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Trajectories of neighborhood change: the case of gentrification

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Abstract. Our understanding of the comparative dynamics of neighborhood change is relatively undeveloped. In order to disentangle various trajectories, the complex processes which constitute gentrification are explored both quantitatively and qualitatively in four neighborhoods in Philadelphia for the postwar period. The analysis reveals quite diverse forms of gentrification, varying in potential and pace, that pivot around the structural forces of capitalism and the particularities of place. Emphasis is placed on the actions of agents of property and finance capital, governments, and individual households in bringing about gentrification; and those of neighborhood groups in resisting it. The implications for the merging of structure and contingency in neighborhood theory and for political action are addressed briefly.

Introduction

During the 1960s and early 1970s our understanding of neighborhood processes was relatively settled. Stage-theories dominated, and even the caveat that neighborhood decline might be reversed—posed by Hoover and Vernon (1959) in terms of apartment construction, and repeated by Birch (1971)—was lost on subsequent theorists (Downs, 1981). The discovery of gentrification in the mid-1970s confused that understanding, and gentrification eventually came to be recognized as a major challenge to traditional theories of neighborhood change (Hamnett, 1984).

Early explorations of gentrification—the invasion by relatively affluent households into marginal neighborhoods, with the concomitant rehabilitation of housing and the displacement of previous residents—focused mainly on single neighborhoods. Gentrifying neighborhoods were seldom compared with each other, nor were gentrifying neighborhoods compared with nongentrifying neighborhoods. Little attention was directed at the differing dynamics of neighborhood change (see Laska and Spain, 1980). Gale (1979) provided one of the first comparative studies of gentrification, and others followed (Clark, 1985; Cybriwsky et al, 1986; Ley, 1986; Rose and LeBourdais, 1986; Schill and Nathan, 1983). For the most part, however, these studies highlight the traits of gentrifiers or of the displaced, and concern themselves solely with specific conditions before and after gentrification.

Studies which do consider the processes of gentrification frequently revert to a stage-theory perspective reminiscent of human ecology (Pattison, 1983). DeGiovanni (1983) searched in vain, however, for stages in the gentrification process and thereby debunked less subtle understandings. The actual processes of gentrification, then, are generally underresearched and poorly theorized (for an exception, see Zukin, 1982). So, despite my (Beauregard, 1986) and Rose's (1984) efforts to show that gentrification is a 'chaotic concept' comprising a variety of prior conditions, participants, outcomes, and processes; a theory of neighborhood change which can account for the diversity of processes has yet to be elaborated.

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My goal in this paper is to show that what seems to be a single dynamic of neighborhood transformation—gentrification—instead comprises multiple processes. My concern is to transcend the legacy of early stage-theories of neighborhood change by arguing that there is more to neighborhood dynamics than growth, decline, and stability; and more to neighborhood reinvestment than incumbent upgrading and gentrification (Holcomb and Beauregard, 1981).

The argument that there must be multiple dynamics in gentrification is built upon a view of neighborhoods in which they are seen as being buffeted by two sets of often antagonistic forces. The first is the tension between accumulation and community, and the second the problematic intersection of contextual or structural forces with the particularities of place. Neighborhoods are, simultaneously, places where 'community' is formed and where households and investors amass wealth and accumulate profits (Harvey, 1985a; Mollenkopf, 1981). The formation of 'community' often leads to intraclass struggles as different groups attempt to establish the social bonds, public image, and norms of behavior that define the neighborhood as their home; while other groups—frequently denied such opportunities elsewhere—compete to do the same. These quests for community often become intertwined with the exchange value of property, further confounding the bases upon which struggle occurs. Interclass struggles also ensue when investors discover the potential for profit in neighborhoods, thereby threatening community and making territorial control by long-term residents problematic. This contradiction between community and accumulation is most pronounced in neighborhoods experiencing sudden and rapid change.

The contradiction also gives rise to place-specific tensions. Forces of accumulation emerge primarily from structural tendencies in a capitalist social formation that operate increasingly on a national and even international scale. Although housing markets are often local in scope, the flow of capital to finance the purchase and construction of new and rehabilitated housing, mortgage insurance, and the overall push towards profitability are part of a larger context of advanced capitalism. Nonetheless, the playing out of these contextual forces 'on the ground' results in distinct 'local' housing markets (Harvey, 1985b) and thus in sharp variations in neighborhood dynamics. Investors soon find that capital cannot annihilate space, cannot overcome without resistance the layers of past investment and social commitments. Rather, each neighborhood has particularities that shape investment opportunities and thereby fragment contextual forces into a series of contingent, place-specific processes (see Beauregard, 1989a; Munt, 1987).

The result of the interaction of accumulation and community with structure and place is a significant variation in the potential for and pace of gentrification across neighborhoods. The potential for gentrification is not simply equal to the rent gap (Smith, 1979b). Rather, potential is both a function of accumulation opportunities and of the nature and strength of the 'community' as historically produced. Where community is embedded and where neighborhood residents have captured control over accumulation through home ownership, for example, the potential for and the pace of gentrification might be correspondingly reduced. On the other hand, a strong community might enhance the city-wide image of the neighborhood and generate a wide range of services and activities, thus increasing that potential.

The interplay of potential and pace with accumulation and community raises a more specific issue, that of the agents of gentrification. In this paper I offer a more variegated perspective than simply that gentrification is driven by young, urban professionals or 'yuppies' (Smith, 1987). To attribute gentrification solely to yuppies is to eliminate quite complex processes and to shift the burden of the negative consequences of gentrification away from factions of capital (for example, developers) who often are responsible. Such a focus robs analysis of its structural and political perspective.

To explore these issues empirically, four neighborhoods in one city (Philadelphia) were selected for in-depth analysis by using secondary data gathered from newspapers, census documents, magazines, and government publications along with a mix of observation and participation in the various neighborhoods. The choice of one city with numerous gentrifying neighborhods minimized the contextual differences across neighborhoods, further facilitating the focus on more contingent factors. The neighborhoods were chosen in order to demonstrate the contrasts in the dynamics of neighborhood change and to reflect the potential for and the pace of gentrification. One neighborhood (Society Hill) was selected because it was fully gentrified in the mid-1980s, another (Spring Garden) because it had recently been partially gentrified in a very rapid fashion, a third (Northern Liberties) because of the slow pace of gentrification, and the last (Fishtown) because gentrification was feared but seemingly unlikely. This choice also enabled a contrast of various key actors.

The four case studies proceed chronologically with three theoretical themes highlighted: (1) variations in the roles played by households, developers, and governments in initiating, subsidizing, and directing reinvestment; (2) the pervasive influence of finance capital; and (3) the significance of neighborhood identity and community resistance. The intent is to tell richly detailed stories about neighborhood change. The individual stories, however, can only be fully understood within the context of Philadelphia's postwar decline (Beauregard, 1989b).

Context

Although World War Two rejuvenated the city's economy, by 1950 suburbanization was siphoning off population, and the movement of manufacturing plants and commercial establishments to the suburbs along with structural shifts in the economy were eroding the economic base. The out-migration of white working-class and middle-class populations was accompanied by an in-migration of rural black households from the southern states. The resultant population, on average, was poorer, less educated, and less skilled; and the remaining economic activities were neither of the scale nor type to absorb the new migrants and bring about economic growth. Moreover, decline eroded the tax base and had a negative effect on the physical condition of neighborhoods throughout the city.

These neighborhoods also shared specific attributes and experiences which affected their potential for, and thus the dynamics of, gentrification: location and accessibility to downtown, the style and quality of the housing stock, and residential segregation and strong neighborhood identities.

The four neighborhoods are located adjacent to the central business district, what is called Center City, with Fishtown being farthest away but still easily accessible via bus or the elevated railway (see figure 1). In fact, with the exception of Fishtown and the northern portions of Northern Liberties, each neighborhood is considered to be within walking distance of downtown.

Proximity became important in the mid-1960s and mid-1980s as Center City experienced major construction of offices and a corresponding demand for residential space within and adjacent to downtown. In the 1960s, the net change in office space (3440000 ft^2) in Center City was double that in the 1950s, and it tripled in the 1970s and continued at that pace into the 1980s (PCPC, 1985). In the earlier period, this facilitated the gentrification of Society Hill. In the later period, neighborhoods within Center City (for example, Old City) and nearby (for example, Queen Village) gentrified, and other Center City neighborhoods experienced increased demand and rising property values. Prior to the mid-1980s, and with the exception of Fairmount, much of the reinvestment took place to the south of Center City. As the southerly distances have increased, however, investors, developers, and households have begun to explore neighborhoods to the north.

Once past the areas of Center City built during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, of which Society Hill is the prime example, the housing stock ranges between middle-class and working-class Victorian row houses built in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Philadelphia's major spurt in growth in the late 1800s created a quite similar stock of row houses, with only slight variations in size and style, that ranges four to five miles from Center City both north and south. The neighborhoods of Spring Garden, Northern Liberties, and Fishtown thus contain housing in a narrow range of architectural style. With postwar decline, much of the stock in the inner-ring neighborhoods deteriorated. Thus all the neighborhoods within this circumference were potential sites for historic preservation, an important factor in property reinvestment during the 1980s.

Lastly, Philadelphia has always been a city of neighborhoods organized along ethnic and class lines (Warner, 1968). Residential areas have distinct histories, identities, and spatial boundaries. The postwar changeover in the population heightened racial segregation within the city. Many low-income and formerly working-class and middle-class neighborhoods deteriorated as rural black households migrated in, white households fled, and employment opportunities declined. Society Hill and Northern Liberties are examples of this form of change. In other areas, black working-class and middle-class households established stable neighborhoods. White households, of course, continued to dominate in many neighborhoods, from those of the working class (for example, Fishtown) to those of the rich (for example, Chestnut Hill in the northwest portion of the city). Race thereby added a new dimension to neighborhood change.

The four neighborhoods thus faced the prospect of gentrification within a common context. Philadelphia experienced postwar decline, but by the 1980s its

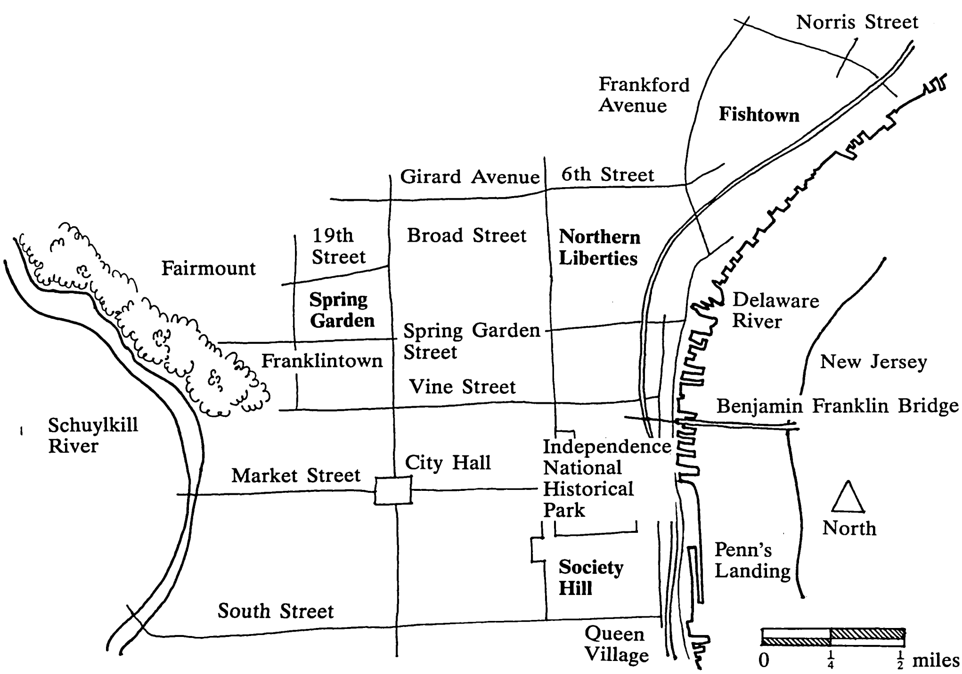

Figure 1. Center City Philadelphia and the four neighborhoods.

population was stabilizing, employment loss had subsided, and office construction in Center City was robust. As a result, housing demand in close proximity to Center City was high and many of the neighborhoods within and adjacent to downtown experienced reinvestment and rising values in property. Simultaneously, a movement to preserve historic buildings took hold, and developers and small investors began their search for appropriate buildings. The demand for gentrifiable housing and neighborhoods, moreover, confronted a landscape highly differentiated by race and class. Despite the commonalities, however, each of the neighborhoods experienced gentrification, or its possibility, in quite different ways.

Dynamics of neighborhood change

In 1980 Society Hill was considered to be fully gentrified, Spring Garden was experiencing a few signs of gentrification, Northern Liberties was reaching the nadir of its decline, and Fishtown was relatively stable. By 1988 Society Hill had solidified its position as one of the most expensive and exclusive neighborhoods in the city. Spring Garden had undergone massive gentrification and displacement, and Northern Liberties was the site of significant housing rehabilitation by higher income residents. In Fishtown, long-term residents were raising the image of gentrification, though property development in the neighborhood seemed moribund. What forces drove these neighborhoods along such trajectories and defined gentrification uniquely for each of them?

Society Hill

Society Hill is located to the southeast of Center City. It is adjacent to Independence National Historical Park, which houses the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall, and is bounded on the east by the Delaware River waterfront which in the late 1980s was undergoing significant commercial and residential redevelopment. As one moves west from Society Hill, the colonial and Georgian housing stock continues. It too has been renovated and has increased markedly in value since the 1970s. This is a description appropriate to 1988, however, and not at all fitting for when the story begins.

In the late 1950s, Independence National Historical Park did not exist, the piers and warehouses of the Delaware River waterfront were underutilized and deteriorating, the Center City economy was stagnant and its built environment undermaintained, and adjacent neighborhoods had suffered decades of neglect. What is now called the Society Hill neighborhood was made up of very old housing occupied by relatively low-income households, approximately one-fifth of which were nonwhite. The housing stock was in disrepair, and middle-class and upper-class Philadelphians were reluctant to reside there. The eastern portion of the neighborhood was occupied by warehouses and factories, and the hill from which the neighborhood took its name was the location for the city's wholesale produce and meat market, a congested, noisy, and malodorous land-use (Lowe, 1968).

The subsequent gentrification of Society Hill was initiated by the city government. Its roots were in the 1951 Charter Reform and the concomitant emergence of a reform government committed to the redevelopment of Center City (Cybriwsky et al, 1986; Cybriwsky and Western, 1982; Kleniewski, 1984; Pace, 1976; Petshek, 1973). With use of urban renewal legislation and various private–public partnerships in the late 1950s and early 1960s, ambitious plans for Center City were conceived and a host of urban renewal projects undertaken.

One purpose was to retain the middle class within the city, not only as consumers along the retail spine, Market Street, and as workers in the planned office towers, but also as residents and, particularly, as home owners. The emphasis was on single-family use, with multifamily developments discouraged. The city government believed that without the white middle class the city would lose its leaders. Society Hill, one of the oldest areas of the city and an area stocked with historically significant eighteenth century row houses, was targeted (Lowe, 1968).

Three governmental actions were crucial for its transformation. First, the neighborhood was declared blighted—82.9% of the residential structures were considered substandard (Pace, 1976)—and in 1957 was designated an urban renewal area as Washington Square East. Second, as part of the renewal process, the wholesale food market was relocated to the southern portion of the city. This freed the upper part of the hill in 1959 for the third component of the strategy: the development of three high-rise luxury apartments towers adjacent to new low-rise town houses.

By making Society Hill an area of urban renewal, the city government was able to utilize its power of eminent domain to condemn all the buildings within the renewal boundaries and in 1959 the Redevelopment Authority began acquiring the housing stock for resale to prospective middle-class home owners (Smith, 1979a). As a condition of sale, the Redevelopment Authority required that the owners of the houses rehabilitate them to conform with the guidelines for historic preservation. The resultant neighborhood would then represent the colonial origins of the city.

During the late 1950s, the movement of middle-class households and the pace of privately driven renovation were minimal. By 1960 the population had more than halved and the percent of nonwhite residents had increased. On the one hand, the number of housing units had declined and the percent of vacant structures had increased, and few new units had been built. On the other hand, the percentages of professional and college-educated people in the neighborhood had grown, family incomes had increased relative to the city's median, the owner-occupancy rate had crept up slightly, and the value of owner-occupied housing had grown significantly (see tables 1 and 2). Such changes might well be explained by the displacement and demolition activities of an urban renewal program in its early stages.

The gradualness of the reinvestment during the late 1950s and early 1960s can be attributed in part to the change in attitude required to attract middle-class households into what had become a slum, to the Redevelopment Authority's control over the housing stock, and to the lack of early financial involvement by the private sector (Smith, 1979a). Only in the 1960s, after the towers and town houses on Society Hill were complete did private-sector financing become readily available for the purchase and renovation of 'blighted' row houses. Building shells sold for \$6000 to \$12 000, and rehabilitation costs ranged from \$30 000 to \$45 000, whereas a few years before urban renewal houses were selling for \$400 to \$500 and were finding no buyers (Pace, 1976).

The data on residents and housing reflect the gentrification of the neighborhood. Median family income skyrocketed, minorities virtually disappeared, and educated professionals became dominant in the resident work force. As for the housing stock, the apartments and town houses on Society Hill appeared in the census data along with a significant percentage of new housing units constructed on the empty lots left after the demolition of structurally unsound housing and nonresidential buildings. Turnover increased as numerous new households moved into the neighborhood, and the value of owner-occupied units tripled. Owner-occupancy, however, remained stable, partly as a result of the addition of the apartments (now condominiums) of Society Hill Towers.

The slow pace of redevelopment was reflected in the slow start of the new housing on Society Hill. The architect I M Pei had designed three towers of 703 apartments adjacent to 37 low-rise luxury town houses. Financial institutions, specifically the Federal Housing Administration, balked at lending money to the project. Not only did they point to the overall deterioration in the area, but also to the difficulty of renting apartments in inner cities and the size of the apartments themselves. The developer, Webb and Knapp from New York City, wanted to redesign the towers, but the city objected. Webb and Knapp went forward with the town houses in order to demonstrate the viability of the overall project, and the city constructed a

Table 1. Resident characteristics, 1950–80. Source: USDC, various years.

Year	1950	1960	1970	1980
Society Hill				
Population	6982	3378	4481	5213
Nonwhite[a] (%)	18.7	21.0	6.3	<23.0
College-educated[b] (%)	3.8	7.6	47.6	63.8
Employed PTK workers[c] (%)	6.7	11.4	47.8	67.2
Employment to population ratio[d]	0.39	0.44	0.64	0.67
Median family income[e] ($)	1806	4679	17825	41412
Income ratio[f]	0.54	0.73	1.90	2.53
Female-headed households[g] (%)	na	na	9.8	12.9
Spring Garden[h]				
Population	na	6138	4581	2676
Nonwhite[a] (%)	na	58.4	57.5	87.3
College-educated[b] (%)	na	1.1	1.8	9.5
Employed PTK workers[c] (%)	na	3.9	9.8	20.3
Employment to population ratio[d]	na	0.30	0.27	0.21
Median family income[e] ($)	na	3058	5218	7237
Income ratio[f]	na	0.48	0.56	0.44
Female-headed households[g] (%)	na	na	32.3	51.0
Northern Liberties				
Population	16600	10497	5322	3469
Nonwhite[a] (%)	20.3	31.0	23.6	un
College-educated[b] (%)	2.4	1.5	2.9	9.4
Employed PTK workers[c] (%)	4.6	3.9	6.7	21.8
Employment to population ratio[d]	0.38	0.35	0.38	0.39
Median family income[e] ($)	2171	4316	7124	16353
Income ratio[f]	0.65	0.67	0.76	1.00
Female-headed households[g] (%)	na	na	23.0	28.7
Fishtown				
Population	14925	12077	10003	8274
Nonwhite[a] (%)	0.1	0.2	0.2	un
College-educated[b] (%)	1.9	1.4	1.5	4.0
Employed PTK workers[c] (%)	6.1	4.5	5.1	10.7
Employment to population ratio[d]	0.39	0.38	0.37	0.34
Median family income[e] ($)	2784	5743	8840	15199
Income ratio[f]	0.84	0.89	0.94	0.93
Female-headed households[g] (%)	na	na	18.1	26.0

na not available; un cannot be computed owing to lack of specific estimates for various tracts.
[a] Nonwhite in 1960 includes Negro and born in Puerto Rico, in 1970 it includes only blacks, and in 1980 it includes blacks and those of Spanish origin.
[b] Those twenty-five years or older who have completed four or more years of college.
[c] The ratio of employed professional, technical and kindred (PTK) residents to total employed residents.
[d] The ratio of employed persons to total persons.
[e] For families and unrelated individuals in 1950 only. In all years, data are for the previous year. For multiple tract neighborhoods, the median is the weighted average of tract medians.
[f] Ratio of neighborhood's median family income to the median family income for the city.
[g] Unavailable for 1950 and 1960 by tract.
[h] In 1950 Spring Garden did not correspond to a census tract.

small neighborhood park and rehabilitated a nineteenth-century market (Head House) a few blocks away. The gambit worked. The town houses went on the market in 1962, and though they sold slowly, for between \$40000 and \$45000, early sales enabled the developer to finance the three towers. Opened in the mid-1960s, they served as a visual symbol of the revival in the area and helped to allay the fears of reluctant investors.

With the exception of Society Hill Towers and town houses and the Bingham Court town houses built in 1969 (Austin, 1987), reinvestment in the housing stock of Society Hill proceeded mainly through the actions of individual investors (Smith, 1979a). Small-scale speculators were evident in the late 1950s, but as the pace of gentrification increased, owner-occupants dominated. One-third of the housing

Table 2. Housing characteristics, 1950–80. Source: USDC, various years.

Year	1950	1960	1970	1980
Society Hill				
Total housing units[a]	1965	1622	2683	3183
Owner-occupied (%)	18.5	22.2	21.1	40.3
Vacant[b] (%)	4.1	13.2	7.8	9.7
Structures built in last ten years (%)	0.0	0.4	53.0	14.0
Turnover in owner-occupied units[c] (%)	na	48.4	79.9	58.8
Median value of owner-occupied units[d] (\$)	5224	13100	45300	168300
Median value ratio[e]	0.75	1.51	4.27	7.16
Spring Garden[f]				
Total housing units[a]	na	2378	1802	1415
Owner-occupied (%)	na	10.8	11.1	12.2
Vacant[b] (%)	na	11.0	14.0	33.4
Structures built in last ten years (%)	na	0.7	4.4	1.4
Turnover in owner-occupied units[c] (%)	na	58.5	62.3	51.3
Median value of owner-occupied units[d] (\$)	na	6600	5800	18100
Median value ratio[e]	na	0.76	0.55	0.77
Northern Liberties				
Total housing units[a]	4914	3529	2543	1912
Owner-occupied (%)	27.0	33.1	31.9	39.7
Vacant[b] (%)	4.6	9.9	20.6	40.7
Structures built in last ten years (%)	0.3	0.4	0.4	5.5
Turnover in owner-occupied units[c] (%)	na	49.2	50.2	39.4
Median value of owner-occupied units[d] (\$)	4604	5271	5543	19068
Median value ratio[e]	0.66	0.61	0.52	0.81
Fishtown				
Total housing units[a]	4172	3886	3414	3368
Owner-occupied (%)	55.8	62.7	64.9	65.5
Vacant[b] (%)	3.0	9.3	6.0	15.0
Structures built in last ten years (%)	0.0	0.4	0.6	0.7
Turnover in owner-occupied units[c] (%)	na	35.4	33.3	29.6
Median value of owner-occupied units[d] (\$)	4568	5750	5994	14563
Median value ratio[e]	0.65	0.66	0.57	0.77

na not available.
[a] Includes all housing units in 1950 and 1960, and only year-round units in 1970 and 1980.
[b] Includes available and nonavailable vacant houses in 1950 and 1960, and vacant year-round and boarded-up houses in 1970 and 1980.
[c] Based on the year people moved into the unit; last seven years for 1960 and last six years for 1970 and 1980.
[d] For multiple tract neighborhoods, the median is a weighted average of the median values for the tracts.
[e] Ratio of median value of owner-occupied housing for the neighborhood to that for the City.
[f] Spring Garden does not correspond to a census tract in 1960.

units were rehabilitated by long-term residents in fact (Pace, 1976). Large-scale developers, with the exception of Webb and Knapp, were nonexistent. Concomitant with the increased demand for housing and mortgage loans for rehabilitation, financing for reinvestment switched from governmental sources to large financial institutions.

By 1976, $38.6 million of federal and city funds had been invested in the neighborhood (Smith, 1979a), and the neighborhood was well on its way to complete gentrification. The characteristics of residents continued to demonstrate the in-migration of middle-income and upper-income households, and the housing stock expanded in value. By 1980 owner-occupancy had grown significantly as the construction of apartments dwindled, and the new housing units represented 'in-fill' on the few empty lots remaining. Because the neighborhood was virtually fully redeveloped by 1980, new housing construction and turnover slowed.

Society Hill had become by 1988 one of the most expensive residential areas in the city. Housing values, nonetheless, continued to increase (table 3). A few new units were added in the 1980s; the potential sale price being so high as to enable developers or individual investors to pay the high price of the land and to build one, two, or at most three custom-designed units. No abandoned or boarded-up buildings are now evident, and there is nary an empty lot. The neighborhood has become the home for an affluent, white, and professional population living in historically certified and preserved housing and occupying a neighborhood renowned across the country as the epitome of gentrification and as an urban renewal success story.

Table 3. Median residential sales prices[a] and number of sales 1981-86. Source: Philadelphia City Planning Commission compilations based upon real-estate transactions recorded by the Philadelphia Department of Records; Board of Revision of Taxes property tax data files for 1987; Goldstein I J, no date, "Rising property values as a double-edge sword", mimeograph, Institute for Public Policy Studies, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA 19122.

Year	Society Hill[b]	Spring Garden	Northern Liberties	Fishtown	City
1981					
Median price ($)	175000	10200	15788	10721	31005
Number	45	26	89	122	14914
1982					
Median price ($)	150000	10000	16065	11023	31085
Number	39	17	46	109	13276
1983					
Median price ($)	175000	34960	22033	16018	36181
Number	68	23	45	142	14840
1984					
Median price ($)	192000	26550	28011	17280	38752
Number	64	28	59[c]	143	17272
1985					
Median price ($)	204875	29962	36125	21327	40433
Number	59	37	84	160	18769
1986					
Median price ($)	237500	14000	32899	20815	na
Number	91	31	74	174	19818

na not available.
[a] Excludes apartment buildings.
[b] Society Hill is basically Census Tract 10, Spring Garden is tract 133, Northern Liberties is tracts 128-130 and 142, and Fishtown is tracts 143 and 158. For multiple tract neighborhoods, the average sale price is a weighted average of the median sales price in each tract.
[c] Sales are missing for tract 129 in this year.

Spring Garden

Whereas the story of the transformation of Society Hill is well known, that of Spring Garden is only beginning to spread throughout the city. In fact, the popularity of the Society Hill saga is part of the problem, both theoretically and politically. All gentrifying neighborhoods become symbolically reconstructed as Society Hills by opponents and supporters of gentrification in Philadelphia. As a result, quite diverse processes are conflated into one simple dynamic with all the liabilities that has for good theory and appropriate political action.

Although the government played a major role in the transformation of Society Hill, in Spring Garden a small number of developers made heavy use of federal historic tax credits that reduced the tax liabilities of the developer in proportion to the amount spent on the rehabilitation of certified historic properties. In addition, unlike Society Hill, existing residents resisted the process.

Throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, the Spring Garden neighborhood declined. Its population changed from non-Hispanic working-class to Hispanic (mostly Puerto Rican) working-class and lower-class, with the major shifts occurring in the 1950s and 1970s. From 1960 to 1980, the population fell by 56%. By 1980, 'minority' residents constituted almost nine out of every ten residents and one out of every two households was headed by a female. Family incomes remained low relative to the city, and only in the late 1970s did college-educated and professional persons appear in the neighborhood (see table 1).

The housing stock exhibited a deterioration which corresponded with the influx of poor minorities and the overall decrease in population. Approximately 40% of the total housing units were demolished, many by the City, as they became abandoned and dilapidated. The median value of owner-occupied units remained below the city median, and vacancy rates increased dramatically in the 1970s. Moreover, almost no new residential construction was in evidence (see table 2). Despite the decline of Spring Garden, the Hispanic population managed to form a tight, ethnic community organized around a local Catholic church and a strong neighborhood organization, Spring Garden United Neighbors.

The gentrification of Spring Garden in the 1980s with its massive displacement of Hispanic households had its roots in two governmental actions of the 1960s and 1970s. One was the designation of a renewal area just south of the neighborhood (that is, just below Spring Garden Street). Many buildings on the site were cleared, a high-rise apartment house for retired elderly was built, and ambitious plans were drawn. Franklintown Development Corporation, the developer, however, failed to continue the redevelopment process. Still, site clearance activities had created land which by the mid-1980s became highly desirable. The second governmental action involved the closing of the Philadelphia Mint on the south side of Spring Garden Street and its subsequent takeover by the City in 1971. The city constructed a major addition to that building and used both sections to house the Philadelphia Community College. The college stabilized a small commercial strip on Spring Garden Street and established an institutional presence in the area.

In addition to the private-public Franklintown project and the investment by local government in a community college, the neighborhood just west of Spring Garden—Fairmount—experienced substantial gentrification throughout the 1970s (Cybriwsky, 1978; DeGiovanni, 1983; Lang, 1986). Often referred to as Behind the Art Museum in real-estate advertisements, Fairmount was transformed from a white working-class neighborhood into a community of white, college-educated professionals. By 1988, rehabilitated houses in Fairmount were selling in the \$150000 to \$250000 range, making it one of the highest priced neighborhoods in the city. With the full redevelopment of Fairmount and the rising cost of dwellings, one could not but expect gentrification to diffuse into adjacent residential areas.

Nonetheless, Spring Garden continued to decline through the early 1980s. At that time, three Philadelphia-based developers began major investments that led to a rapid rehabilitation of housing and a sudden turnover of population. Leading the way was Historic Landmarks for Living Inc. Historic Landmarks in 1984 purchased the empty Will's Eye Hospital just across from Philadelphia Community College on Spring Garden Street. Using historic tax credits, it transformed that building into the Colonnade, a 117-unit complex of luxury apartments.

Almost simultaneously, another developer, Michael Treacy, undertook the purchase and rehabilitation of numerous row houses in the neighborhood. In 1979 a group of residents had had most of the neighborhood placed on the National Register of Historic Places (Ruane, 1985), and developers like Treacy became heavy users of the related federal historic tax credits. Aiming for the 'upscale' consumer, Treacy produced large, luxury apartments equipped with all the accoutrements (Jacuzzi, patio deck, microwave, etc) of gracious living, including off-street parking (an important amenity in crowded inner-ring neighborhoods), at a relatively affordable rent (approximately \$850 per month in 1988). From his initial effort in 1972 to 1988, he claims to have rehabilitated approximately 200 appartments (DePaulo, 1988) —almost 15% of the total housing units recorded for the neighborhood in 1980.

Treacy's rehabilitation activity was matched by the investment of Thomas Scannapieco and John Bennett of Historical Developers. During the 1980s, of the 582 units certified for historic tax credits in Spring Garden, Treacy had 14.6% of the total compared with the 39.0% of Historical Developers. The Historic Landmarks for Living project represented another 20.1%. Thus the three developers combined rehabilitated 73.7% of the certified historic housing units.[1] In fact, Historical Developers once purchased almost an entire city block (20 houses), displaced the mainly Hispanic renters, and rehabilitated the structures into 90 apartment-style luxury condominium units—Wallace Court. The strategy was to sell the condominiums to investors who would then rent them as apartments. The remaining 11 houses on the block were simultaneously rehabilitated by other developers. This section of Wallace Street was drastically transformed within a few months. In the early stages of construction, dumpsters lined the street like parked automobiles.

While these three developers were transforming the neighborhood, the Hispanic community and Spring Garden United Neighbors were actively resisting displacement and attempting to establish Hispanic renter households as home owners. The group picketed the opening of Wallace Court, obtained city assistance to purchase and adapt a former school building for 27 low-rent to moderate-rent apartments, and supported plans for converting a building in the neighborhood into a shelter for the homeless, much to the chagrin of many of the newer residents. The ability of the Hispanic community to resist, however, was undermined by their predominantly renter status and their financial inability to become home owners. Displacement was common. One estimate was of a roughly 36% reduction in the minority community in the 1980s (Ruane, 1985).

[1] These numbers are based on an analysis of historic tax credits granted in the City of Philadelphia for projects completed before January 1987. The data were obtained from the Social Science Data Library at Temple University and originally came from the Pennsylvania Historical Commission. The data for Historical Developers represents the sum of tax credits granted to Bennett, Scannapieco, and Historical Developers. Of the 653 rehabilitated housing units which used historic tax credits in the four neighborhoods, Spring Garden accounted for 89.1%, Society Hill for 7.7%, Northern Liberties for 3.2%, and Fishtown had none.

The Spring Garden United Neighbors lacked political clout within city politics. At the same time, the neighborhood spoke with two voices as the newer, more prosperous residents established their own organization, the Spring Garden Civic Association. The resistance of the Hispanic community was not able to halt gentrification, only to slow it. Whereas the data on median sale prices in table 3 fail to show the escalation of housing values, the city's major newspaper in 1988 listed newly rehabilitated town houses selling for \$200000 to \$250000.[2] Building shells which once sold for \$10000 back in 1972 were selling for \$100000 in 1988 (DePaulo, 1988).

By 1988, the Hispanic community and new residents were living together uneasily, but had also joined forces around a new issue—drugs. Drug activity resulted not only in traffic congestion along adjacent streets and the littering of the area with discarded hypodermic needles, but, more importantly, outbursts of violence (though mainly within the drug community) and the harassment of residents. The city established a police outstation in the area, with the space provided by Historical Developers. The common enemy and the joint endeavor, however, neither stopped nor reduced the antagonism of gentrification. By late 1988, housing values had greatly increased, a large luxury apartment building had opened adjacent to the community college on a site cleared as part of the Franklintown project, and a gourmet food store appeared. The neighborhood, however, still contained empty lots and abandoned buildings; many poor, Hispanic residents continued to live on the fringes of the neighborhood; and drugs and displacement remained common issues in the lives of Spring Garden residents.

Northern Liberties

The process of gentrification in Northern Liberties is much different than those which transformed Spring Garden and created Society Hill. Although developers appeared in the mid-1980s to late 1980s, none operated on the scale of Historic Landmarks for Living, Michael Treacy, or Historical Developers. Governmental intervention was barely perceptible, except for the funding of a neighborhood association, the designation of part of the area as a Neighborhood Strategy Area eligible for funds from the Community Development Block Grant (some of which went to early rehabilitators), and the active marketing by the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation of vacant land and empty industrial space. Gentrification in Northern Liberties was driven mainly by relatively unassisted, individual households. When combined with the poor quality of the built environment of the neighborhood and its location, household-driven gentrification explains a good deal of the slow pace of redevelopment.

Northern Liberties has traditionally been a neighborhood of mixed land-uses (primarily residential and industrial), working-class residences, and a diversity of ethnic groups (Burwasser, 1985; PCPC, 1982). The neighborhood reached its population peak in the 1860s when almost all of its working-class, Victorian, brick row houses were constructed. Prior to World War Two, the neighborhood was predominately white (mainly Eastern Europeans: Ukranians, Poles, Slovaks), but as the white population declined, the minority population increased. Many of the Eastern European residents remained, however, and by 1980 Northern Liberties was one of the more racially diverse areas in the city with blacks, Hispanics and whites intermingled throughout the neighborhood. College-educated and professional

[2] The data on median sale prices are based on actual sales within a given year, and for Spring Garden it might simply represent the purchasing of unrehabilitated units. As rehabilitation is relatively recent and has involved tax credits, many of the buildings have not yet exhausted their commitment to apartment status and newly renovated owner-occupied units are likely still being used by their original inhabitants.

households were few, family incomes were low, and there were many poor, female-headed, and elderly households. A glimmer of gentrification in the late 1970s, however, appears in the aggregate data on median family income and in the data on college-educated and professional individuals. Nonetheless, population continued to decline, having fallen by nearly 80% from 1950 to 1980 (see table 1).

This overall drop in population was reflected in the built environment (see table 2). By 1980, 4 out of every 10 structures were either vacant or abandoned and boarded up. Moreover, the neighborhood had lost over 3000 housing units (61%) in the last three decades. Few new housing units were being built, and the median value of owner-occupied units had declined relative to the city median over the years 1950 to 1970, and its relative expansion between 1970 and 1980 still left it behind. In addition to the deterioration of the residential stock, many small factories scattered around the neighborhood were vacant and some of the largest ones were abandoned. The intermittent demolition of structurally unsound structures by the City completed the creation of a landscape of decline.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, a small number of adventurous individuals moved into the area in search of housing close to Center City and of the opportunity to achieve home ownership relatively cheaply. They represented a mix of occupations, but artists seemed overrepresented (Gillin, 1986). For artists, the existence of abandoned small factories and large but inexpensive row houses—many three-story row houses of between 1500 and 2000 square feet exist—made it possible to combine studio space with living space. Although many artists were involved—and many of them seemed to hold second jobs—other occupations were in evidence, including numerous professionals. For the most part during this period, individual renovators purchased single buildings which had either been abandoned or which were placed on the market by long-term residents wishing to leave the neighborhood. There were many cases of commercial buildings (small factories, a bank) turned into studio residences for artists. At the same time, a good deal of speculation seemed to have occurred. The Philadelphia City Planning Commission (PCPC, 1982) conducted a special study of the neighborhood and found that of the 313 properties sold between January 1975 and April 1980, 22% had been owned and subsequently sold by a dozen individuals. Nonetheless, the process involved little displacement; one did not need to purchase a house that had been subdivided into apartments because so many other, nonsubdivided row houses could be had (PCPC, 1982).

Household-driven gentrification proceeded at a slow pace, at least if compared with the pace of gentrification in Spring Garden. Northern Liberties had some significant minuses to balance off the low cost of space and its relative accessibility. Location is problematic. First, between the neighborhood and Center City is not only a major highway—Vine Street—which was being further widened in the late 1980s but also just north of that an industrial district (Callowhill) which had been developed by the city. These served as visual and symbolic barriers. Second, the neighborhood to the north of Northern Liberties was daunting. Part of it, Ludlow, was considered one of the poorest and most physically devastated in the city. Generally, once one crossed the northern boundary of the neighborhood, the physical environment became perceptibly shabbier, and increasingly black and Hispanic. This relates to a third obstacle: Northern Liberties is located in North Philadelphia, a place identification which generally means black, poor, and dangerous. Last, the working-class quality of the row houses (that is, lacking decorative elements inside as well as out), the existence of factory buildings intermixed with housing, and the unavoidable empty lots and abandoned buildings generated an aura which weakened any positive image of the neighborhood.

Yet, in the mid-1980s to late 1980s, as fewer and fewer bargains were available in the neighborhood and as real-estate prices began to rise, the process changed, though not in any appreciable way. For the first time, developers began to express more than an interest in the neighborhood and, as a result, a number of relatively large residential projects were undertaken (Gillin, 1986; Hazelton, 1987). Rouse Urban Housing Inc. constructed 32 town houses for sale between 1986 and 1988 on a site that was once an ice-cream factory. Just a block away, and only a year previously, a small developer had built 5 town houses for sale. The absorption of these units, however, took some time. The developer of the 5 town houses began his offering at \$115 000 and after a year lowered his asking price to the low \$90 000 range. The Rouse development, Madison Courts, began with only partial financing, as the bank was not sufficiently convinced of the feasibility of the project. Although many neighborhood residents applauded the new construction, the prices (about \$95 000) of these units were out of line with the purchase price and rehabilitation costs of an existing house, and the new units were smaller and had less 'character'. Many eventually sold, but new units were still on the market in the spring of 1989.

Other developers were buying buildings and converting them into apartments, usually in the moderate-income range. B&R Associates used historic tax credits to convert 9 nineteenth century federal and Victorian row houses into 17 luxury apartments, Liberty Green. A number of large developments (15–30 units) occurred in this fashion, though only Liberty Green utilized historic tax credits, along with a few developers who converted 3–6 units in one or more buildings. In addition, some residents bought single buildings to rehabilitate as income producing properties. Most of the small apartment-projects were leased relatively quickly, some with federal Section 8 rent supplements. The rehabilitation of apartments seemed to be more financially sound than the construction of new housing for sale.

During the mid-1980s to the late 1980s, a few new stores (for example, 2 flower shops, convenience stores) appeared in the neighborhood. Generally, Northern Liberties had a good complement of small grocery stores, bakeries, drug stores, barrooms, and dry cleaners. Plans were also underway for a small retail strip. In the early 1980s, an 'upscale' bar and restaurant was opened and it continued to do well. Otherwise, the level of services was not on par with that expected in a gentrified neighborhood. The two commercial districts that had served the neighborhood previously—Marshall Street and Second Street—had declined drastically in the postwar period. Marshall Street had lost most of its former Jewish merchants and had become a low-price, low-quality strip with many abandoned storefronts; whereas Second Street had become an area of nonretail establishments and junk-filled buildings being held off the market by one major property owner.

Indicative of the slow pace of gentrification in Northern Liberties was the media perception of the neighborhood and the failure of the City to reassess properties frequently. First, throughout the early 1980s Northern Liberties was touted in various newspapers and magazines as an 'up and coming' neighborhood. Yet it never quite emerged from that category to become 'a place to be'. One newspaper article (Burwasser, 1985) labeled it "not yet the latest Society Hill", and in *The Philadelphia Magazine* in December 1985: "Still many gorgeous old houses to be had cheap, mainly because this neighborhood also failed to catch on. Too far from Center City, too fierce." Second, despite clear signs of gentrification, the market values of properties in the neighborhood, and thus property taxes, remained relatively low in comparison with, say, Society Hill or Spring Garden, but they were increasing. Building shells had been sold for \$3000 to \$6000 and livable houses for \$25 000 to \$40 000 in the early 1980s, whereas in 1988 they were selling for \$25 000 to \$30 000 and \$70 000 to \$90 000, respectively, but taxes had not risen accordingly. Northern Liberties thus remained a bargain, though less so than a few years earlier as many of the better properties had already been taken. What made the neighborhood affordable for household gentrifiers was the slowness of gentrification and the perception by the general public and the banking community that Northern Liberties was not yet a 'hot' neighborhood.

Fishtown

In contrast to the neighborhoods discussed above, the amount of gentrification in 1988 in the neighborhood of Fishtown was almost imperceptible. Nonetheless, Fishtown is important for understanding gentrification and, more broadly, neighborhood dynamics. The absence of significant reinvestment is in contrast to the belief or, better, fear on the part of many residents of Fishtown that gentrification was occurring.

Despite the destruction of the eastern portion of the neighborhood by the construction of the I-95 highway and the closing of a number of large factories in the same area (Paone, no date), Fishtown has seemingly changed little in the postwar period. Although the population of the neighborhood has declined by almost 45%, the basic characteristics of the residents have hardly changed at all. It is mainly a white, ethnic, Catholic community with an extremely small number of minorities, reflecting in part the insular nature of the neighborhood and the solidarity of its residents. Few college-educated residents or professionals live in the neighborhood, relative employment is stable, and the median family income is close to the median for the City and is also virtually invariant (see table 1).

Fishtown is a working-class community with strong neighborhood identification, and a certain insularity. One report on the area in 1960 commented: "In Fishtown and many sections of Kensington, any new family (though from an 'old' Kensington family a few blocks away) is regarded as a newcomer for the first 10 to 15 years" (HWCI, 1960). One periodically hears stories about 'outsiders' who have moved into Fishtown to gentrify and have received a cold reception by residents. People who buy small factories in the neighborhood often find it difficult to establish friendly relations. All this creates obstacles to gentrification, lowers its potential, and slows its pace.

Two other obstacles also operate. First, Fishtown is located farther away from Center City than the other three neighborhoods, though mass transit access is good. Moreover, it has all the perceptual problems of Northern Liberties only slightly more so, including the further impediment of having an interstate highway passing through parts of the neighborhood. Second, the housing stock in Fishtown, though similar to that in Northern Liberties, includes a greater number of small houses, though without the abandonment and empty lots which characterize Northern Liberties.

The lack of any significant change in the aggregate characteristics of Fishtown's residents is reflected in a similar stability in the housing stock (see table 2). The number of housing units did decline, though by half the percentage amount of the decline in population, and owner-occupancy and vacancy rates crept up a bit, but the median value of owner-occupied units, turnover, and new construction exhibited little temporal variation. In fact, the number of housing units itself has virtually stabilized over the years 1970 to 1980, with no new units being added and very few subtracted.

In part, the solidarity of the neighborhood is important for its stability, particularly with regard to its potential for gentrification. A key factor in the gentrification of a neighborhood is its penetration by citywide media, real-estate agencies, and real-estate developers. One seldom finds properties in Fishtown advertised in the City's major Sunday paper or in the primary Center City paper. One has to read the local neighborhood paper to see listings of Fishtown properties. Few properties are publicly advertised for sale, however. In addition, as one moves through the neighborhoods, not only does one see many fewer 'For Sale' signs than one sees in Society Hill, Spring Garden, and Northern Liberties, but the signs are for local, neighborhood-based realtors rather than the major Center City or citywide realtors. Many sales seem to be to people within the neighborhood, and one would expect that a healthy percentage of them are not 'arms-length' transactions.

Of course, there are exceptions, and this has fueled the belief in the threat of gentrification. In the southern portion of Fishtown, asking prices for certain house sales in 1988 rose into the \$50000-\$75000 range, well above previous prices, and a developer constructed a small project of new town houses selling for from \$85000 to \$90000. Sales, however, have not kept pace with the optimism. Rumors of gentrification might cause an inflation of asking prices at the same time that rising prices fuel those perceptions.

Despite what seems to be a low potential for gentrification, neighborhood associations and elderly organizations in Fishtown have joined the coalition 'Save Our Neighborhoods', a group formed in the mid-1980s to support the passage of a property-tax-relief bill for long-term homeowners in gentrifying neighborhoods, and have argued that gentrification is beginning in Fishtown. (Such public rhetoric also serves to discourage gentrifiers.) The main source of the concern seems to be a rapid rise in property taxes caused by a citywide reassessment. Property-tax increases are thus linked to higher sale prices (for that is normally how assessed values are determined) and these higher sale prices are viewed as evidence of an in-migration of gentrifying households. Although the fear of gentrification might be justified, then, its potential in Fishtown, at least for the immediate future, seems relatively low, precisely because of the solidarity and insularity of the neighborhood.

Analysis and conclusions

In the three neighborhoods that clearly experienced gentrification, the dynamics vary significantly. At play were not only various investors, market conditions, and opposition groups, but also changing perceptions of the developmental potential of these neighborhoods. Behavior and perception, moreover, were significantly shaped by particular social and physical conditions that had been historically established.

The gentrification of Society Hill was initiated by the use of federal resources by the local government, coordinated by agencies of the local government and private-public partnerships, and was achieved through the investment and preservation activities of numerous government-assisted households. With the exception of Society Hill Towers and a few small-scale luxury town house developments, developers played a minimal role. Despite massive displacement, previous residents offered almost no resistance, and, except for the early reluctance of financial institutions to invest and the trepidations of middle-class and upper-class households to move into the neighborhood, once initial investments were set the process went smoothly and rapidly.

The same cannot be said for Spring Garden. Although Fairmount immediately to the east had experienced significant reinvestment, certain qualities of Spring Garden deflected its quick diffusion into that neighborhood. A combination of a large and cohesive Hispanic community, a housing stock of apartment buildings (albeit small ones), and a much deteriorated physical environment was obviously important. Those same large Victorian buildings, however, also attracted developers of luxury apartments and, with the help of federal historic tax credits, these developers began in the late 1970s and early 1980s to purchase and convert numerous such buildings and to displace many existing residents, particularly Hispanics.

The process in Spring Garden, then, was one of government-assisted, developer-driven gentrification; the federal government indirectly facilitated the process with tax credits for historic preservation. The local government, on the other hand, was basically absent, unlike in Society Hill. Once the developers began to have success, financial institutions and real-estate organizations from Center City moved into Spring Garden and accelerated gentrification. Existing residents resisted and attempted to stabilize the Hispanic community by developing low-income and moderate-income rental housing. They barely slowed the process.

Whereas the local and federal governments played central roles in Society Hill and the federal government was a major actor in Spring Garden, they have not been major actors in the transformation of Northern Liberties. Adjacent neighborhoods had been targeted for urban renewal clearance and new housing construction in the 1960s and 1970s, but Northern Liberties remained untouched except for spot demolition carried out by the city. Even federal historic tax credits were rarely used. Resistance by long-term residents did not happen. Thus, the gentrification of Northern Liberties unfolded without government assistance and without the political struggle which had occurred in Spring Garden.

This did not mean that reinvestment in Northern Liberties was smooth and rapid. The sharply uneven physical fabric of the neighborhood, its location in North Philadelphia, and the working-class quality of its housing stock did not attract large developers and made the neighborhood only marginally attractive to household gentrifiers. The reinvestment was driven by a few, unassisted individual households. Only in 1986 did developers of relatively large housing projects appear, and they found success elusive. By that time, too, Northern Liberties was being touted as the next 'hot' neighborhood, its properties were appearing in the real-estate sections of Center City newspapers, and citywide real-estate firms were present in the neighborhood. Gentrification still proceeded slowly, as did displacement. The process of neighborhood change in Northern Liberties will seemingly continue at that pace as long as its motivating force is individual households. With the complete rehabilitation of single-family housing, and the continued growth in housing demand linked to Center City development, developers might well rehabilitate abandoned factories. Until that occurs, Northern Liberties will likely remain marginally gentrified.

If one considers Northern Liberties to be marginally gentrified, then Fishtown must be labeled as insignificantly gentrified. External signs and even empirical measures of gentrification in this neighborhood are quite fleeting. On the one hand, Fishtown's location and housing stock do not place it prominently in the path of property reinvestment. On the other hand, Fishtown represents a situation of mostly passive (but sometimes very active) resistance to intrusion from 'outsiders'. The neighborhood is very insular with a high degree of ethnic and neighborhood solidarity. As a result, ownership of property changes either without the assistance of real-estate agents or, if such organizations are involved, through local real-estate agents. The neighborhood is virtually unpenetrated by 'external' financial, real-estate development or real-estate-sales firms. The neighborhood, moreover, has received little attention from government as a site for property development. For these and other reasons, the potential for gentrification in Fishtown is low. Yet, gentrification serves as a useful and vibrant symbol to a community which feels itself threatened by rising taxes, growing Hispanic and black populations at its fringes, and declining real incomes (Mallowe, 1986).

Gentrification, then, does not unfold as a single process. In different neighborhoods, even within a single city, the process involves different actors, and proceeds with varying consequences. Moreover, it is not a process which, once started, continues until the neighborhood is totally gentrified (Smith, 1986; Williams, 1988).

Certainly Spring Garden and Northern Liberties are good examples of this, with Fishtown as an instance of thwarted incipient gentrification. As a result, stage-theories of gentrification and, by extension, of neighborhood change oversimplify and distort the situation. The production and reproduction of neighborhoods cannot be captured by a formalistic theory grounded in an ideal-type methodology.

Neither can one ignore the dynamic elements which infuse gentrification with contingency. Even though capital accumulation is central to the process, it takes quite different forms depending on whether developers, governments, or households are in command. Moreover, community also plays a structural role, but in a very contingent fashion. Whereas an emerging sense of community focused on historic preservation and enhanced the reinvestment in Society Hill, broadly articulated community solidarity hindered gentrification in Spring Garden and thwarted it in Fishtown. Complexity and contingency abound.

At the same time, such a complex perspective makes it difficult to forge a determinative link between gentrification and young urban professionals (Smith, 1987) and thus to cast gentrification as solely a household-driven process (Beauregard, 1988). Rose (1984) and Rose and le Bourdais (1986) have identified the role of female-headed household gentrifiers in Montreal, and in this paper I point to a number of variations on the theme of yuppie gentrification. For example, in Spring Garden one finds developers doing the gentrification, with young urban professionals only subsequently leasing or purchasing from them. Of course, one might argue that the developers are responding to the demand created by these households. Yet that is only part of the story. Many other neighborhoods are available to yuppie households. The supply of luxury housing produced by developers played an important role in attracting that demand to Spring Garden when it could have easily gone elsewhere in the City. Northern Liberties, as a second example, is being slowly gentrified by households not easily encapsulated by the yuppie label.

The issue of young urban professionals is important beyond its theoretical dimensions. It has an unavoidable political side. The linking of yuppies and gentrification crystallizes and reinforces the opposition, particularly by the Left, to gentrification (Beauregard, 1988). Yuppies represent conspicuous consumption, privatizing behavior and insensitivity to social ills, and political quiescence (Barry and Derevlany, 1987). By breaking this link, one confronts the political implications of gentrification in a more structural and thus more meaningful fashion. One can focus more clearly on the forms of displacement, the disruption of community, and the attitude of local governments (Beauregard, 1985; Lang, 1986).

This political perspective returns us to contextual elements. The discussion of the particularities of place and the contingencies of process was not meant to dismiss the structural forces which operate on these four neighborhoods. Three forces, certainly, are paramount. First, the restructuring of the Philadelphia economy both provided the out-migration of working-class and middle-class households that 'prepared' certain neighborhoods for gentrification and generated the resurgence in office employment in Center City that provided one element of the rationale for middle-class households to remain within the city. Second, the wide-ranging possibilities for capital accumulation through property development, a set of possibilities with roots in capitalism itself, established an important base upon which gentrification was built. Smith's (1979b; 1982) concept of the rent gap begins to capture this structural force while also placing it within the larger dynamics of the uneven development of capitalism. The capitalist underpinnings of property development explain both disinvestment and reinvestment, and by their impact on the economic and political resources of specific racial and class factions they shape the mobilization of resistance.

Third, and last, one must not forget the strong ties between government and capital, ties which are particularly salient at the local level. Local governments in cities such as Philadelphia can ill-afford to scoff at reinvestment, and the bias of the federal government toward development and towards the middle class is evident in federal historic tax credits and tax deductions for home ownership.

Any worthwhile theory of neighborhood dynamics will have to incorporate these, and other, structural forces while remaining sensitive to the contingent factors that make the transformation of neighborhoods such a diverse set of processes. In the case of gentrification, the time has come to confront seriously its differences, and also to expand our attention to other trajectories of neighborhood change.

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