a bit if Lincoln Park suddenly changes. If "no man is an island entire of itself" (Donne 1624), no neighborhood is either.

Beyond making our data richer and suggesting how we should go about our research, if we know that other neighborhoods help people form meaningful identities for their own neighborhoods, then we can begin to know all sorts of other things about how they might act. There are two reasons for this. First of all, reputations are remarkably durable and consequential, as

exemplified by the "Matthew Effect" (Merton 1968; Podolny 1993). Second, what people think about a place has effects on their actions regardless of whether or not what they think is "accurate."

Reputations are often durable, and for good, as there are a number of reasons that a place reputation might persist despite contradictory facts "on the ground." (Brown-Saracino and Parker 2017) Regardless of *why* reputations persist, the fact that they do has real ramifications for how people act. Urban sociologists have documented the ways that people use mental categories to understand their neighborhoods. There is a particularly rich literature related to how people understand the relative safety of a neighborhood, particularly when they might not have complete information about it. Suttles (1972) talks about how we use cognitive maps to "help us decide where to live, where to walk at night, and when to start worrying about our children's absence; they help us make a welter of day-to-day decisions in which what we do depends heavily on where we think we are" (4). Crucially, he points out that "where these cognitive models may not be correct, they are at least determinate" (4). Quillian and Pager (2001) demonstrate the way people use race as a proxy for crime in a neighborhood, with percentage of young Black men in a neighborhood positively correlated with perception of crime level, after controlling for actual crime level. Krysan and Bader (2009) have proposed a potential source for this phenomenon, suggesting that individuals have "blind spots" about some neighborhoods based on race, of both the individual and of the neighborhood. Specifically, they find "that each racial group's knowledge of communities is, perhaps not surprisingly, greater about communities in which their group has a presence than about communities where few of their co-ethnics live" (696). Of course, this research suggests the importance of stereotypes as opposed to the importance of reputation as it is based on racial blind spots, not blind spots toward particular neighborhoods. That said, the mechanism can be similarly applied to reputation—it's just a matter of assuming ignorance about a single neighborhood as

opposed to a type of neighborhood. People are more likely to rely on cognitive heuristics like reputation and stereotype for places they are not familiar with personally, and persistent patterns of residential segregation along racial lines means that such reliance is more likely to be important for neighborhoods of people who are different from the observer.

Consequences of place reputation scale up beyond the individual. Krysan and Bader suggest that these blind spots are potential mechanisms for the persistence of residential segregation by race. In the case of the merchants in this study, their understanding of what kind of neighborhood they live in has consequences for decisions they make in their day-to-day lives, which can come to actually influence the neighborhood. For example, the Special Service Area (SSA) board in Wicker Park, a local group comprised mostly of merchants, commissioned a "Master Plan" (2008) for the neighborhood from an urban planner. The local Chamber of Commerce, which is closely affiliated with but independent of the SSA, commissioned a "market assessment" (2012) from a consulting firm. Encoded into this document are the telltale signs that Wicker Park is a certain kind of neighborhood, and that this group, with taxpayer dollars behind them, is invested in maintaining that reputation. For example, the Master Plan tells us that

> Today, WPB is continuing to grow due largely to the area's rich and textured history and an emerging "brand" that blends diversity—of people, of buildings, of places, opinions and ideas—with creativity and cool. The real estate and retail markets are so robust that banks are replacing community coffee houses and three-flat condominiums are replacing old homes. WPB is now a "hip" stop—on the local, national, and international radar—as opposed to when it just was what it was.

This view of the neighborhood as hip has consequences on what decisions get made regarding the development of the neighborhood. Hipness helped build the economic viability of Wicker Park. Jamie, an urban planner who worked on the Master Plan, discussed how even those who were development-minded on the neighborhood's Special Service Area board "would try to care about the art scene and the music scene because they did recognize that it did bring a unique flavor to the

neighborhood and it did draw people in." To the extent that development and gentrification happen because of human choices and interests and not just because of natural "ecological" processes (see Logan and Molotch 1987), what a group of local merchants understands about the reputation of its neighborhood is incredibly consequential.

The market assessment is perhaps even clearer in terms of how it understands Wicker Park's reputation, and it is explicitly relational. Specifically, it designates "peer communities," which sound an awful lot like the *doppelgängers*:

> The Chamber Board and staff identified five (5) peer communities for consideration as part of this WPB Market Assessment. The peer communities selected include both Chicago and out-of-state urban, commercial corridors with similar market characteristics to Wicker Park and Bucktown. The five communities are: Andersonville and Logan Square in Chicago, Uptown in Minneapolis, Silver Lake/Los Feliz in Los Angeles, and Brooklyn's Park Slope neighborhood in New York City. This peer community study process will inform the implementation strategy for this Market Assessment.

In order to better sell the neighborhood, these merchants endeavor to fit it into a legible category for other consumers, and in doing so explicitly outline at least part of the relevant constellation of neighborhoods for Wicker Park.

So what can knowledge of neighborhood constellations tell us about how someone in a focal neighborhood might act? Obviously, circumstances differ from neighborhood to neighborhood, but based on research in Wicker Park, Bridgeport, and Woodlawn, I can offer some provisional hypotheses. Briefly: an emphasis on *bête noires* is likely to shape arguments for preservation and an emphasis on *doppelgängers* is likely to encourage arguments for change, making emphasis on *bête noires* likely to produce conservative action and an emphasis on *doppelgängers* to produce progressive action.[4] Emphases on ghosts and visions are more flexible in that they can be

[4] In this instance, I do not mean "conservative" and "progressive" in any party-political sense, but rather in terms of being against or for neighborhood change. In fact, an action classified as

utilized for either end, depending on whether or not there is anxiety about the current state of affairs in a neighborhood.

The reputational type most likely to shape concrete action toward preservation is the *bête noire* because it is the reputational type individuals can most easily concretize and identify strategies for stopping some potential threat. So, while the other three reputational types certainly get brought up at public neighborhood meetings, for example, it is the *bête noire* that is used most often to justify certain political actions related to keeping a neighborhood the way it is. Think of leaders in Woodlawn assuring worried residents that the neighborhood is *not* going to become Lincoln Park specifically because of their plans to forestall gentrification. Think of residents of Wicker Park opposing chains on the basis of protecting the neighborhood from becoming like the suburbs or, again, Lincoln Park. Think of Bridgeporters explaining their opposition to another coffee shop in the neighborhood in terms of North Side hipsters. The figure of the *bête noire* is typically closer geographically than its flipside, the *doppelgänger*, so local structures of conservation can be invoked in relation to it, e.g., zoning to prevent change. Rhetorically, it is not difficult to present concrete, city-specific plans for Woodlawn to avoid becoming Lincoln Park, for example, because the intended audience is familiar with the comparison, as well as (often) the municipal tools available to prevent such a transformation. In terms of getting small-scale policy work done that helps to forestall neighborhood change, (e.g., zoning and tax abatements), it turns out that fear of a nearby other is the most powerful specter to invoke.

A neighborhood with a concentrated awareness of *doppelgängers*, on the other hand, is likely to see these reputational figures used in the service of change. This is because there is something

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conservative in this sense—say, attempting to stop gentrification—might be classified as progressive in relation to its politics.

aspirational about the figure of the *doppelgänger*—it is built on a recognition of something somewhere else that members of the neighborhood see in their own place, but this association requires constant reassurance. It is a sort of keeping up with the Joneses, except in a case like Wicker Park, the Joneses are Williamsburg. *Doppelgängers* provide benchmarks for neighborhoods—if you see your neighborhood as being like another neighborhood, and that neighborhood gets something, you are likely to want to get it, too. This manifests itself in things like the peer community section of the Wicker Park Master Plan. When Wicker Park lists its "peer communities," it is meant to provide a model not only of what Wicker Park *is*, but what it *should be*. A neighborhood focused on *doppelgängers* is likely to be focused on making positive changes to the neighborhood.

A neighborhood focused on ghosts and visions—which often go together—can end up focusing on conservation *or* change, and the way to predict which action might be taken is more likely is to determine whether or not there is anxiety about the current state of affairs. If there is, ghosts are likely to inspire nostalgia for better times in the past, which get converted into visions for the future. If there is not a general sense of anxiety—if people are generally happy with the way things are going—then ghosts and visions get separated, and even if people are nostalgic for the way things used to be, their visions for the future are likely to be based on progress and not conservation as they view the neighborhood's arc as overwhelmingly positive.

Conclusion

There is of course the issue here of the causal arrow, and whether it points from these reputational figures toward progressive or conservative action, or from progressive or conservative action toward these reputational figures. I would argue that it works both ways. For sure, there are figures in a neighborhood with attitudes, desires, and commitments prior to the emergence of any sort of discourse. These are people who are for the preservation or change of a neighborhood for

their own reasons, and they are unlikely to be moved in the opposite direction. In fact, these people are likely to try to move things in their preferred direction, and in doing so, they create an environment where the emergence of one type of reputational figure or another is more likely to emerge. For example, a real estate developer might strategically emphasize *doppelgängers* as a way of motivating development, while an anti-gentrification community activist might strategically emphasize a *bête noire* as a way to rally supporters to the cause of making sure their neighborhood does not become something recognized as anathema. In this way, use of these reputational figures in rhetoric is a result of prior opinions for many people. However, once these figures are deployed, they become part of a broader discourse and influence the actions and attitudes of all sorts of people, even those who had no prior commitments on the topic. So, someone starting a business in Bridgeport, for example, can be influenced to be wary of change and interlopers from the North Side and take action against it because it is "in the water," whether they came to the neighborhood with such commitments or not. Of course, the more people in a neighborhood who have such a commitment, the more likely it is to get repeated in official and unofficial ways, and in this way, these reputational objects and actions taking place in the neighborhood are co-constitutive. A neighborhood with a preponderance of one of these relational "stars" over another is locomotive of a particular set of actions, but people undertaking a particular set of actions are locomotive of the production of these stars as well. While this co-constitutiveness is undeniable, for those interested in encouraging one set of actions over another, it is worth thinking about how discussing a neighborhood in terms of *doppelgängers* facilitates action oriented toward change, whereas discussing a neighborhood in terms of *bête noires* facilitates action oriented toward preservation.

The presence of absent neighborhoods in the way merchants talk about a place tells us important things about the place itself. It is not just idle talk, but rather consists of revealing

comparisons that respondents use to talk about their neighborhood and who they think it was (ghosts), who they think it might become (visions), who they think it is (*doppelgängers*), and who they know it is not, but are afraid it might become (*bêtes noires*). The implications are clear. In order to understand how consequential decisions get made in neighborhoods, urban researchers need to understand how actors understand their neighborhoods on the ground. To do this, we must think like our respondents and carry around more than just the focal neighborhood in our head.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION: THE SOCIAL RAMIFICATIONS OF PLACE REPUTATION

In this dissertation, I examined the ways place reputation is created, maintained, and commodified in the American city. Using the three Chicago neighborhoods of Wicker Park, Bridgeport, and Woodlawn, it identified three distinct social processes—consolidation, contestation, and exploitation—that differ in terms of goals but are united by their fundamental orientation toward neighborhood reputations. Moreover, these three processes all rely on a relational understanding of place, as each neighborhood is defined not in isolation, but as part of a broader constellation of neighborhoods across dimensions of both space and time. In explicating these processes, this dissertation has identified a key component of broader conflict over resources, political clout, and symbolic power that maintain power structures, shape neighborhood change, and fuel inequality in American cities.

The three cases also demonstrate the importance of the three aspects of place reputation emphasized in the introduction: (1) it has material consequences, (2) whether or not the reputation is "true," and (3) it comes from diffuse sources, making it difficult to disprove. In terms of material consequences, we saw them in all three neighborhoods. In Wicker Park, merchants make money off the reputation of the neighborhood for hipness, while in Bridgeport and Woodlawn, merchants discuss how negative reputations—for racism and violence, respectively—keep would-be customers away. Regarding the inconsequential nature of whether or not a reputation is "true," the prevailing reputations are challenged by at least some merchants in all three neighborhoods, but this makes them no less effective. In Wicker Park, merchants push the reputation for hipness even if they think it is inaccurate because they know how financially remunerative it is, whereas in Bridgeport and Woodlawn, even those who do not think their neighborhood is racist or violent lament the very real

impact the perception that it is has on the business environment. Finally, we heard about these reputations from multiple sources across the three neighborhoods: politicians, friends, family, newspapers, publicity agencies, and chambers of commerce, to name a few.

Additionally, the dissertation demonstrates that though their responses to it differ, individuals use place reputations to orient their behaviors and attitudes, taking them as inputs toward the "definition of the situation" (Thomas and Znaniecki 1919), wherein the individual "has to take social meanings into account, interpret his experience not exclusively in terms of his own needs and wishes, but also in terms of the traditions, customs, beliefs, aspirations of his social milieu" (Thomas and Znaniecki 1919: 26). Collective understanding of place reputation plays a key role in the defining of the situation in urban neighborhoods. By interrogating merchants in three neighborhoods at different stages of gentrification, this dissertation provides an analysis of how one group of key figures in neighborhood life make sense of their neighborhood's reputation, attempt to utilize it for their own ends, and reconcile economic interests and cultural commitments in relation to it. The responses of the merchants differ based on their circumstances and the valence of the reputation they are dealing with, and we see consolidation in Wicker Park, contestation in Bridgeport, and exploitation in Woodlawn.

Lessons from the Neighborhoods

The three cases document reputational processes that are distinct from one another, but intimately related. The consolidation in Wicker Park emerges in relation to a reputation that is financially remunerative. On the flip side, the contestation in Bridgeport is in relation to a reputation that is financially destructive. While we would expect to see something similar among the merchants in Woodlawn concerning their own financially destructive reputation—and we do, to the extent that they are able—this contestation is no match for the exploitation of reputation by those in the

neighborhood with more political power and resources. By considering how reputation operates differently in each neighborhood, we can better understand the impact of what people think about places has on all sorts of urban neighborhoods.

In Wicker Park, merchants who differ along a number of dimensions—tenure in the neighborhood, corporate status, geographic location, and customer base, among others—are able to coordinate action in an attempt to consolidate the neighborhood's reputation for hipness. There is not a consensus among the merchants about the appropriate level of hipness in the neighborhood, and different merchants are openly anxious about it being too hip (and thus alienating to new customers) or not hip enough (and thus undeserving of its reputation), but they all recognize that *some* reputation for hipness is financially remunerative, so they are able to coordinate around the consolidation of that reputation through neighborhood institutions like the Special Service Area and the neighborhood Master Plan. The case of Wicker Park establishes that reputation can serve as an orienting concept that allows actors with disparate financial incentives and cultural commitments to coordinate their action toward a common goal.

In Bridgeport, merchants—particularly those of a newer generation—attempt to contest the historically entrenched reputation the neighborhood has for racism. Through a process I refer to as "undefending the neighborhood," these individuals—who represent a substantial but by no means complete set of neighborhood merchants—strategically orient their businesses toward the goal of welcoming outsiders and being actively hostile to those perceived to be at the root of racial exclusion in the neighborhood. The moral calculus of this is complicated for a number of reasons. First of all, the people attempting this undefending stand to benefit financially from the process as opening up the neighborhood to more people also means opening it up to more people's money. They are also often people of color or members of the LGBTQ community with sincere professed

commitments to making the neighborhood welcoming in a way it has not been in the past. There is moral calculus that allows us to disentangle altruism and instrumentalism, as it seems incontrovertible that the people in question are benefiting financially *and* performing in line with their professed ethics. The other complication associated with undefending the neighborhood comes from the fact that this attempt—which is fundamentally about fighting exclusion—is itself exclusionary. The attempt to destroy one moral order inevitably leads to the creation of a new one, and in this new one, there are still people who feel excluded. The people who feel excluded are the ones accused of doing the excluding in the first place, so they get varying degrees of sympathy from the undefenders, but the question lingers: is undefending the neighborhood different from defending the neighborhood solely in its subjects of exclusion? The case of Bridgeport shows how reputation—and the fight over it—can serve to call out to certain groups and exclude others.

Finally, in Woodlawn, we have a case where merchants are stymied in their efforts to shape the neighborhood in a way that is different than either of the other two cases. This is because while merchants and their allies make up the dominant class in terms of shaping the neighborhood in Wicker Park and Bridgeport, there is a competing power in Woodlawn pursuing different interests. Like Bridgeport, Woodlawn has a reputation one would code as negative. Further, merchants' response to this negative reputation—for violence, in this instance— is similar to the way merchants in Bridgeport respond to its reputation for racism: whether or not they view it as accurate, they believe it is an anchor on the neighborhood and on their livelihoods specifically as it prevents people from coming to the neighborhood to spend money. Whereas an effort to fight the reputation for racism is unimpeded in Bridgeport—even as different actors disagree on the accurateness of that reputation—any effort to fight the reputation for violence in Woodlawn has historically been countered by an organizational force in the neighborhood that has benefited financially and

politically not *in spite* of the neighborhood's reputation for violence, but in fact *because* of it. The case of Woodlawn demonstrates that even as merchants are receptors and shapers of reputation, they do so under situational constraints. To borrow from Marx (1852), merchants shape their neighborhood's reputations, but they do not shape them as they please.

Merchants as Frontline Reputational Actors

Speaking of merchants, this dissertation demonstrated the theoretical importance of merchants in the study of cities. Merchants are ideal figures to examine if one is looking to understand neighborhood reputation for two primary reasons, both of which are accounted for by their status as frontline reputational actors. What I mean by this is that merchants are both directly impacted by their neighborhood's reputation and active in shaping it. Because of their position in the neighborhood, they are in an excellent position to both comment on what their neighborhood's reputation is *and* have experience in their day-to-day lives with making decisions in light of it.

First, merchants are acutely aware of their neighborhood's reputation *because they have to be*. Their livelihoods depend on people being willing to come to their neighborhood to spend money—rare is the successful shop that gets all its customers from the immediate neighborhood—so it is in their interest to have an extremely accurate and nuanced understanding of their neighborhood's reputation. Moreover, they are often the first people neighborhood outsiders interact with, as many people come to a new neighborhood for the first time specifically to go to a store or a bar or a restaurant or a coffee shop. As neighborhood figures likely to interact with outsiders for whom reputation is most important, given insiders' fine-grained knowledge of the neighborhood, merchants witness firsthand the effects of their neighborhood's reputation on other people.

This is related to the second advantage of merchants as figures to explore neighborhood reputation through since once merchants have this knowledge about what their neighborhood's

reputation is, they do not simply sit with it and let it dictate their fate; rather, they become active participants in the life of that reputation. This activity takes different forms depending on the valence of the reputation as merchants in a neighborhood with a financially remunerative reputation will attempt to prop it up and amplify it, while merchants in a neighborhood with a financially destructive reputation will attempt to counteract it. Either way, though, merchants make day-to-day decisions and engage in long-term strategies to improve their business prospects with neighborhood reputation in mind and often articulate these decisions and strategies in specifically reputational terms because reputation is an issue crucial to their livelihood and even survival.

Reputation as a Social Object

In studying reputation as a social object, this dissertation intervenes in a debate about appropriate objects of inquiry. In critiquing substantialist group- and place-based approaches to social research and advocating for relational approaches instead, Desmond (2014) argues that his approach concerns itself not with, among other objects, "a location delimited by the boundaries of a particular neighborhood," but with "processes involving configurations of relations among different actors or institutions" (Desmond 2014: 547) This work suggests that the two are co-constitutive—that places are made by relationships, and that, following Brown-Saracino (2015), "places shape identity." This is seen most clearly in Chapter Five in the discussion of the relational nature of neighborhoods themselves as social objects. Neighborhoods are geographically bounded places, to be sure, but they are also objects of symbolic contention, and a careful study of them as these symbolic objects should give the researcher a deeper understanding of the configuration of relations that Desmond calls for. Though neighborhoods themselves are the clearest objects bound up with relational activity found in this dissertation, we might look at what I call reputational objects as well, e.g., strollers, taverns, and empty lots. These are all physical objects that can be studied as physical

objects, but they carry with them social relationships and conflict as well, like Freud's (1913) totem or more recent sociologically significant material objects (Zukin 1982; Molotch 2003; Benediktsson under contract). The larger point is, studying "the boundaries of a particular neighborhood" and studying "processes involving configurations of relations among different actors or institutions" (Desmond 2014: 547) need not be different studies if the configurations of relations are oriented toward understandings and disputes over the neighborhood as a social object in the first place.

Reputation as a Way of Knowing

In a book about the concept of rumor, Shibutani (1966) said that "what men do depends upon their own cognitive orientations, however naïve or misguided they may be" (v). Like Shibutani's work on rumor—and even more relevantly, Gigerenzer and Gaissmaier's (2011) work on heuristics—my dissertation is built on the fundamental insight that people base consequential decisions on in their everyday lives without complete information. This should not be a controversial claim to anyone, but a rational choice strawman—even economists have long talked of bounded rationality (1972), after all—and yet our empirical research often makes assumptions that overlooks this crucial fact. This dissertation examines reputation as a way of knowing, related to but distinct from other epistemologies we typically associate with urban sociology. This is important because it points to a fundamental question we need to ask as we consider how cities function: How do people make decisions and take actions?

A great deal of urban research is focused on the idea of purposive action. A whole set of literature conceives of urban life as a collection of individuals pursuing goals and resources, if not in an explicitly full information environment, then at least without interrogating the question. People pursue capital—whether economic (Smith 1979), social (Lyons and Snoxell 2005), cultural (Bourdieu 1984), or subcultural (Thornton 1996). People are strategic and make calculated decisions in pursuit

of their ends, sometimes even treating social life as a sort of confidence game (Grazian 2008). People try to sell things, even cities, in pursuit of profit (Greenberg 2008; Wherry 2011). They might be stratified in their access to resources (Wilson 1987), respect (Anderson 1978), collective efficacy (Sampson and Raudenbush 2004), or networks (Small 2009a), but ultimately the focus is still on their goals and how they go about achieving them or failing to do so.

I do not suggest that any of this research is wrong or flawed; only that zeroing in on how people are actually making decisions in light of reputation might help us to better understand what actually goes on in cities (and anywhere). People are constrained by all sorts of things that we recognize as sociologists—their social positionality, their familial resources, their income, their geographic location. They are also constrained by their knowledge—what they know, and what they think they know—because this is the basis of decision-making. Information is expensive, as Simmel (1903) realized more than a hundred years ago when he concluded that if we absorbed all the sensory information available to us in a city, we would effectively have a nervous breakdown. And yet, we still have to make decisions in the world, so we take shortcuts. We use heuristics, defined by Gigerenzer and Gaissmaier (2011) as "strateg[ies] that ignores part of the information, with the goal of making decisions more quickly, frugally, and/or accurately than more complex methods." We cannot know everything about a city, so in order to move about it in a way that does not totally destabilize our lives, we use mechanisms that make the complex simple. Maps (Strauss 1976) are physical examples of this. Reputations are mental ones.

Many people do not have the inclination to learn everything about each neighborhood in their city, or in a city they are visiting. Even among those who *do* have this inclination, few have the time or the energy. There are only so many hours in the day, and attention must be focused on other things: family, work, friends, etc. So we rely on second-hand information—a stray comment from a

friend, a headline in a newspaper, a listicle on a website, a tirade from a presidential candidate. While not every single one of these inputs will make our decisions for us, they agglomerate in our minds, and gradually we come to decide certain places are certain ways, and are worth spending time in or not. This agglomeration of reputational cues frames our experience of these neighborhoods when we do finally go to them—a piece of graffiti can look very different in a neighborhood you've been led to believe is sketchy than it does in a neighborhood you've been led to believe is hip—and unwittingly, we become carriers of the reputation ourselves as *our* stray remarks help shape the way other people feel about a neighborhood they have never been to.

So, we return to the question from the beginning of this section: How *do* people make decisions and take actions? In many ways, they wing it. This is not to say that people are not deliberative when they can be, or that they do not have preferences. What I mean is more along the lines of how sociologists have explored jazz improvisation and repertoire (Dempsey 2008; Faulkner and Becker 2009). On the one hand, what appears made-up on the spot as an act of pure creativity is actually the result of meticulously practiced scales and standards pieced together in a collective effort reliant on deep knowledge. On the other hand, these musicians do not know *every* song, e*very scale*, so they must use shortcuts and social cues to negotiate the activity of jamming together. Reputation serves the same purpose: it allows people to get by in a world in which they must function in anyway without complete information. Shibutani tells us that "the development of reliable knowledge is a cumulative process, generally involving a division of labor" (vi). A reputation is a thing that we hold in our heads, that helps guide us as we make decisions that we are not prepared to do based on any sort of complete information. But it is also the object of a social process, constantly building on itself as we pass it among each other through various informational channels. Finally, it is a way of knowing, to the extent that we know anything—it is imperfect, contingent, and socially produced.

Consequences and Policy Implications of Place Reputation

The answer to this question leads us to reconsider other questions. Namely, how might we approach problems in American cities if we know that people are making decisions based on heuristics like reputation? What should we be doing differently?

Primarily, we need to recognize that we cannot build policies that rely on individuals to passively have perfect information about the cities they live in because this is not how people operate. We cannot rely on people to look up rates of violence and notice when they are down because the television news suggests otherwise every night (Johnson 1996; Weitzer and Kubrin 2004). What's more, they often do so in a way that distorts perceptions about who commits crimes, to the detriment of racial minorities (Dixon and Linz 2000). Reputation being as powerful and persistent as it is, governments and civil society organizations need to be active in shaping neighborhood reputations, and it needs to go beyond the place branding of fashionable neighborhoods that chambers of commerce are already doing. Along with investing money and resources into poor, stigmatized neighborhoods, we need to think about how to shape public narratives to counteract inaccurately negative ones. I am not suggesting that reputation work take the place of social services or reallocation of resources, but it needs to be done in tandem with these more structural changes. Of course there are some neighborhoods that will need more of the former than the latter—change on the ground for residents should take priority over change in reputation—but change in reputation should be kept in mind because a negative reputation can be a heavy weight on a neighborhood, and what's more, it can lead to some of the problems that actually manifest. In the case of a neighborhood thought to be violent, likely consequences are that people do not go there to shop, or that property values fall, and they become more isolated from the rest of the city. Perversely, having a reputation for being unsafe can lead to conditions that actually make a place

unsafe, and it becomes it a self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton 1948). Of course, in the case of a neighborhood thought to be "hip," opposite outcomes might be expected. Outsiders come to shop, property values go up, and people in the neighborhood become better connected to outsiders. As we saw from respondents in Wicker Park who push the narrative of hipness even though they do not believe it to be accurate, actors and neighborhood branders have clearly already recognized how this process can work to their advantage. As urban policy makers, we need to recognize how it can work to stigmatized neighborhoods' disadvantage and figure out ways to intervene. The entire South Side of Chicago could become violence-free tomorrow, and plenty of people would still be afraid to go there because of the persistence of its reputation. We must invest in programs not only to change neighborhoods for their better, but to change their reputations for the better as well.

Second, we should be paying more attention to businesses and merchants, both academically and politically. I have already made the case for why merchants are interesting sociologically—as frontline reputational actors, they exist at the point of interaction between insiders and outsiders, and as figures looking to make money within the neighborhood, they occupy a social space at the intersection of economic interests and cultural commitments. Merchants and the storefronts they run should be important to people other than just urban sociologists, though, because they hold some promise for ameliorating against inequality in our cities. Louail et al. (2017) find that "the addition of small changes in the shopping destinations of individuals can dramatically impact the spatial distribution of money flows in the city, and the frequency of encounters between residents of different neighborhoods, even if the total number of changes remains relatively small" (10). Specifically, the authors find, according to news coverage on the article (Winters 2017) entitled "Shop Here, Not There: Science Says Reducing Inequality Is Almost That Simple," that "new research shows that shuttling even 5 percent of consumer transactions to poorer neighborhoods can

reduce income inequality by up to 80 percent." A great deal of public policy aimed at reducing inequality in America is focused on housing and education. These are, of course, important sources of structural inequality and worthy targets of policy change. It is worth considering the importance of stores as well, though, when thinking about these questions of how to make our cities more equitable. Beyond this virtue, businesses of course provide all sorts of other benefits to neighborhoods: jobs and resources for residents, places to spend time and interact with others, and "eyes upon the street" (1961) for safety. Alone, these are good reasons to care about the commercial health of neighborhoods. If shifting a small number of shoppers from one area of a city to another has the potential to reduce the endemic inequality that defines American cities, though, we should be redoubling our efforts.

Reputation at Other Scales

This dissertation has dealt with place reputation as it applies to urban neighborhoods, but the concept is portable to larger scales. Cities, regions, countries, and entire continents have salient reputations, and just as understanding how reputation works at the neighborhood level is crucial if we want to understand the problems and potentials that are part of these neighborhoods, understanding how place reputation works at these larger scales can similarly yield benefits to anyone interested in the impact of place on people's lives. As place reputation can have positive and negative impacts at any scale from city to continent (Gonzalez 2007; J.A. 2011), I would like to conclude by providing an example of how place reputation has been impactful at the scale of region—in this case, the American South—and make suggestions about how we might study reputational processes at this scale, and crucially, how they might be the same and how they might be different to how we study neighborhoods.

The American South, with its history of slavery, segregation, and racism (not to mention the Civil War) has accrued multiple reputations over the centuries. The South has a reputation as a place with unique problems with racism (Key 1949; McVeigh et al. 2014; Strother et al. 2017), has been associated with "rednecks" (Hardie and Tyson 2014), "white trash" (Isenberg 2016), and an overall sense of close-mindedness. One linguistic study connected the reputation of the South to stereotypes of people from the South, finding that "given only a sound sample of individuals' voices, participants rate Southern accented individuals as less intelligent, less wealthy, and marginally more friendly than Standard accented individuals" (Phillips 2010: 53).[1] Scholars have long been interested in region (Johnson 1934; DuBois 1935; Dollard 1937; Cash 1941; Davis et al. 1941; Odum 1947; Woodward 1955; Mueller 2018), and interest in the perceived pathologies of the region have reached somewhat of a local maximum in recent years with the election of Trump and the perception of a part of the country that overwhelmingly voted for him, with prominent contemplations written in both academia (Hochschild 2016) and the popular press (Vance 2016).

Interestingly, in the past decade a visible counternarrative about the South has emerged from progressives from the region who challenge the prevailing narrative. They do not dispute the often hateful and tragic history of a region defined for many by Bull Connor, George Wallace, and Robert E. Lee, but rather insist on challenging it where they are instead of leaving the region and judging it from somewhere else. They also insist on laying claim to a progressive legacy that runs deep in the region's history, from contemporary figures like William Barber II, to well-known civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks, to the interracial political coalitions formed in the South during Reconstruction. They fight for progressive policies not only in elections (Kilgore 2018; Moser

[1] This latter is another reputation the American South has for friendliness, hospitality, and "Southern charm."

2018) but in civil rights campaigns explicitly modeled after King's Poor People's Campaign (Barber 2018). Writing in publications like *Oxford American*, *The Bitter Southerner*, and *Scalawag* (the latter named after the slur for Southern whites perceived to be race traitors for working with Blacks and Northerners during Reconstruction), they also bristle at critiques of the South born out of stereotype—that it is, as a region, systematically more racist and less intelligent than the rest of the country—and challenge them loudly.

A recent ad even put this into stark relief. After a series of Southern states passed restrictive abortion laws in 2019, the *New York Times* ran an op-ed titled "Abortion and the Future of the New South," written by Ginia Bellafante. In it, she worried about what these laws might mean for the "New South," which she described as "a term conceived in the aftermath of the Civil War to suggest a set of aspirations of some southern elites who hoped to rebuild a backward and devastated place into a world better aligned with Northern urban values" that "today ... tends to call to mind a string of cities from Charlotte, N.C., to Austin, Tex., that have essentially been Brooklynized by way of a progressive social culture and a tweaked fidelity to some of the South's more marketable traditions." Writing in *Scalawag,* Birmingham, Alabama-based Katherine Webb-Hehn wrote a takedown of the essay entitled "'Brooklynization' my ass," in which she accused Bellafante of

> somehow manag[ing] a remarkable trifecta of ignorance. She slanders Southerners and glorifies gentrification while neglecting the very real horror of restrictive abortion laws on those of us who will remain here regardless, who have roots here, who have family members who need tending to or communities we're invested in, or simply have a love of this place and its nothing-to-do-with-Brooklyn culture.

She does not make a claim that the South is *not* in serious trouble in terms of reproductive rights. "Our laws have always been excessively regressive," she says. "We know that. You know that." She does, however, point out that "Southerners, mostly those of us with a uterus, are furious. We're heartbroken and tired. We don't agree with this ban. What we don't need right now is outsider

condescension or dimwitted reactions." She evokes the specter of reputation specifically, saying "we're contending with the ridiculous distractions of outsider perceptions *and* influence."

There is a lot to unpack here, but ultimately it is a story about reputation, just like the neighborhood stories from this dissertation. In remarkable ways, we can see reflections of the Bridgeport story here—we might call what Webb-Hehn is attempting "undefending the region." In both cases we have places with deeply historical reputations for racism and regressivism, as well as groups of progressives who publicly push against both the racism *and* the reputation for it. In both cases, there is a moral dimension *and* an economic dimension—just as Bridgeport merchants benefit economically from undefending the neighborhood, progressive Southerners frame at least *part* of their objection to regressive laws in terms of the tax dollars that will be lost from companies refusing to do business in their state and boycotts (Blest 2017; McWhirter and Schwartzel 2019). In both cases, we are dealing with a place identity with strong local salience for the people within it. January jokes about Bridgeport, "There's an old adage and it goes—people say the same joke with vegans—how do you know someone's from Bridgeport? Wait five minutes, they'll tell you." Similarly, writer John Jeremiah Sullivan (2012), writing about the character Quentin Compson from Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*, observes

> This is what Quentin is, we start to see, and what Southerners are or used to be: walking concatenations of stories, drawn or more often inherited from the chaos of the past, and invested here with a special, doom-laden meaning, the nostalgia that borders on nausea—the quality that most truly sets the South apart from other regions, its sheer investment in the meaning of itself.

In both cases, we have place reputations that are meaningful in large part because the places themselves are so meaningful to the people in question.

But it is not the same, or at least cannot be studied in the same way. Most obviously, a region is much bigger than a neighborhood, and because of this the management and manipulation of its

reputation must necessarily be different. For example, while merchants operate as frontline reputational actors in neighborhoods—those figures both most vulnerable to the effects of their neighborhood's reputation and best positioned to perceive and shape it—they have a different position when it comes to regional reputations. They *still* often act as frontline reputational actors, but through different means. Whereas in neighborhoods, merchants acquire this position because they are often the first people outsiders interact with, and in regions merchants can acquire this position because they get media exposure. Particularly with the rise of media dedicated to food and drink, in both traditional and new media (Shankman 2015), merchants in the hospitality industry are often prominent faces shaping the reputation of a region.

That said, given the size of a region compared to a neighborhood, there are other figures competing with merchants in the reputational space in ways different from at the neighborhood level. Take the instance of politicians. Even in a neighborhood as politically prominent as Bridgeport, in people's day-to-day lives in Chicago, they might not associate it with politics, particularly if they are disconnected from municipal politics. There are lots of people in Chicago who, when they think of Bridgeport, think of it primarily as a place with good bars or good Chinese food, who know nothing about the Daleys or any of the other Bridgeporters who served as mayor, perhaps because they moved to the city after 2011. With regions, on the other hand, to the extent that you are exposed to any information at all, it is very hard to *not* be exposed to information about politics. Unlike neighborhoods, which occasionally produce politicians of national import, regions produce politicians of national import, whether presidents, senators, congresspeople, or mayors—on a fairly regular basis. As a result, merchants are more likely to face competition from political figures—and artists and writers and musicians and media figures—in the shaping of a region's reputation than they are in a neighborhood where they often control the narratives around the

neighborhood's history and development. The Woodlawn case—in which merchants have priorities but face conflict because they do not line up with certain powerful political interests in the neighborhood—is a good case to think about this issue with, even if the field of actors is bound to be much larger in a region.

Because of their size, regions are also more heterogeneous than neighborhoods, making the prospect of a regional reputation even more difficult to reconcile with reality on the ground. In this dissertation, I discussed the massive differences in the life experiences, economic priorities, and cultural commitments of merchants along a one-mile stretch of Milwaukee Avenue. If there are such radical geographical differences between the upper and lower halves of this stretch, what can we begin to say about the differences between, say, Virginia and Louisiana? If place reputation has to flatten difference that exists in neighborhoods to tell a compelling narrative and allow people to make sense of a place—which is what it does as a heuristic—then this process of flattening is even more extreme in regions. Because of this, if people object to overgeneralization through reputation in neighborhoods, the objections are likely to be more aggressive—and more justified—when discussing a region.

Finally—and related to these first two points—regional reputation should be even more intransigent than neighborhood reputation. Neighborhood reputations—persistent though they are, as we have seen—are at least limited to a relatively contained geographical space and can be approached in coordinated action by a relatively small set of actors, whether it is a merchants' association or a citizen's group. Regions span thousands of miles and are filled with millions of people who do not know each other. If you want to change the reputation of the South—or the Rust Belt, or New England, or any other region—where do you start? It is a difficult question.

Final Thoughts

Regardless of how we might approach the study of reputation at different levels, though, we must begin with the few fundamental insights that shaped this dissertation. Reputations are consequential. They are consequential whether or not they reflect the truth. They are rooted in many sources, which makes them especially difficult to challenge.

From these fundamental premises, we expanded our view of the topic by examining three neighborhoods and learned other lessons we might apply in different contexts. Reputation can serve as an object around which to coordinate people with different priorities. Reputation management can be a process that includes previously excluded populations, but it can also exclude previously included ones. Reputation is a resource that is valuable, and as such, is likely to be hotly contested among groups with different ideas about how it should be managed.

More than anything, though, we need to remember that, while we typically think of reputation as an object that describes something—a person, a group, a neighborhood—it is also a fundamental lens through which we see our world and a powerful force in shaping and directing our actions. We do not move through the world blindly, but we do not move through it with complete information, either. We have to make guesses, sometimes—educated ones to be sure, but guesses nonetheless—and relying on reputation is often what allows us to make those guesses with confidence. There is a space between our guesses and the world as it actually exists. Whether that space is inches or a yawning chasm, it is where reputation operates, and it is a productive space, full of activity. People can attempt to eliminate it, to bring the distance between understanding and reality to zero, and they can also attempt to widen it, to expand in the direction of a particularly beneficial misunderstanding. The space is always there in some form, though. This dissertation has

been an attempt to understand how it can be shaped, challenged, and commodified in ways that alter the lives of both people and places.

APPENDIX A

CASE LOGIC AND DATA COLLECTION METHODS:

HOW TO STUDY PLACE REPUTATION

Studying place reputation presents a number of methodological challenges. In this appendix, I outline my case logic at three separate levels: the level of neighborhood, the level of city, and the level of respondent. Additionally, I provide details about my data collection methods.

Choosing Neighborhoods

In terms of neighborhood selection strategy, my initial interest was in levels of economic development. I chose three neighborhoods in Chicago at different levels of gentrification.[1] I was interested in gentrifying neighborhoods because they exist during a time of uncertainty, of unsettledness, which means reputation has the potential to do particularly important work. Previous scholarly work on related topics affirm this point. Shibutani (1966) tells us that "the manner in which popular perspectives are shaped becomes a question of crucial importance in periods of social upheaval" (v), and indeed many studies of rumor—a concept similar to reputation insofar as it is

[1] Wicker Park existed at an advanced level of gentrification, Bridgeport at a medium level, and Woodlawn at a low level when I started this project. While I ascertained these typologies myself initially, they are backed up by quantitative research done to determine the Gentrification Index, put out by researchers at University of Illinois at Chicago's Nathalie P. Voorhees Center for Neighborhood and Community Improvement (Voorhees Center 2014). The report, put out in 2014, found that as of 2010, West Town (the Chicago community area that contains Wicker Park) could be classified as "Positive Change, Gentrification," Bridgeport could be classified as "Positive Change, Not Gentrification," and Woodlawn could be classified as "No Change, Extreme Poverty" (15). This generally comported with my understanding that Wicker Park had undergone and was continuing to undergo gentrification, Bridgeport was changing slowly, and Woodlawn was not. The patterns generally stayed the same, based on my observations, in Wicker Park and Bridgeport, although development in Bridgeport sped up, which squares with the report's prediction that "if current trends of upward change continue ... Bridgeport [is] likely to be classified as gentrified in the next decade" (22). Woodlawn is the one neighborhood that shifted directions drastically during my time in the neighborhood, as development and speculation ramped up substantially there with the announcement in 2015 that the Obama Presidential Center would be put in the neighborhood.

information "without secure standards of evidence being present" (Allport and Postman 1947: ix)—emerge out of concerns for rumors during wartime (Allport and Postman 1947; Shibutani 1966), racial unrest in the American South (Odum 1943), political scandals (Rosnow and Fine 1976), and the aftermath of terrorist attacks (Sunstein 2009). While gentrification might not be as dramatic a context as wartime, the uncertainty it represents and anxiety it can provoke in people in the neighborhood—residents, merchants, and visitors alike—suggest that neighborhoods undergoing gentrification—or at the cusp of its possibility—exist in an "unsettled cultural period" (Swidler 1986). This initial selection strategy paid off to the extent that I was able to trace responses to reputation based on the economic transitions—real, feared, or hoped for—that defined each neighborhood.

Different neighborhoods can have all sorts of different kinds of reputations, and while I was familiar with the three neighborhoods when I began my dissertation research and had absorbed reputational information about each of them, in terms of determining the neighborhoods' reputation and the impact it had on this dissertation, I allowed my interview respondents to guide me. In all three cases consensus emerged among my respondents about the prevailing reputation of the neighborhood. Specifically, Wicker Park had a reputation for being hip, Bridgeport had a reputation for being racist, and Woodlawn has a reputation for being violent.

A Note on Chicago as a Case

Often, qualitative work attempts to stake a claim for its importance by arguing for its generalizability. This is partly because of an academic atmosphere in which even superficial similarity to natural science is rewarded, and thus qualitative scholars have been encouraged to frame their work using the same logic of inquiry that quantitative social scientists use (King et al. 1994). This trend has been subject to critique (Small 2009) with which I generally agree, but there is no need to

re-litigate this particular debate here. Suffice to say that I think that case studies can be theoretically generative without being statistically generalizable, and there is no need to make a claim at the latter to fit research into a methodological context in which it does not belong.

What I *would* like to make a case for is the specific usefulness of using cases that are not only not statistically generalizable but are in fact exceptional. Effectively, I would like to make a case for sampling on the dependent variable. The Rosetta Stone isn't valuable because it is similar to other rocks to the point that we can assume that what is on the Rosetta Stone is on other rocks. The Rosetta Stone is valuable because it contains clear versions of the same decree in three different scripts, making it easy to translate among them. It offers the "reader" a clear way to understand something important, not only on the Rosetta Stone, but anywhere where hieroglyphics or the Greek language appear. These other places do not need to be identical to the Rosetta Stone for the Rosetta Stone to be useful for deciphering. Because the Rosetta Stone is a particularly clear exemplar of translation, its lessons can be usefully applied elsewhere. The Rosetta Stone is valuable because it is exceptional, not because it is average.

In addition to the merits of each individual neighborhood, there is a specific advantage to studying neighborhoods in Chicago. Of course, choosing only three neighborhoods from a single city means that nothing I find will be statistically generalizable, not that it would be if I chose three neighborhoods in different cities. Statistical generalizability is not my aim, however. Instead, it is uncovering mechanisms that operate in the creation, perpetuation, and change of place reputations and the consequences thereof. With this goal in mind, the way to go about constructing a research plan is not to sample as many neighborhoods as possible or to search for statistically representative neighborhoods, but rather to identify cases where the social processes I am interested in seem most likely to be emergent (for discussion of the usefulness of theoretically interesting but statistically

non-generalizable cases, see Small 2009: 17–18; for recent work whose case selection involves informed selection where certain social processes or groups are likely to be, see Brown-Saracino 2011, 2014, 2015). Because of this, choosing Chicago neighborhoods as a category from which to draw cases is a sound strategy, specifically because Chicago is not average in terms of its relationship to neighborhood reputation.

Chicago, as a city, sells itself on its neighborhoods. Along with well-known nicknames like the Windy City, the Second City, the City of Broad Shoulders, and the City That Works, Chicago is known as a "city of neighborhoods" (Pacyga and Skerrett 1986), and the city encourages the vision of itself as a place defined in large part by a diversity of neighborhoods. Choose Chicago, "the official destination marketing organization for Chicago, Illinois," has a website dedicated to helping the curious "discover Chicago neighborhoods," declaring that "the heart and soul of Chicago lives in our 77 vibrant neighborhoods and within the people who call them home" ("Discover Chicago Neighborhoods"). The idea that Chicago is defined by life at the neighborhood level is an important part of the story Chicago tells about itself, to its residents and, perhaps more importantly, to the tourists who visit every year. Festivals dedicated to different neighborhoods fill the calendars during the summer, a cottage industry of products related to the celebration of various Chicago neighborhoods has emerged, and neighborhood chambers of commerce and Special Service Areas (SSAs) go about the serious business of how best to spend money to market a neighborhood in just the right way.

Methods

This project primarily uses data from 100 interviews I conducted, supplemented by ethnographic field notes and archival data related to the three neighborhoods. While some argue for the supremacy of one method over another (Becker and Geer 1957; Jerolmack and Khan 2014), I

believe different methods are good for getting at different kinds of questions (Trow 1957). Interviews are particularly useful (Weiss 1994), especially for the researcher looking at issues "not only, or primarily, about behavior, but also about representations, classification systems, boundary work, identity, imagined realities and cultural ideals, as well as emotional states" (Lamont and Swidler 2014). I pursued interview-based research for this project because interviews provide an excellent way at getting at the decision-making and attitude-formation processes of merchants, especially when triangulated with other methods like ethnography (Khan and Jerolmack 2013). I adopted Small's (2009) "saturation" model, in which the objective is not to accumulate a certain number of interviews, but rather to interview until one is not receiving any new information, treating each new interview as a case informed by previous ones. As to whom I aimed to interview, they fell into three categories: merchants, actors within the orbit of merchants, and knowledgeable neighborhood figures.

By merchant, I mean business owners or managers in the three neighborhoods. I was interested in talking to people who were likely to be sensitive to how what goes on in a neighborhood affects business, and owners and managers best fit this description. Within this category, I sampled for range (Weiss 1994: 23), seeking interviews with new and longtime merchants selling as wide a variety of products and services as possible. I was aware of a potential survivorship bias, so when possible, I also interviewed merchants who used to locate in a particular neighborhood but do not anymore as this population could potentially reveal interesting things about who gets pushed out by neighborhood change.

Beyond this group, I pursued interviews with other individuals whose position put them in direct orbit with the merchants who are my primary interview subjects. In particular, I spoke with developers, real estate agents, landlords, and municipal workers, including those involved with the

management and implementation of Special Service Areas (SSAs) and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts (Pacewicz 2013). Businesses operate within the constraints of both the financial environment of their neighborhood, e.g., what new development is coming to an area, how much rent they must pay; and the regulatory environment of the city and whether an area is zoned for a particular purpose and how much money is coming in from the government. Talking with people who deal with these issues on a daily basis helped give me a better understanding of the attitudes and decisions of the merchants in my primary set of interviews.

Finally, to better understand the broader context of the neighborhoods I studied, I sought out knowledgeable neighborhood figures, including social service providers, religious figures, and residents. I did this for two reasons. First, I needed to get a fine-grained understanding of each neighborhood—its history, its contemporary issues, its important figures—and while the people best equipped to give me this information were sometimes merchants, other times they were other types of what Jacobs (1961) calls "public characters": anyone who is in frequent contact with a wide circle of people and is sufficiently interested to make himself a public character" (68). Public characters are not hard to find if you spend long enough in a neighborhood for people to feel comfortable talking to you—all you have to do is tell someone at a bar or a coffee shop that you are interested in learning more about the neighborhood, and the same names will keep coming up. "Have you talked to John?' or "You know who knows about all this is Angela." Second, sometimes these figures *were* the ones most closely related to commercial life in the neighborhood. For example, in Woodlawn, where there is less conventional commerce, land, organizations, and establishments that might normally be controlled by merchants, they are often controlled by churches or social service organizations. In some cases, if I wanted to know how a commercial enterprise worked, the best person to talk with was a preacher.

All interviews were semi-structured and informed by previous interviews (see Small 2009 for discussion of sequential interviewing), and all of them involved questions related to personal history in the neighborhood, understanding of change or stability of place over time, perception of the neighborhood, perception of other's perceptions of the neighborhood (see Kaliner's [2014:15] for a discussion of a series of studies led by Permentier [Permentier, Bolt, and Van Ham 2011; Permentier, Van Ham, and Bolt 2008; Permentier, Van Ham, and Bolt 2009] on this issue), understanding of business climate, important events, decision-making, and hopes and anxieties for the future of the neighborhood. Most of the interviews were conducted in person at a place of the respondent's choice, which was often their place of business. In cases where respondents were too busy to meet in person, I conducted the interviews over the phone. I either transcribed each interview myself or had a transcription company who signed a confidentiality agreement transcribe them. I used Atlas.TI to code the interviews, looking for emergent themes and putting them in codes. I also coded the codes in an attempt to get a sense of the meta-processes I was looking at.

While interviews and ethnography formed the basis of my understanding of the way reputation works in neighborhoods in the present day, it is also true that reputations accrue over time, and as a result, a solid understanding of the histories of these neighborhoods in Chicago and of Chicago itself was necessary. In an attempt to gain a deep understanding of each neighborhood's history in Chicago in the twentieth century as well as a history of Chicago's efforts to market its neighborhoods, I immersed myself in written material about these places. As Chicago is perhaps the most studied city in the world, there was an intimidating amount of material to deal with. I pored over hundreds of books related to these neighborhoods. In addition to reading published material about each neighborhood, I also tracked down old dissertations held in storage at libraries, read over

notes from meetings housed in archives, and studied area maps produced throughout the course of the twentieth century.

I was also interested in media coverage of these neighborhoods, as media can have a profound effect on the public image of a neighborhood, which is part of what leads to its reputation. Certain genres of media have developed whose sole purpose seems to classify neighborhoods as types, e.g., most hipster neighborhood, best gay neighborhood, best neighborhood for singles (for a brief discussion of this phenomenon, see Brown-Saracino and Parker 2017). While this sort of media coverage was abundant for documenting Wicker Park's reputational hipness, such boosterish articles are understandably less likely to be dedicated to issues of racism or danger. That said, different media sources still pay a great deal of attention to—and contribute to—the idea that certain places have these qualities, and while they were of a different type, I had no trouble finding articles dedicated to exploring Bridgeport's reputation for racism or Woodlawn's reputation for danger. Beyond archival work, I paid close attention to contemporary reporting, from both the Chicago press and the national press, about each of the three neighborhoods.

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