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Comparing Gentrification in South Parkdale, Toronto and Lower Park Slope, New York City: A 'North American' Model of Neighbourhood Reinvestment?

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to move on from the intractable theoretical divisions and overgeneralizations which have pervaded the gentrification literature for decades, and by doing so it offers a response to several calls for a ‘geography of gentrification’. This takes the form of a comparative assessment of the gentrifying neighbourhoods of South Parkdale, Toronto, Canada and Lower Park Slope, New York City, USA. A central part of this research has been an engagement with two contrasting academic discourses on gentrification, the ‘emancipatory city’ (a Canadian construct) and the ‘revanchist city’ (an American construct), to examine how gentrification may or may not have changed since these discourses were produced and articulated. I combine narratives from in-depth interviews (with a particular focus on displaced tenants) with insights from action research and supplementary data from secondary sources, and elaborate the main similarities and differences in gentrification between these two contexts. I demonstrate that gentrification is neither emancipatory nor revanchist in either case; while we can see crucial broad similarities in both the causes and effects of ‘post-recession’ gentrification, the process is also differentiated according to contextual factors, and these factors are illuminated and clarified by international comparison.. Furthermore, references to a ‘North American’ model of the process obscure some subtle local and national differences between the gentrification of individual neighbourhoods within that continent. The paper therefore demonstrates the need to exercise caution when referring to ‘North American gentrification’, especially as the geography of gentrification is only in its infancy.

“I think that the gentrification process is actually changing so quickly that considerable empirical research will be necessary alongside theory” (Smith, 1996b, p.1202).

Introduction: ‘Post-recession Gentrification’ and the Resilience of Theoretical Divisions

Over a decade ago now, a boisterous exchange took place between Chris Hamnett and Neil Smith over the theories of gentrification¹ which had arisen in the academic literature during the 1970s and particularly the 1980s (Hamnett, 1991, 1992; Smith, 1992). Well known to gentrification researchers and frequently cited, it provided a useful insight into the “theoretical and ideological battleground”, as Hamnett (1991, p.174) put it, of gentrification discourse. However, it also left one scholar (Clark, 1992) with feelings of ‘disappointment’ and ‘frustration’, and later, another (Lees, 1998) lamented how the “futility of the Smith-versus-Ley debates” (p.2257) (which were a central focus of the Hamnett/Smith exchange) had held back a progressive research agenda. The exchange was published at a time of media and academic speculation about ‘degentrification’ during economic recession (Bagli, 1991; Lueck, 1991; Bourne, 1993a, 1993b) and the likelihood of a ‘post-gentrification era’. Academic interest in gentrification then descended to a low point (for overviews, see Bondi, 1999a; Lees, 2000; Wyly and Hammel, 2001), partly due to the winding down of the process under economic recession,

¹ I define gentrification as the transformation of a working class or vacant area of the central city into middle-class residential use – a process “fundamentally rooted in class” (Wyly and Hammel, 1999, p.716).

but also due to the fact that gentrification debates such as that between Hamnett and Smith were suffering from paralysis by analysis:

“By the end of the 1980s these debates seemed to exhaust themselves with no prospect of a final ‘resolution’, and on empirical grounds gentrification appeared ready to collapse under the weight of every demand- and supply-side factor cited to explain its emergence” (Wyly and Hammel, 2001, p.215-6).

An ‘agree to disagree’ culture had emerged among leading researchers, with major theoretical and ideological gulfs appearing irreconcilable (Slater, 2002). It can also be argued that these divisions were overdrawn. For instance, are we really to believe that Ley (1996) ignored the economy in his comprehensive account of the emergence of the post-industrial metropolis, or that Smith’s (1996a) compelling assessment of the emergence of the ‘revanchist’ metropolis was divorced from the impact of cultural studies? Whether these divisions were valid or overdrawn, many scholars thus chose to jettison gentrification research in favour of other avenues of inquiry that were free from the ball and chain of apparently intractable dualisms such as Marxist versus liberal, supply versus demand, economics versus culture, production versus consumption, structure versus agency, and so forth.

Despite attempts to follow a ‘complementary’ perspective to the study of gentrification, where researchers could learn from each other and explore tensions and divisions productively (Clark, 1992, 1994; Lees, 1994b), the search for a synthesis of explanations

became so awkward, contended one researcher (Redfern, 1997), that we required “not more attempts at synthesizing the existing theories, but fresh attempts at theorizing the process as a whole” (p.1277). His own attempt at re-theorizing, that it was the decreasing price and increasing availability of ‘domestic technologies’ which drove gentrification, was certainly fresh but highly questionable given the likelihood that these technologies would have been more instrumental in driving the quite different process of suburbanisation (or more generally, increasing homeownership). In this sense Redfern’s ‘new look at gentrification’ promised far more than it delivered, and subsequently his line of inquiry has not been developed. Reflecting on the body of work from which Redfern attempted to depart, Wyly and Hammel (1999) recently observed that “despite attempts to forge a new synthesis, much of the gentrification literature remains balkanised along lines of debate established a generation ago” (p.718). Bondi (1999) was so troubled by the resilience of old debates in the wake of a search for synthesis that she pondered whether a disappearance of gentrification research “might actually be a sign of good health”, and that “maybe it is time to allow it to disintegrate” (p.255).

If we look at some very recent work on gentrification, Bondi’s frustration is perhaps understandable, for there are signs that gentrification discourse is *still* locked within the zeitgeist of the 1980s. Take for example a recent essay by Hamnett (2000), published in a text intended as an academic guide to contemporary urban issues. After reviewing some recent work, his conclusion could have been written in the 1980s:

“I am dubious of the extent to which the rent gap is a principal driver of this process. There is no doubt that property prices in potentially gentrifiable areas are relatively low and that this is, or was, one of the key attractions for gentrifiers, but it is not a sufficient explanation” (p.337).

The recent calls to move away from this debate appear to have bypassed Hamnett, perhaps because his review does not include several of the important contributions where calls for a new direction were made. In a more recent plenary address to a conference on gentrification in Glasgow, Hamnett once again did not side with a complementary perspective:

“The argument made here is that the basis of an effective explanation [of gentrification] has to rest on the demand side rather than the supply side of the equation” (Hamnett, 2002, p.4).

Badcock (2001) is also in concert with earlier debates:

“It is impossible to escape the structuralist and functionalist overtones of the rent-gap hypothesis..... Apart from this, an exclusive focus upon the production of gentrifiers runs the risk of missing other crucial aspects of inner-city restructuring, tenurial transformation and class changeover” (p.1561).

The debate over the rent-gap theory of gentrification was very important in the 1970s and 1980s as we tried to understand and explain an unexpected empirical phenomenon, but in 2001 one is left wondering why we need to be reminded of its pros and cons (cf. Smith, 1996b). Yet Hackworth and Smith (2001) provide further evidence of adherence to apparently immortal theoretical squabbles. While their essay contains a superb summary of the history of gentrification (and research on gentrification), teasing out the nature of different ‘waves’ of gentrification in New York City and the temperamental involvement of the state within these waves, it retreats into the divisive approach which dominated the gentrification literature during the (1980s) ‘second wave’ they identify. They argue that “economic forces driving [current] gentrification seem to have eclipsed cultural factors as the scale of investment is greater and the level of corporate, as opposed to smaller-scale capital, has grown” (p.468).

The point of this introduction is *not* to diminish the importance of these debates, nor to dismiss the often sophisticated theoretical and empirical frameworks which attempted to understand gentrification when it emerged with full force in the 1980s. It is rather to question the epistemological relevance of such debates when there is widespread scholarly agreement that gentrification is a multi-faceted phenomenon which can only be explained from a holistic point of departure (e.g. Clark, 1994; Rose, 1996; Butler, 1997; Lees, 2000; Bridge, 2001a, 2001b; Butler and Robson, 2001; Wyly and Hammel, 2001; Slater, 2002), and also to reiterate a move away from research which falls into the same conceptually divisive approach. As Ley (2002) has recently argued,

“the interdigitation of economic and cultural competencies and pursuits in the gentrification field makes any statement of mono-causality questionable. *It is not a matter of whether economic or cultural arguments prevail, but how they work together to produce gentrification as an outcome*” (p.16, emphasis added).

One of the more attractive frameworks which attempts to reconcile theoretical divisions, yet is thoroughly in tune with the key insights from different schools of thought, is that of the ‘geography of gentrification’ (Ley, 1996; Lees, 2000; Slater, 2002), paying particular attention to research contexts and the discourses that have emerged from them. A meticulous reading of the gentrification literature in the ‘post-recession’ era finds a geography of gentrification still in its infancy, and this paper attempts to provide a theoretically-informed empirical contribution to what is, in a North American context at least, a progressive direction for gentrification research to follow.

Discourses of Gentrification from Canada and the United States

A perplexing irony emerges from a survey of four decades of gentrification research – although geographers are the dominant academic voice in the study of gentrification, only recently have they begun to recognise the need for a comprehensive geography of gentrification (Ley, 1996; Lees, 2000; Slater, 2002). Adding insult to irony, it is in fact two sociologists who have put forward the most compelling evidence yet that we require such a geography. Butler and Robson (2001) attempted to tease out subtle differences in the ways in which middle-class groups ‘come to terms with London’ (see also Robson

and Butler, 2001) in different London neighbourhoods. The impetus for their research was clearly set out:

“One criticism of existing approaches to gentrification is that they tend to see gentrification as a more or less homogenous process – whatever their differences, neither Smith (1996) nor Ley (1996) appear to explore differences within the gentrification process. Our hypothesis is that different middle-class groups would be attracted to different areas and this would be determined by a range of factors, in addition to what they might be able to afford in particular housing markets” (Butler and Robson, 2001, p.2146-8).

After testing this hypothesis by interviewing gentrifiers in Telegraph Hill, Battersea and Brixton, they found that gentrification had consolidated very different forms of middle-class identity in each location. They conclude with the argument that

“[g]entrification.....cannot in any sense be considered to be a unitary phenomenon, but needs to be examined in each case according to its own logic and outcomes” (p.2160). In a North American context, I argue that this ‘examination’ must be sensitive to two discourses on gentrification which have emerged from two different countries (cf. Lees, 2000; Slater, 2002). The ‘revanchist city’ discourse (Smith, 1996a), a negative construct arising predominantly from the study of gentrification in American cities, especially New York City, is almost the exact opposite of the ‘emancipatory city’ discourse (termed by Lees, 2000), a positive construct which has emerged in large measure from the study of gentrification in Canadian cities such as Toronto and Vancouver. Attention to these

discourses addresses the crucial, enduring issue of whether gentrification is a desirable or objectionable aspect of urban transformation, and such attention therefore has political importance. A brief overview of each discourse is necessary, before I present my own research into gentrification.

The notion of 'revanchist' gentrification comes from Neil Smith (1996a), and the word has its roots in nineteenth-century French history - revanchists were a group of middle-class nationalist reactionaries opposed to the working-class uprising of the Paris Commune, intent on taking revenge ('revanche') on those 'undesirables' perceived to have 'stolen' the city from them. Smith sees a similarity between this and the gentrification of New York (and to lesser extent his other research sites in Philadelphia, Paris, Amsterdam and Budapest), and views the process as part of "a [middle-class] reaction against the supposed 'theft' of the city, a desperate defense of a challenged phalanx of privileges, cloaked in the populist language of civic morality, family values and neighbourhood security" (p.211). For Smith, gentrification is the spatial expression of the revanchist attitude of the white middle-classes - a menacing, displacing 'frontier' that threatens to redefine the social fabric of the central city:

"More than anything the revanchist city expresses a race/class/gender terror felt by middle- and ruling-class whites who are suddenly stuck in place by a ravaged property market, the threat and reality of unemployment, the decimation of social services, and the emergence of minority and immigrant groups, as well as women, as powerful urban actors" (p.211).

As Smith pointed out in later works (Smith, 1998, 1999, 2001) neoliberal revanchism in the 1990s under Mayor Giuliani filled the vacuum left by the failure of 1980s liberal urban policy in New York City, and was consolidated by blaming the failures of earlier liberal policy on the disadvantaged populations such policy was supposed to assist:

“Rather than indict capitalists for capital flight, landlords for abandoned buildings, or public leaders for a narrow retrenchment to class and race self-interest in the assertion of budget priorities, Giuliani led the clamor for a different kind of revenge. He identified homeless people, panhandlers, prostitutes, squeegee cleaners, squatters, graffiti artists, ‘reckless bicyclists’, and unruly youth as the major enemies of ‘public order and public decency’, the culprits of urban decline for generating widespread fear” (Smith, 2001, p.73).

A particularly mean spirited and repressive attitude towards these populations, as exemplified by the well-publicised ‘zero tolerance’ policies of Giuliani’s police force, has been playing out in particularly racist and classist ways in New York. By clearing the streets of ‘undesirable’ elements, Giuliani prepped entire neighbourhoods for gentrification (Smith and DeFilippis, 1999; Curran, 2001). As the city’s economy recovered in the 1990s, the crime rate dropped, and public spaces such as Times Square were privatised and commodified, New York City became a sanitised vacation destination, an arena for lavish middle-class consumption – yet the people who had to be

swept away and/or incarcerated to allow this to happen were ignored under the fanfare of success attributed to a charismatic but very brutal mayor.

Smith is not alone in his vilification of gentrification in American cities. A large number of other researchers – working in American contexts - are in concert with his viewpoint that gentrification is a serious injustice that makes the American city more unequal than it already is, restructuring its geography along extant divisions of class and race and further dividing it into a maelstrom of privilege and underprivilege. While ‘revanchism’ per se may not be the explanatory framework in other work, the theme of revenge is seemingly omnipresent in the literature on American gentrification. It is a literature too vast to summarise here, but it is useful to introduce a few studies which demonstrate that Smith’s portrayals of gentrification as revenge do not stand alone, and that there are several other “exponents of a genre of urban commentary best described as the critical eulogy” (Merrifield, 2000, p.474).

Abu-Lughod’s richly detailed (1994) narrative of the East Village in New York is a case in point. Bringing together several essays on the neighbourhood in an edited collection, her sombre conclusions lament the difficulty of resistance, the destruction of community and the loss of place under the revengeful gentrification that occurred there in the 1980s:

“Not every defense of a neighborhood succeeds and, we must admit, not every successful defense succeeds in all ways....if the attacks against it are too powerful, the community can eventually lose its vitality and verve.[I]t is also easier for government to destroy

community than to nurture this intangible element of the human spirit. To some extent, while the developers and most particularly, the long arm of the law of the City of New York that aided and abetted them, failed to convert this portion of an old quarter into a paradise for yuppies, they succeeded, at least for the time being, in killing much of the precious spirit of the neighborhood. The funereal pall that in 1991 hung over the community is the legacy of their efforts” (Abu-Lughod, 1994, p.340).

A further portrayal of revengeful gentrification comes from Robinson (1995), in his vivid account of grassroots resistance to the international economic restructuring behind the gentrification of San Francisco’s Tenderloin district. While much of the focus of this article is on the emergence, consolidation and tactics of such resistance, Robinson is quick to attack the middle-classes and their institutions:

“San Francisco’s realtors have noted that the Tenderloin is the last underdeveloped area within striking distance of corporate downtown.... A variety of upscale developments threatened the Tenderloin.... A danger to current neighborhood character arises when such developments show success and inspire even greater numbers of new developments. This process could ultimately lead to a middle- and upper-class consolidation in the Tenderloin’s border areas – a consolidation that could be a starting point for further upscale invasions” (p.489).

Moving to gentrification in another large US city, Chicago, Betancur (2002) has recently written about the “tremendous disruption” (p.780) of working class Puerto Rican

community life caused by the gentrification of the West Town neighbourhood. Arson, abandonment, displacement, “speculation and abuse”, tenant hardships and class conflict are woven into a mournful tale of struggle, loss, and above all, “the bitterness of the process and the open hostility/racism of gentrifiers and their organizations toward Puerto Ricans” (p.802). Betancur’s assault on the gentrifiers rises to a crescendo near the end of his paper, where the current situation is chillingly presented, and gentrification almost personified:

“The ethnic enclaves that managed to hold on through the years are also falling prey to gentrification – especially as their now senior population dies. As gentrification advances, the community continues resisting the ever-stronger blows coming from the forces of gentrification” (p.805).

Gentrification is Goliath, the community is David, yet Betancur places so much blame on the gentrifiers that we doubt David’s chances in bringing down his monstrous enemy.

All this could not be in greater contrast to the emancipatory discourse on gentrification, emerging from Canadian city research. Almost a decade ago, Jon Caulfield (1994) published a detailed account of Toronto’s gentrification, extending arguments made in an earlier paper entitled ‘Gentrification and Desire’ (Caulfield, 1989), where gentrification in Toronto was explained as a middle-class reaction to the repressive institutions of the suburban life:

“city people....express their feelings....where they are able, individually and collectively, to pursue practices eluding the domination of social and cultural structures and constituting new conditions for experience. For the marginal middle class, resettlement of old city neighbourhoods is among these activities” (Caulfield 1989, p.624).

Caulfield viewed gentrification as a ‘critical social practice’, a response to the city’s post-war modernist development and growth-boosterism in what became known as the ‘reform’ era of the 1970s (see also Caulfield, 1988). Middle-class radicals *and* conservatives in Toronto were dismayed at the municipal government’s 1950s and 1960s prioritisation of suburban expansion at the expense of inner-city areas. In reaction, these gentrifiers of Toronto were seen to be involved in a deliberate operation of resistance to the dominant ideals of suburbia, breaking free from “a routine of placeless space and monofunctional instrumentality” (Caulfield, 1989, p.624-5). Drawing on the urban musings of figures such as Marcel Rioux, Walter Benjamin, Roland Barthes and Jonathan Raban, Caulfield outlined the attractions of inner-city neighbourhoods for the middle-classes:

“Old city places offer difference and freedom, privacy and fantasy, possibilities for carnival.... These are not just matters of philosophical abstraction but, in a carnival sense, ...the force that Benjamin believed was among the most vital stimuli to resistance to domination. ‘A big city is an encyclopaedia of sexual possibility,’ a characterization to be grasped in its wider sense; the city is ‘the place of our meeting with the other’” (ibid., p.625).

The gentrification of many central Toronto neighbourhoods was the outcome, consolidating a new 'postmodern urbanism' (Mills, 1988; Knox, 1993; Ley and Mills, 1993). In her extensive review article, Lees (2000) contended that Caulfield's perspective on gentrification can be seen as 'emancipatory', whereby gentrification is the saviour of the city, quintessentially a positive process of class transformation. Through his portrayal of gentrification as a liberating experience for those involved, Lees argued that Caulfield's focus was perhaps less on critical social practice and more on "emancipatory social practice" (p.393). In short, Caulfield provided a view of gentrification as a process which unites different people in the central city, creating opportunities for social interaction and tolerance.

While in Caulfield's work we find the emancipatory discourse on gentrification at its most explicit, the Canadian context is crucial to its emergence. His work was undoubtedly influenced by the long-term investigations of Canadian central city 'embourgeoisement' undertaken by David Ley, who argued that the process was initiated by a nascent marginal counter-culture, where 'hippies became yuppies' (Ley, 1996) and sought inner-city spaces as an expressive act of resistance against the dominant 1950s and 1960s 'instrumentalist ideology' (see Ley, 1980). A collective disdain for the blandness and monotony of suburban living, and for the stultifying conventions of the post-war Fordism that facilitated suburban expansion, overcame resilient pathological images of inner city neighbourhoods and transformed them into sites of resistance, or "oppositional spaces" as Ley termed them, "socially diverse, welcoming difference, tolerant, creative,

valuing the old, the hand-crafted, the personalized, countering hierarchical lines of authority” (1996, p.210). Artists played a key role in this transformation, as Ley has recently shown:

“For the aesthetic disposition, commodified locations, like commercialised art, are regarded as sterile, stripped of meaning... The suburbs and the shopping mall, emblems of a mass market and a failure of personal taste, are rejected. The related but opposing tendencies of cultural and economic imaginaries reappear; spaces colonised by commerce or the state are spaces refused by the artist” (2002, p.11).

Gentrification follows artists because “the surfeit of meaning in places habituated by artists becomes a valued resource for the entrepreneur” (ibid. p.11). Guided by Bourdieu, Ley concluded that “it is the societal valorisation of the cultural competencies of the artist that brings followers richer in economic capital” (ibid. p.16). These followers are the gentrifiers and the institutions that produce urban space for them. While Ley is more critical than Caulfield of the process of gentrification, particularly its ability to rob cities of their affordable housing stocks and displace the vulnerable, his portrayal of the process is not entirely negative, principally because of the research context - the Canadian inner city.

In sum, the emancipatory discourse is the antithesis of the revanchist discourse - yet as a binary opposition, both are *dependent on each other* for their epistemological and ideological weight, and their articulation. As Henriques et al argue,

“The systematic character of a discourse includes its systematic articulation with other discourses. In practice, discourses delimit what can be said, while providing the spaces – the concepts, metaphors, models, analogies, for making new statements within any specific discourse...” (1984, p.105-6).

While there is an asymmetrical relationship between Canada and America in many spheres of urban life (Ruddick, 1996), this is not the case in the production of gentrification discourse, where the relationship becomes a two-way exchange. For example, Smith’s revanchist city arguments are advanced and legitimised in reference to Caulfield’s emancipatory Toronto, which he derides as “Foucault run amok” and “less a contribution to theories of gentrification than to the gentrification of theory” (Smith, 1996a, p.43). Betancur’s (2002) account of the politics of gentrification in West Town, Chicago, immediately sides with Neil Smith and, citing Caulfield, dismisses the view that gentrification results from “middle-class activity and creativity”, where the middle-class “emerges as the adventurous pioneer transforming the inner-city” (p.781). By way of contrast, Damaris Rose’s (1996) critique of stage models in favour of ‘social diversity’ in a Montreal context is based on a sharp rebuttal of American city research which presents gentrification as an unequivocal polarising force – “[f]or some neo-Marxist scholars, the consideration of social mix is an irrelevant diversion for critical urban research agendas. But findings from Montreal in the 1980s give cause to question such assumptions” (p.155). Ley (1996) rounds up his exhaustive assessment of Canadian city gentrification with a telling caveat: “the geographical specificity of gentrification should caution us from making arguments that are too binding from evidence that is limited to the United

States” (p.352). Clearly, these divergent discourses on gentrification cannot be considered either in isolation or without sensitivity to their contextual origins. The emancipatory perspective, largely from Canadian research, seems to render problematic any attempt by researchers of American cities to claim that the conditions and forms of revanchist gentrification are applicable outside their area of study, and vice versa.

International comparative investigation can serve to illuminate the nuances of gentrification between different national contexts at a time when generalised, casual references to ‘North American gentrification’ appear in even the most popular textbooks (Yeates, 1998). Overgeneralisation unaided by empirical material is a widespread and serious problem in urban social science (Goldberg and Mercer, 1986; Mercer and England, 2000):

“In the last fifteen years, urban theory has moved a considerable way towards recognizing the varied and plural nature of urban life. Most of the major contemporary urbanists....acknowledge the inadequacy of one positionality on the city. They note the juxtaposition of high-value added activities with new kinds of informed activity, the co-presence of different classes, social groups, ethnicities and cultures, the stark contrast between riches and creativity and abject poverty, and the multiple temporalities and spatialities of different urban livelihoods. It is, however, fair to say that while they get to the complex spirit of the urban, *the tendency to generalise from prevalent phenomena or driving processes remains strong*” (Amin and Thrift, 2002, p.8, emphasis added).

While context has been acknowledged in the study of gentrification, the tendency to generalise a trenchant opinion on gentrification arguably obscures the geography of the process:

“[T]he post-1990s generalization of gentrification as a global urban strategy came as heir to the abandonment of twentieth century liberal urban policy on the one hand and, on the other,as a consummate urban expression of an emerging neo-liberalism. Much as cities became global....so did some of their defining features” (Smith, 2002b, p.15-16).

Few would disagree with Smith’s worry over the relentless march of neoliberal urban policy, but as Smith himself acknowledges, we do not have a great deal of empirical research to fathom its geography with respect to gentrification. This research paper, comparing gentrification in South Parkdale, Toronto and Lower Park Slope, New York City, has two aims. First, I will consider how far the contrasting discourses of gentrification which have emerged from each local and national context (emancipatory from Toronto, Canada, and revanchist from New York City, America) reflect what is happening to the geographies of one gentrifying neighbourhood in each city. If gentrification has changed everywhere as much as Hackworth and Smith (2001) and Hackworth (2001, 2002) argue, does the nature of gentrification in two currently gentrifying neighbourhoods still sit well with the discourses which emerged from earlier studies of the process? This is not so much an effort to test discourse empirically, but rather an effort to assess the extent to which gentrification may or may not have changed

since these discourses were produced and articulated. Second, by providing a theoretically informed, wide-ranging empirical assessment of the specificities of gentrification in two different neighbourhoods, in two different cities, in two different countries, I will contribute to the debate over ‘continentalism’ (Yeates and Garner, 1976; Goldberg and Mercer, 1986; Garber and Imbroscio, 1996; Mercer and England, 2000; Slater, 2002) and whether we can refer to ‘North American gentrification’. However, many more comparative (USA-Canada) studies are required before we can make bold conclusions for or against a ‘continentalist’ approach to the process, so my intention in this paper is to provide some *preliminary* insights to this debate.

I draw on insights from a broad range of interviewees, arguably breaking new ground in the discussion of comments made by the displaced working-class in both areas, and my work is also informed by ‘action research’ with community groups in each neighbourhood. Both cases will be discussed in turn before bringing the evidence together and commenting on how this research contributes to the geography of gentrification.

South Parkdale, Toronto, Canada : From Deinstitutionalization to Gentrification

South Parkdale, the southern section of the ‘Village of Parkdale’ annexed by Toronto in 1889, ten years after its official incorporation, grew rapidly in the late 19th century as one of Toronto’s first commuter suburbs, facilitated by the development of the railway and later the streetcar (Laycock and Myrvold, 1991). Streets were laid out to facilitate

resident access south to Lake Ontario, and north to Queen Street which became the main thoroughfare of commerce and trade, a condition unaltered today (Figure 1). In the early 20th century the neighbourhood “was considered one of Toronto’s most desirable residential locations” (CTPB, 1976, p.7). With the 1922 opening of *the* major public amenity of the city, Sunnyside Amusement Park and Bathing Pavilion, Toronto’s version of Coney Island (Filey, 1996), adjacent South Parkdale became known as the ‘Village by the Lake’ (Laycock and Myrvold, 1991), with fine Victorian and Edwardian terraces and some substantial mansions housing a largely elite and upper-middle class population.

In the 1950s, when Toronto became a prime site of experimental modernist planning, expressways leading to suburban expansion were a sign of progress, legitimised by the ideological banners of slum clearance and urban renewal (Kipfer and Keil, 2002, p.238). Even though it was not a slum by any stretch of the imagination, South Parkdale was in the path of the construction of the Gardiner Expressway between 1955 and 1964 and thus in the way of ‘progress’ (Filey, 1996, p.131), and therefore its southern reaches were designated a slum to be cleared. As Toronto’s current chief transportation engineer, Robert McBride, recently pointed out:

“[w]hen...[the Gardiner Expressway] was built and designed...it was fabulous, a work of genius really.It didn’t much matter how sensitive the road was or what implications it might have had for the area it went over because that, by and large, simply wasn’t relevant” (quoted in Hall, 2001).

By 1959, South Parkdale was completely sliced off from the lake, the principal amenity which had encouraged its settlement. Along with Sunnyside Amusement Park, over 170 houses were demolished, and entire streets disappeared (Caulfield, 1994, p.33). Development companies then built many high rise apartment buildings in the neighbourhood, with the hope that those displaced by the Expressway construction would move in and remain in the neighbourhood (CTPB, 1976). This proved optimistic and unrealistic, however, as the elites and middle classes largely abandoned South Parkdale in favour of other neighbourhoods and the suburbs. Many of the substantial mansions and handsome terraces were demolished to make way for the high-rises; others were abandoned by owner occupiers and sold to absentee landlords or investment firms, who divided them into smaller apartments, and some properties remained vacant as the neighbourhood went into economic decline. The outgoing residents were replaced by a sustained influx of low-income immigrants, particularly intense following the liberal immigration policies of the federal government after the 1968 election of Pierre Trudeau (Croucher, 1997). In this era, devalorized, disinvested South Parkdale, with its diverse population and small immigrant support networks, its inner-city location with convenient access to the types of employment most readily available to new immigrants such as manufacturing and personal services (Murdie, 1996), and its cheap rental accommodation in the wider context of Toronto's highly competitive rental housing market, became a 'gateway' neighbourhood for those seeking a new life in Canada's largest city. Far from being segregated along the lines of one ethnicity, the Village by the Lake became one of the most ethnically diverse yet most economically traumatized communities in Canada.

Another crucial factor underpinning the changing social geographies of South Parkdale was its proximity to the Queen Street Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, for a long time the largest facility of its kind in Canada (Court, 2000). Following a trend sweeping cities across North America at the time, the radical shift of the Provincial government towards the deinstitutionalization of psychiatric patients in favour of 'community-based care' (Dear and Taylor, 1982; Marshall, 1982; Dear and Wolch, 1987; Simmons, 1990) together with the retraction in the role of the Welfare State under economic recession and a fiscal crisis at the Provincial level (Lemon, 1993; Hasson and Ley, 1994) had profound and lasting effects on a neighbourhood already under stress from metropolitan restructuring and devalorization. Together with the closure of the nearby Lakeshore Provincial Psychiatric Hospital in 1979, it discharged thousands of patients into South Parkdale in the early 1980s (Marshall, 1982; Simmons, 1990).

South Parkdale suffered disproportionately from a lack of community aftercare policies designed for discharged psychiatric patients. As Dear and Wolch (1987) put it, deinstitutionalization in Ontario was "a policy adopted with great enthusiasm, even though it was never properly articulated, systematically implemented, nor completely thought through" (p.107). Housing was neither plentiful nor adequate for the needs of the deinstitutionalised, and by 1981, it was estimated that between 1000 to 1200 ex-psychiatric patients lived in South Parkdale (Simmons, 1990, p.168), in a neighbourhood which by 1985 contained only 39 official 'group homes' for such patients (Joseph and Hall, 1985, p.150). The majority of discharged patients gravitated to unofficial boarding

homes², or to rooming houses or the even smaller ‘bachelorette’³ apartments in the single-family dwellings of the old South Parkdale which saw prolific (and usually illegal) conversion during the 1970s (CTPB, 1976). With by far the highest concentration of deinstitutionalized patients in Toronto left to their own devices, South Parkdale became a ‘service-dependent ghetto’ (Dear and Wolch, 1987, p.108), its residents living “in the shadow of run-down apartment buildings on nearby streets that stand like walls, fracturing the neighbourhood. A neighbourhood rife with poverty, drugs, and prostitution....no place for a child to grow up. Broken glass and wild screaming on the street at night. Prostitutes strolling down the sidewalk. Drunks splayed on the grass asleep” (Philip, 2000).

Given this backdrop, it might seem unlikely that gentrification could take place – indeed, quantitative data provide little or no indication that this neighbourhood is on any kind of upward trajectory. While there are sizeable pockets of poverty in the neighbourhood which show few signs of improving (Filion, 1991), qualitative evidence demonstrated that a number of factors have joined together to facilitate gentrification, as the following residents revealed:

“We moved here because of the location. It is really easy to get into Downtown if you work in the city, like 20 minutes on the streetcar, and as my husband often goes to Niagara on business, he can get right on the Expressway in about two minutes. The

² The often intolerable conditions in boarding homes were captured poignantly by Pat Capponi (1992), a discharged patient who became a leading mental healthcare advocate.

³ A bachelorette is a mini-apartment, often converted from a rooming house unit - one room which simultaneously contains sleeping, living and dining space, with a separate bathroom within the unit.

houses here are so beautiful, and affordable, which was a big reason for us because everywhere else was so expensive. Plus, they're Victorian, and large, and you just can't find this type of housing anymore without paying a fortune for it. You get way more space for the price in this neighbourhood, and our friends who stop by just can't believe how little we paid for this place. Yes the crime is a concern and yes it is a rougher neighbourhood than many others but the benefits far outweigh those burdens" (Kathryn, interview, 29th January 2001).

"I guess I liked the architecture, the wide, tree-lined streets, the easy access to Downtown and the park [High Park, Toronto's largest public park], and above all, because people were bothered by what they saw on the streets, it was incredibly cheap. I had always wanted a Victorian home and this was the only neighbourhood left where they were affordable. As I am an interior designer and the place needed a lot of work, it was ideal for me to experiment with my ideas. When you settle here, you wonder what all the fuss is about, really. It's a great place to live and not as pretentious as some other neighbourhoods" (Paul, interview, 17th February 2001).

These comments suggest that it was the reputation of South Parkdale which kept property values down. As house prices rose elsewhere in the city during the mid- to late-1980s real estate boom, a growing segment of professional middle-classes who favoured 'old-city' places (Caulfield, 1994) found a rich and *affordable* Victorian and Edwardian architectural heritage on the broad, tree lined streets of South Parkdale, with easy access to employment in Downtown Toronto.

Gentrification in South Parkdale is also associated with the spread of the arts and cultural scene along the Queen Street West axis (see Ley, 1996, p.94). For many who know the area, the South Parkdale section of Queen Street West represents the ‘final frontier’⁴ of the Street’s artistic and cultural (and social) transformation. While reinvestment along the South Parkdale section has been somewhat pedestrian compared to the rapid gentrification of areas to the east in earlier decades, the last few years have seen the appearance of bohemian cafes and stores, and particularly small independent art galleries. The Parkdale Village Arts Collective (PVAC) was formed in 1994 under the auspices of the federally funded Parkdale Village Business Improvement Association (PVBIA) with the objective of ‘promoting the arts community’ in the neighbourhood – hardly surprising given the PVBIA’s mission ‘to revitalize the Village of Parkdale’. The PVAC regularly houses exhibitions of contemporary art on Queen Street (<http://www.g1313.org>) and has become something of a centrepiece for the large community of artists - and their middle-class patrons - in Toronto’s west-end. One of the PVBIA’s main strategies has been a re-designation the neighbourhood as ‘Village of Parkdale, 1879’ on many of the streetposts and its publicity documents - an effort to erase South Parkdale’s immediate past, bring back the ‘glory years’, and encourage the middle-classes to buy into the rich architectural, social and cultural heritage of the neighbourhood.

⁴ See Smith (1996, p.12-29) for a trenchant critique of the frontier imagery associated with artists and gentrification.

The resettlement of middle-class homeowners and tenants has caused problems for the large number of low-income tenants in the neighbourhood⁵, at the forefront of which is displacement, or the threat of displacement, resulting from either the closure or deconversion of rooming houses and bachelorette buildings. The cheapest form of permanent rental accommodation currently available in Toronto, both these types of housing are a consistently vital resource for the city's low-income population. Together with gentrification, a lack of profits for landlords, NIMBYism from middle-class residents' associations (see Lyons, 2000), new zoning restrictions, and closure through illegality and poor safety standards, rooming houses have declined significantly across Toronto since the 1980s, a decline which a number of researchers have linked to the explosive growth of homelessness in the city (Filion, 1991; Dear and Wolch, 1993; Ley, 1996; Layton, 2000; Harris, 2000; Peressini and McDonald, 2000).

Rooming houses and bachelorettes in South Parkdale, often synonymous with the neighbourhood, have long been a source of community conflict, especially between low-income tenant advocates and the South Parkdale Residents' Association (SPRA), a small group of middle-class homeowners who joined together to voice their concerns to the municipal government about the continued presence of such housing, which they viewed as a hindrance to South Parkdale returning to their ideal of 'Parkdale Village'. Where the SPRA are primarily concerned with the 'effects on the community' and their property values, tenant advocacy groups in the neighbourhood are concerned with the abysmal and hazardous conditions for many low-income (and often mentally ill or disabled) tenants in

⁵ In 1996, 93% of the population in the neighbourhood's four census tracts were tenants, and the average household income was \$34,004 per annum compared to the citywide average of \$68,251 (Statistics Canada, 1996 Census of Population).

these dwellings, and lobbied hard for the City's recognition of and action towards these conditions. By the mid-1990s, the City was under intense pressure from South Parkdale's residents, and realised that action on the low-income housing in the neighbourhood was required to mediate the ongoing conflicts within its borders.

In December 1996, the City of Toronto passed a by-law that prohibited any rooming house/bachelorette development or conversion in South Parkdale pending the outcome of an area study. The results were released in July 1997, in the form of proposals for discussion (among community groups) entitled 'Ward 2 [now Ward 14] Neighbourhood Revitalization' (CTUDS, 1997). An analysis of this document provides a fascinating insight into what the City of Toronto viewed as the principal 'problem' of the area – the presence of low-income single persons in single-person dwellings⁶. The broad objective was spelled out concisely and without disguising the intent: “[t]o stabilize a neighbourhood under stress *and restore a healthy demographic balance*, without dehousing of vulnerable populations” (p.17, my emphasis). Tables, graphs and most importantly language were used to illustrate what was unhealthy: “[T]he area has gone from a stable neighbourhood, with a healthy mix of incomes and household types, to one with *a disproportionately large number of single occupancy accommodation*” (p.1, my emphasis).

Just as Sommers (1998, page 296) found in the 'skid road' district of Vancouver, the neighbourhood's inhabitants “were considered to be the *cause* of urban blight and decay”

⁶ In 1996, 45.1% of all households in the neighbourhood were single person households (Statistics Canada, 1996 Census of Population).

and the neighbourhood itself was “distinguished precisely by its lack of both families and the respectability that somehow accompanied them”. While the objective states that ‘dehousing’ of vulnerable populations would be avoided, it is not easy to see how this can be achieved because South Parkdale’s most vulnerable are singles – often welfare-dependent, mentally ill and socially isolated. A defensible argument can be put forward that these proposals were not drawn up improve the conditions for singles already in South Parkdale, but rather to reduce the percentage of singles in the neighbourhood, with families taking their place:

“[We will] deal fairly with properties that already contain bachelorettes and rooming houses, so that the credibility of the City’s Zoning By-law is not diminished, the properties are maintained at, or above, minimum health and safety standards and, over time, *these small units are gradually replaced with larger units and the tenants are relocated*” (p.17, my emphasis).

A new zoning system was proposed for South Parkdale that would limit the number of units permitted in existing rooming houses and bachelorettes, together with their inspection/legalisation, and ‘strategic prosecutions’ and possible closures of the ‘worst-case’ properties. The proposals were presented at a community meeting organised by the City in South Parkdale in October 1998. The meeting was taken over by the Parkdale Common Front, a coalition of anti-poverty activist groups, who were united against any form of discriminatory zoning and argued that these proposals were tantamount to ‘social cleansing’ (Lyons, 1998; Kipfer and Keil, 2002, p.255). It was bringing the buildings up

to standard, rather than prosecuting owners, shutting them down or reducing unit size, which was the preferred solution for these groups.

Responding to criticism that they had been exclusive of low-income interests in the neighbourhood, the City then invited members of all stakeholders to a series of meetings, in what became known as the 'Parkdale Conflict Resolution'. In October 1999, the outcome of the meetings was published (CTUDS, 1999), yet it still maintains that "[t]he proliferation of illegally converted small dwelling spaces has contributed to the decline of health of the community" (p.3). The 1996 ban on all new conversions remained in place, but this time a team of planners and building inspectors was formed to deal with the illegality, overcrowding, and poor safety of many of the existing multi-unit dwellings, called the Parkdale Pilot Project (PPP), whose manifesto is presented in Table 1. The requirement for licensing eligibility was that all units in a building must comply with the minimum unit size of 200 square feet (p.14). A study undertaken in 1976 by the City of Toronto revealed that many bachelorette units are as small as 90 square feet (CTPB, 1976, p.59) – as many remain unchanged since this study was undertaken, bringing buildings 'up to standard' would almost certainly lead to the loss of many bachelorette units, and displacement of tenants. On the rationale behind the scheme, the Director of the PPP explained that:

"Generally accepted planning principles suggest that healthy neighbourhoods support a diversity of housing opportunities for families, couples and singles. There is a planning concern that by tipping the balance too much in favour of small, essentially single-person

housing, that healthy diversity will be lost and the area will become ghettoised as more and more of the housing stock is abandoned by families and converted into bachelorettes and rooming houses.So what we are doing now is bringing current conversions into the light, and banning all new ones” (Director of the PPP, interview, 20th June 2001).

These comments suggest that the City of Toronto are now using the laws on building safety and licensing to fulfil a broader objective, which is to re-balance the population of South Parkdale in what might be termed a new kind of “municipally-managed gentrification” (Forrest and Murie, 1988, p.148) – a concerted effort to break away from the social geographies of South Parkdale’s immediate traumatised past.

In recent years, the threats posed by gentrification have been compounded by the aggressively neo-liberal Conservative Provincial government (Keil, 2000, 2002). In June 1998, their unfortunately named ‘Tenant Protection Act’, came into effect. The hallmark of the Act was the introduction of *vacancy decontrol*– the elimination of rent control on vacant units. When an apartment becomes vacant through ‘natural turnover’, the landlord may charge whatever they think they can make on the unit to a new tenant. Qualitative evidence confirms that landlords now have a powerful financial incentive to attract a new tenant, and often do so with maintenance improvements:

“I’ve lived here since 1995, and I usually paid my \$400 [per month] rent on time. Then two years ago [early 1999], the landlord puts a letter under my door saying he has re-financed the building and has put in a new boiler, so my rent will be \$630, and if I can’t

pay it then I should take it up with the [Ontario Rental] Housing Tribunal. So I called him and said you can't do this as I can't afford it, and then he says to me 'I know you have been a good tenant but I can't afford to keep you here anymore'. So I tell him how desperate I am because I only get \$520 a month in welfare. I think he started to feel sorry for me and then he says I can stay for \$450. I thought that is better than being on the street, so that's what I pay now" (Celia, interview, 22nd March 2001).

This leaves Celia, an unemployed single mother with bi-polar disorder living in a bachelorette building with her two year old daughter, with \$70 a month for all necessities other than rent. Bob, a pensioner who has lived in the neighbourhood for 36 years, revealed the problems that the neighbourhood's gentrification causes for seniors without a substantial pension fund:

"I got kicked out of my house. I couldn't afford the rent anymore as it kept going up and up as all these young folks started moving into the neighbourhood. My rent was the same for 15 years, but I think around 1994 it started to creep up as the landlord said his bills were becoming too high. I fell five months behind and then the landlord had me evicted about two years ago. Then my friend Irene who lived in the apartment next to me says that he then leased it to this young couple for \$1050 a month, which is double what I paid! Now I live with my younger sister..... I'm looking for places all the time, as I don't want to be in a retirement home as I am too young for that, but there's like one ad in *The [Toronto] Star* every week and it's gone by the time you call up" (Bob, interview, 23rd March 2001).

Not only are there stories of threatened and actual displacement, there is also a startling contradiction between the two levels of government concerning the PPP. Following any mandatory maintenance/safety improvements ordered by the PPP inspectors, the landlord *can still apply to the Province for an above-guideline rent increase* allowed under the Tenant Protection Act - so the costs of regularisation can be downloaded to the tenant. If the municipal government really are attempting to improve the existing housing stock 'without dehousing of vulnerable populations', their work may be undone by this loophole in the Provincial government's tenant legislation. The qualitative result is that both levels of government appear to be contributing to the desired rebalance of the 'unhealthy' demographics of South Parkdale.

Lower Park Slope, New York City, USA: 'Overspill' Gentrification and Organised Resistance

The 1990s real estate boom in New York City coupled with the extraordinary salaries that can be made in the city's corporate world have led to what Lees (2000) has termed the 'super-gentrification' of the Brooklyn neighbourhoods where gentrification had matured during the 1980s. Hackworth (2001) has collectively called these mature zones the 'reinvested core' and is correct to argue that "property markets have recovered and become even more exclusive than before. It has, as a consequence, become virtually impossible to find affordable housing in Lower Manhattan and northeastern Brooklyn" (p.875). As the stock market recovered in the mid-1990s, there was exclusive-end

reinvestment in Park Slope, Brooklyn, which can be treated as symptomatic of the post-recession ‘third-wave’ of gentrification identified in recent research (Smith and DeFilippis, 1999; Hackworth and Smith, 2001; Hackworth, 2002). The personality of gentrification has changed in tandem with the internationalisation of real estate and financial markets, and Lees has outlined these changes as follows:

“[G]entrifiers in Park Slope today are significantly wealthier than gentrifiers in the past. Sweat equity is not a prominent feature of the process today. Indeed, contemporary gentrifiers have to be wealthier than ever before because of average prices for single-family townhouses have *doubled* since 1997..... This rapid appreciation is linked to the dramatically increased value of the New York stock market and the financial services industry, whose profits have (re)lubricated gentrification in New York City” (2000, p.397-8).

The cumulative result of the “corporatization of gentrification” (Smith and DeFilippis, 1999, p.650) has been the rise of Park Slope from one of the elite residential communities of Brooklyn to one of most desirable neighbourhoods in the entire city, a symbol of New York’s (and Brooklyn’s) remarkable economic revival of the late 1990s.

Lower Park Slope, bordered by 6th Avenue to the east, 3rd Avenue to the west, Flatbush Avenue to the north, and the Prospect Expressway to the south (Figure 2), by contrast experienced only sporadic gentrification when [Upper] Park Slope was gentrifying intensely in the 1960s, 70s and 80s (Lees, 1994a; Carpenter and Lees, 1995; Lees and

Bondi, 1995; Rothenberg, 1995). However, in the post-recession era, sales and rental prices have become so prohibitively high through the wholesale super-gentrification of Park Slope that the middle-classes are now finding that the only affordable accommodation is in Lower Park Slope. The term ‘overspill gentrification’ has been noted elsewhere (Dantas, 1988), and it is a useful image to apply to Lower Park Slope and also to many other previously non-gentrified New York City neighbourhoods in this post-recession era - they have become “reservoirs of gentrification overflow” (*New York Magazine*, March 12th 2001, p.51). Since 1997, overspill in Brooklyn has been intensified by the New York State Rent Regulation Reform Act which introduced ‘high-rent vacancy decontrol’, meaning that any rent-stabilized apartment renting above \$2000 per month leaves the rent regulation system completely, enabling landlords to charge whatever they like to new tenants once these apartments become vacant. This has “whittled away the stock of rent regulated apartments” (Hevesi, 2002) in Manhattan, where the majority of these expensive apartments are located, and pushed young stockbrokers, publishers, dot-com and new media entrepreneurs from Manhattan’s ‘Silicon Alley’, and even young lawyers and doctors out into more affordable, gentrifying neighbourhoods in the outer boroughs of Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx (Phillips-Fein, 2000, p.29).

Lower Park Slope’s current gentrification (Table 2) is quite a turnaround from its condition in the 1970s and 1980s, when three decades of disinvestment had culminated in serious dilapidation and abandonment of some of its housing stock, and the erosion of its economic and tax base – a neighbourhood “ravaged by decay”, as one assessment put it

(Lawson, 1984, p.248), with little political bargaining power to attract the kind of reinvestment it needed for its residents. Its housing stock was and remains nothing like as handsome as that further ‘up the Slope’, and thus none of it gained Landmark Preservation status, one of the catalysts of gentrification nearer to Prospect Park (Lees, 1994a). Lower Park Slope was in every sense left behind by the ‘success’ of Upper Park Slope, and perhaps this is best expressed by the fact that 7th Avenue became a bustling commercial strip during this time, whilst 5th Avenue “witnessed a proliferation of crime during the 1970s as a result of narcotic trafficking”, where “[t]he dangers associated with this problem nearly vacated the retail stores and residents” (Merlis and Rosenzweig, 1999, p.13). Interviews with people familiar with the neighbourhood during this time offered more evidence of the social problems accompanying disinvestment, and fear of crime and particularly a crack house in the heart of Lower Park Slope became a central theme in the recollections of some interviewees:

“I didn’t come down the hill very often as a kid. It wasn’t very safe, and it was very deserted. There were few bodegas [corner stores], certainly no good restaurants, and it had a kind of downward feel about it. There was a crack house on President Street that was well known as a place to avoid, and that made the neighbourhood pretty unsafe. There were hookers on Degraw Street, and I remember being told by my mom to avoid certain places, you know, as a teenage girl it wasn’t really safe” (Stacey, interview, 3rd December 2001).

“I guess in the early ‘80s, the neighbourhood where we are right now was about as different you can imagine. If you were middle-class, you wouldn’t come down here unless you were either a trouble maker or looking for trouble. Like on President and 5th, there was this crack house where apparently you would give some money to the guy on the door, he would then call up to the guys on the second floor, and they would throw the drugs and god knows what else down to you. There were no cops, and just a lot people shooting up [drugs] and getting high” (Jeremy, interview, December 21st 2001).

Notwithstanding these comments, it would be a misrepresentation to portray Lower Park Slope as an arena of outright misery and suffering during this period. The views expressed above were from middle-class (non-Hispanic) whites, but further qualitative accounts of the neighbourhood during this era provide a more nuanced version of a place that offered different experiences of urban life for different people; in this case, along the lines of class, experienced through ethnicity. While none denied the crime and drug problems of the era, working-class Hispanic residents offered contrasting views of the neighbourhood as a community, where attachments to place were strong and social ties strengthened through shared religious and cultural beliefs. In its time of disinvestment, where it seemed feared by white middle class interviewees, the neighbourhood was by contrast deeply valued by some Hispanic interviewees. For example:

“It was much more of a neighbourhood than it is now. You saw many more familiar faces, and people tended to look out for each other. There were some places where you would have to watch your back, like near the crack house, but my street, Union, was a

place where you didn't have to worry because if someone gave you any trouble about 10 people were always out on their stoops watching what was going on. Another thing is that when a new family moved in, it was a major event and everybody knew about it. These days you can't tell who is new and who isn't, as everyone moves around so much more" (Luis, interview, 6th November 2001).

"Looking back I do remember recognising more people as I walked along the streets, stopping to talk with those folks I knew by name, that kind of thing. That still happens from time to time, but the only place where you get any sense of community these days is the church, or things which the church organise. I'm sure it's the same for a lot of these neighbourhoods which have gone upmarket, as people who move in today don't have time for the community, so it kind of breaks up into little pieces, and your family or your church become your community" (Rosario, interview, 15th November 2001).

A discussion of differing neighbourhood sentiments based on ethnicity necessitates a profile of the changing ethnic composition of Lower Park Slope (Table 3). Perhaps the most interesting phenomenon exhibited by these data is the contrast with what has been happening in New York City over the past 20 years. During this time, the city has seen a continuing net out-migration of whites (which began in the 1950s), and a significant inflow of immigrants - a pattern especially evident in Brooklyn and the Bronx (Warf, 1990; Lobo, Salvo and Virgin, 1996; Abu-Lughod, 1999; Lobo, Flores and Salvo, 2002). In 1980, non-Hispanic whites comprised 52.0% of the city's population, but by 2000 that figure had dropped to 35.1% (Source: US Census). In 1980, people of Hispanic origin

constituted 19.7% of the city's population, but by 2000 that figure had increased to 26.9% (ibid.). Note from Table 3 how Lower Park Slope exhibits a very different trend, in that it has been *gaining* in non-Hispanic whites and experiencing a *decrease* in the number of Hispanics of all ethnic origins. The only aspect of the Lower Park Slope data which chimes with the current immigration patterns of New York City is the increase in the Asian population. These data *suggest* that gentrification in Lower Park Slope has had a significant impact on local ethnic transition through an influx of white gentrifiers replacing or displacing Hispanic (and to a lesser extent black) residents, yet more rigorous quantitative measures are needed to put this to the test. There can be little question, however, that the neighbourhood as a whole is becoming 'whiter', and several of my interviewees of different ethnic backgrounds referred to gentrification as the "whiting-out" of the neighbourhood. Betancur (2002) has recently written about the "tremendous disruption" of working class Puerto Rican community life caused by the gentrification of West Town, Chicago – I found similar concerns about community expressed by working-class Hispanic residents of gentrifying Lower Park Slope, and these sentiments have been a major factor in the efforts to resist gentrification, which aim to prevent a complete reversal of the yesteryear character of the neighbourhood.

Resistance to gentrification has been taking place under the auspices of the Fifth Avenue Committee (FAC), a non-profit community group founded by local residents in 1977 (<http://www.fifthave.org>). For more than two decades, the FAC raised millions of dollars

to rehabilitate many abandoned buildings, transforming dilapidated properties into affordable housing under a ‘sweat equity program’⁷. Their current mission is

“to advance social and economic justice in South Brooklyn, principally by developing and managing affordable housing, creating employment opportunities, organizing residents and workers, and combating displacement caused by gentrification” (Fifth Avenue Committee, 2001: <http://www.fifthave.org>).

The threat of displacement in Lower Park Slope is compounded by the fact that the neighbourhood contains many apartment buildings with fewer than six units, which are exempt from rent stabilization laws⁸. In 1999, the FAC undertook a survey of how many small buildings had changed hands in the neighbourhood between 1996 and 1999. They were concerned about the fact that a change in ownership in unregulated small buildings leads to significant increases in rents (Table 2), as new landlords seek to claim back on their mortgage and maintenance payments, and seek to profit from post-recession overspill gentrification by attracting wealthier tenants. They found that an average 21% of buildings had changed hands – a remarkable pace of turnover indicating booming real estate activity. Qualitative evidence revealed that landlords are cashing in on overspill gentrification, and Martha, a single mother who worked in a day-care centre whilst living in a such a building, provided one of many stories of displacement:

⁷ The Committee’s leaders now realise the inherent contradiction – the more attractive they made the streetscape, the more people wanted to live there, thus driving up rents. So ironically, the FAC are one piece of the problem!

⁸ In New York City, rent stabilization applies to apartments in buildings with six or more units built between 1947 and 1974 and to tenants who moved into pre -1947 buildings with six or more units after June 30, 1971 (Brecher and Horton, 1991; van Ryzin and Kamber, 2002).

“Five months before the end of the [annual] lease, I got a notice that my rent was going to jump from \$750 a month to \$1400 a month. My income was \$19000 a year at the time, so there was no way I could pay it. I went to the landlord and asked him why the rent increase was so steep, and he’s like ‘that’s how much I can get, that’s how much I want from you’. I decided to stay and see what happened at the end of the lease, and when he came to ask me for the rent and I said ‘I can’t pay it’, he gave me an eviction notice right there. I was basically homeless for four months, so I stayed with a friend in Queens for a while, and then when school started again for my [12 year-old] son we went back to Brooklyn and stayed with his Godmother while all my stuff remained in storage. It was a pretty tough time for him as he didn’t really understand why we had to move, and I felt bad because a kid really needs a permanent home, you know?” (Martha, interview, 29th September 2001).

It is stories such as these, where blameless victims of a property boom end up almost blaming themselves, that have prompted the FAC into action. To combat displacement, they devised a strategy in 1999 called a Displacement Free Zone (DFZ), where a territory was marked out where they claimed there would be ‘no evictions’ of low- and moderate-income tenants. Initially a 36-block area, following a two-year trial run the zone has now been extended north and south to cover the entire neighbourhood, and actually crossing the southern border of my study area into the neighbourhood of Sunset Park. The rationale for the DFZ very much reflects the values of the FAC, as it is geared towards preserving the ethnic and class diversity of the neighbourhood, keeping its housing stock

affordable and residents stable in their homes, and respecting the needs of its long-term (particularly minority) residents and senior citizens. It actively aims to discourage anyone from what they call ‘profiteering at the expense of our community’ – a reference to people buying a building and then evicting the long-term tenants paying low or moderate rents either to attract new tenants who can afford much higher rents, or to claim the building back for themselves.

The FAC will consider the case of any tenant who meets the criteria in Table 4, and rely on tenants to come forward, as they have no way of tracking large rent increases or incidences of tenants being served eviction notices. If they hear about a rent increase which threatens displacement, they will try to negotiate a compromise with the landlord, and if that fails, they will work with religious leaders to appeal to the landlord’s ‘conscience’, or demonstrate in front of the landlord’s home or business, or generate media attention about the unfairness of the eviction. If these tactics fail, and the case goes to court, they have the support of South Brooklyn Legal Services to defend the tenant. Whether the DFZ is a worthwhile strategy is, of course, debateable. It increases the visibility of displacement, draws marginalized community members into organising, and extremely vocal and public resistance to displacement may discourage landlords from buying houses in the neighbourhood solely for investment purposes. On the other hand, it may alienate owner-occupiers or incoming higher-income tenants who may be community minded, and it could be argued that the FAC may be going after the wrong people, when they could direct their energies towards a citywide campaign to change rent regulations on buildings with less than six units. It is encouraging, however, that

evictions have dropped by nearly 40% in the Displacement Free Zone since November 1999 (according to the FAC's Director of Organizing), although empirical difficulties in measuring displacement make it unclear how much of that drop is due to activism.

Synthesis

The case studies of South Parkdale and Lower Park Slope provide a useful illustration of the nuances of the gentrification process. While there are a number of important similarities between these two cases, there are also important contextual differences, and synthesising the evidence collected from both neighbourhoods helps clarify this contribution to the geography of gentrification.

The similarities (Table 5) demonstrate the importance of a complementary, holistic perspective towards gentrification which reconciles the divisive insights of the previous research (Clark, 1992; Lees, 1994b). Both neighbourhoods exhibit the cyclical history of investment, disinvestment and reinvestment that remains a theoretical leitmotif in empirical accounts of gentrification (Smith, 1996a), yet also exhibit another leitmotif in that gentrification is driven by the expansion of professional middle-classes in a post-industrial metropolis who seek the locational and cultural advantages of inner-city neighbourhoods regardless of their somewhat insalubrious past (Hamnett, 1991; Ley, 1996). This research also supports arguments in recent work that the state is once more⁹ a key player in the production of urban space for more affluent dwellers (Smith and

⁹ After attending a conference on gentrification in Glasgow (September 2002), one might think that the involvement of the state in gentrification is a new development. This is not the case – some of the earliest gentrification research focused on this involvement (Hamnett, 1973).

DeFilippis, 1999; Wyly and Hammel, 2001; Hackworth and Smith, 2001; Hackworth, 2002). In South Parkdale, this is taking the form of municipally-managed gentrification which is quite explicit in its attempts to recapture the idyll of 'Parkdale Village' for a nascent pool of gentrifiers, underpinned by Provincial legislation which facilitates the eviction of low-income tenants through vacancy decontrol. In Lower Park Slope, the issue of rent regulation is most worrisome for low-income tenants - the State of New York (which introduced the high-rent vacancy decontrol that has contributed to 'overspill' gentrification in Brooklyn, and continues to repel all attempts to extend rent stabilization to buildings with fewer than six units) is the motor behind the distressing stories of displacement which many interviewees provided. Both case studies show that gentrification causes a proliferation of landlord-tenant disputes, which usually are resolved in favour of the landlord through loopholes in alleged 'tenant protection' systems. Although not discussed here, the crises of affordable housing in both cities, in part attributable to neo-liberal ideologies at varying levels of government (Schill and Scafidi, 1999; Layton, 2000), warrant urgent scholarly attention, not least because citywide gentrification is a factor costing both cities their affordable housing stocks, and thus displacement is extremely serious for tenants without the financial resources to secure alternative housing.

This rather sobering picture of gentrification should not detract from the fact that some form of 'improvement' was needed in two neighbourhoods suffering from sustained systematic disinvestment, with little political clout or collective organisation to improve the economic outlook for local residents. Gentrification was not and is not the form of

improvement required, and in the case of Lower Park Slope has arguably gone too far. Both case studies demonstrate the future need for scholars and community organisers to recognise the preconditions for gentrification, and intercept the forces which drive it - “the importance of distinguishing between gentrification and reinvestment that assists low- and moderate-income residents and communities” (Squires, 1992, p.21). When gentrification arrives, as in South Parkdale and Lower Park Slope, interview respondents revealed that social relations are stressed and morph into what Robson and Butler (2001) call ‘social tectonics’, where

“relations between different social and ethnic groups in the area are of a parallel rather than integrative nature; people keep, by and large, to themselves.Social groups or ‘plates’ overlap or run parallel to one another without much in the way of integrated experience in the area’s social and cultural institutions. This does not make way for an especially cosy settlement, and many residents, middle-class or otherwise, speak of palpable tensions” (p.77-8).

In Lower Park Slope, tectonics are most evident in anti-gentrification graffiti dotted around the neighbourhood, projecting strong sense of a community grappling with overwhelming forces of change and class division.

Differences between these two cases are also shown in Table 5. No account of South Parkdale can be complete without attention to the history of deinstitutionalised psychiatric patients and rooming houses/bachelorette buildings, which together constitute

the major frame of reference for municipally-managed gentrification, and the middle-class NIMBYism which encourages it. At the same time, while resistance is far from organised, it has managed to raise awareness of the very significant threat of displacement exhibited in the City's original proposals for 'neighbourhood revitalization'. The South Parkdale case also illustrates a defining feature of urban change and conflict in Toronto, the apparently contradictory aims and motivations of the City and Provincial governments; the former maintaining they are not attempting to 'dehouse' low-income tenants, the latter facilitating this dehousing with legislation that has 'reaped absolute havoc' on low-income tenants in the neighbourhood, according to a community legal worker (interview, 12th March 2001).

Lower Park Slope differs because it exhibits what Kay Anderson (1998) terms "the complexities where race and class *costructure* society and space" (p.214, my emphasis), not one or the other, nor one more than the other. Race and class are not isolated forces of differentiation – they are key determinants of social relations that collide and intertwine through gentrification to generate advantages for white middle-class non-Hispanics and disadvantages for working-class Hispanics. While measuring displacement was beyond the scope of my assessment, discussions with the Fifth Avenue Committee and with neighbourhood residents demonstrated that displacement is not just a question of housing economics, but also a question of ethnic transformation and ultimately ethnic tension as the strong Hispanic base of the neighbourhood is placed under threat from non-Hispanic gentrifiers.

With respect to the current state of activism against gentrification in New York City, Hackworth and Smith (2001) maintain that “effective resistance to gentrification has declined as the working class is continually displaced from the inner city, and as the most militant anti-gentrification groups of the 1980s morph into housing service providers” (p.468). While most local researchers familiar with the difficulties of progressive community organisation under the Giuliani administration would agree that there has been a “palpable decline in community opposition” (p.75), the case of the DFZ in Lower Park Slope illustrates that it would be a mistake to argue that effective resistance has vanished completely, and misleading to imply that is only the working class who are involved in resistance to gentrification, for the FAC in fact have a sizeable proportion of compassionate middle-class activists concerned about displacement of their neighbours. Many of these activists became involved because of concern with another factor that differentiates Lower Park Slope from South Parkdale – the more significant impact of the real estate industry, who according to several qualitative sources contribute to the neighbourhood’s gentrification and displacement by *encouraging* landlords to evict tenants to maximise investment potential, and who also put intense pressure on the State to loosen rent regulation further (Phillips-Fein, 2000). This intertwining of politics and real estate is indeed a defining feature of New York City’s gentrification (Smith and DeFilippis, 1999; Hackworth, 2001).

Conclusion

The similarities discussed above offer some conclusive evidence to side with continentalist perspectives. Some of these similarities are compelling, and together they *suggest* a North American model of gentrification in both cause and effect, but one cannot confirm such a model just by looking at one neighbourhood in Canada and America. Furthermore, a shrewd eye will find more than just compelling similarities between the two case studies. When we take into account differences, as we must, the suggestion of a North American model is destabilised and loses its empirical credibility. There are quite clearly some equally compelling *national* differences that serve to question a North American model, and send us back towards Goldberg and Mercer's (1986) challenges to continentalism. This immediately leads to an important caveat. The fact that these compelling similarities and differences seem to leave us on a conceptual and epistemological middle-ground with respect to 'North American gentrification' should *not* make us sit on the fence and do nothing, especially when the geography of gentrification remains underexplored. This paper, an attempt to reveal the specificities of the process in one Canadian and one American neighbourhood, *hints*, yet does not prove, that there are some very significant, overarching processes behind urban transformation in North America *that intersect with* equally significant national and local conditions in both Canada and America, and the pace, path and character of gentrification is a consequence of this intersection. An unsympathetic critic would likely view this hint – which arguably throws more 'chaos' onto the gentrification process (Rose, 1984; Beauregard, 1986) - as a threat to the theoretical coherence of the concept of

gentrification itself. But might such a critic who has had enough of one-sided explanations of gentrification view this hint as the outcome of an enticing way to answer to the woefully neglected calls for a complementary theoretical perspective? Further work is required to illuminate the geography of gentrification, assessing how different theories are manifest in distinctive ways in different contexts at the interlocking scales of neighbourhood activism, municipal policy, federal priorities in housing and urban redevelopment, and global economic restructuring.

With respect to the emancipatory discourse, whether or not we agree with the politics and explanations of its architects, it is vital to understand that their arguments are contextual in terms of both space and time. There is no question of the profound influence of the 1970s and 1980s reform era on Canadian urbanisation, particularly on Toronto's gentrification, but my findings from South Parkdale show that this era is well and truly a chapter of the past. My interviews with a wide range of informants in particular demonstrate that there is now no evidence of any emancipatory potential in gentrification. I do not wish to refute the arguments of Caulfield, David Ley, and other scholars who discussed the 'critical social practices' of the marginal middle-class (e.g. Rose, 1996), but I do wish to point out that they would be hard pressed to find anything positive to say about the *current* middle-class resettlement of South Parkdale. 'Post-recession gentrification', largely driven by neoliberal municipal and provincial policy and occurring in a neighbourhood with more than its fair share of low-income hardship and social problems, is not an instigator of social interaction but social tension, leading to the unhappy coincidence of reinvestment and displacement, home improvement and

homelessness, renovation and eviction. This ‘old city place’ may still be one where ‘meeting with the other’ occurs, but these meetings are rarely positive or liberating encounters because of the tremendous disparities in life chances and living standards, not to mention divergent views on low-income housing, between gentrifiers and non-gentrifiers. The former are arriving in a neighbourhood which is a vital source of low-income housing for deinstitutionalised psychiatric patients and impoverished immigrants to Canada, and while South Parkdale badly needs reinvestment, it does not need it in the form of gentrification. Middle-classes are not welcomed by working-classes, and working-classes are viewed by middle-classes at best as ‘undesirable’, at worst as ‘wackos’ and ‘pathetic creatures’. This is not an emancipatory urban process.

The Chambers Dictionary (1999) tells us that “emancipate” means “to set free from restraint or bondage or disability of any kind”. Even if middle-class resettlement was still an emancipatory social practice, the *outcome* of South Parkdale’s gentrification demonstrates that it is anything but emancipatory for those already in the neighbourhood. South Parkdale’s disabled people, the deinstitutionalized, are not ‘set free’ or helped by middle-class resettlement – in fact, they experience another kind of ‘disability’ in being unable to pay the price of living in the neighbourhood following the devastating rent increases symptomatic of gentrification. The problem with the City of Toronto’s Parkdale Pilot Project is that the balance of South Parkdale’s housing stock is *already* tipped in favour of bachelorettes and rooming houses that house single-persons, and to make it a ‘healthy’ neighbourhood with ‘a diversity of housing opportunities’ for ‘families, couples and singles’ requires eradicating some bachelorettes and rooming houses and displacing

those who inhabit them. It is a sobering thought that the City of Toronto (helped along by Provincial tenant legislation) may be paving the way for a different and more sinister kind of emancipatory practice, one which involves ‘liberating’ South Parkdale from the ball and chain of deinstitutionalization and low-income housing conversions - a liberation which implies shifting the people and changing the buildings that have defined this neighbourhood for generations.

On the revanchist discourse, there can be little doubt, as MacLeod (2002) has pointed out, that Neil Smith’s thesis is a “deeply suggestive conceptual heuristic” to assess contemporary urban class transformation. Smith himself (1999) has argued the following:

“Scandalizing the revanchist city is important if we are to get a clear sense of how the political wind is etching and eroding the urban landscape.It also would be a mistake to confuse repression with revanchism, however much the latter might include the former. Repression may have many rationales, whereas revanchism is about revenge” (p.202-3).

Revenge is a strong word; but is it too strong with respect to Lower Park Slope’s current gentrification? A term coined to describe the situation in the Lower East Side of New York, the credibility of revanchism has been bolstered by the insertion of neoliberal urban (particularly housing) policy into the vacuum left by the failure of 1980s liberal urban policy across a number of US cities (Wyly and Hammel, 2001). I do not doubt the existence of revanchism in certain places, and the purpose here is not to deny or

downplay its power in the restructuring of urban space in favour of more affluent citizens at the expense of disadvantaged or ‘undesirable’ populations. I am troubled, however, by the uncritical acceptance of contemporary gentrification as a consummate expression of revanchism and the assertion that revanchism is a defining feature of all cities undergoing gentrification (Smith, 1996a), without substantial empirical research to back these claims. My action research and interviews in Lower Park Slope suggest that gentrification is not a revanchist attempt by the policy fortress and the white middle-class to take the neighbourhood back from working-class. In a booming housing market that has made many New York neighbourhoods affordable only to the corporate elite (through super-gentrification), middle-classes have fewer options than ever before and many are ‘overspill’ settlers in this neighbourhood not by choice but by *few other choices*. While theirs is not a predicament anything like that of those who are displaced from the neighbourhood, it would be a misplaced charge to call their actions unanimously revengeful.

It is for this reason that I am suspicious of the current applicability of Smith’s punchy rhetoric. Consider a particularly visceral quote:

“The revanchist city is, to be sure, a dual and divided city of wealth and poverty, and it will continue to be so as seemingly apocalyptic visions of urban fissure....appear more and more realistic. But it is more. It is a divided city where the victors are increasingly defensive of their privilege, such as it is, and increasingly vicious defending it” (Smith, 1996a, p.227).

I find it interesting that, only a few years after Smith wrote these words, and in the very city from which they came, it is hard to detect any kind of vicious defence of Lower Park Slope by the middle-class. Equally as interesting is the fact that many of the supposed 'victors' in the divided city are now so concerned about these ever widening divisions around them that they have begun to show concern about a process in which they are portrayed by Smith and others as the villains. The Fifth Avenue Committee could not operate without its middle-class patronage. If there is any evidence of revanchism, it is most readily found in the actions of some landlords and *especially* some realtors, and always in dialogue with the State legislature in Albany who refuse to tighten the rent regulations in New York City. This power allegiance is as darkly troubling for many middle-class residents as it is for many of their working-class neighbours. In saying this I do not want to paint a rosy picture of gentrification whereby different social classes are residing in Lower Park Slope without any kind of problem, but I do want to argue that revenge is not the most appropriate verb to attach to gentrification in this context. In sum, just as it is important to understand emancipatory gentrification as space and time-specific, the same applies to understanding gentrification as a form of revanchist anti-urbanism.

In sum, it is striking that the discourse not usually associated with Canadian city gentrification is arguably strengthened by the South Parkdale case – the middle-class nimbyism and the language and implications of municipally-managed gentrification I discussed are perhaps closer to the thesis of revanchism. Similarly, the discourse not usually associated with American city gentrification is arguably strengthened by the

Lower Park Slope case – middle-class participation in activism and the affection for ‘old city’ neighbourhoods are hardly opposed to the central tenets of the emancipatory city thesis. But the point remains – *neither* case sits comfortably with either discourse, and this is because of the context and contingency of each discourse with respect to space and time. From this contribution to the geography of gentrification, we can see crucial broad similarities in both the causes and effects of post-recession gentrification, yet the process is also differentiated according to contextual factors, and these factors are illuminated and clarified by international comparison. Comparing gentrification in three European cities, Neil Smith argued that

“general differences really do not gel into a sustainable thesis that these [instances of gentrification] are radically different experiences.....the existence of difference is a different matter from the denial of plausible generalisation. I do not think that it makes sense to dissolve all these experiences into radically different empirical phenomena” (1996a, p.185-6).

In South Parkdale and Lower Park Slope, while similarities are indeed important lessons to be learned in how gentrification operates once preconditions are in place, it actually makes very good sense also to differentiate the empirical evidence, because the differences observed are crucial factors in how gentrification is both experienced *and* contested. This research demonstrates that it is important to reveal in equal weight what might be ‘plausibly general’ *and* ‘radically different’ between two or more cases of gentrification. While prioritising what is general about gentrification (Smith, 2002b)

reminds us that gentrification is both a theoretically coherent category and a widespread urban phenomenon, it obscures the particularities of gentrifying neighbourhoods which help us to understand the implications of the process. Above all, it is hoped that this research demonstrates that much is still the matter with gentrification, and it matters much that academics put aside their differences, use the insights of previous research, and form a collective to keep up with and respond to a process which warrants urgent and sustained attention.

Figure 1: South Parkdale, Toronto



Table 1: Manifesto of the Parkdale Pilot Project (PPP). Source: PPP Director (June 2001)

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| <p><u>Goals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• retain housing• improve building and housing and safety standards• community improvement <p><u>Strategies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• regularise existing bachelorettes and illegal rooming houses• license regularised bachelorettes and rooming houses• ensure ongoing compliance with standards |
|--|

Figure 2: Lower Park Slope, New York City

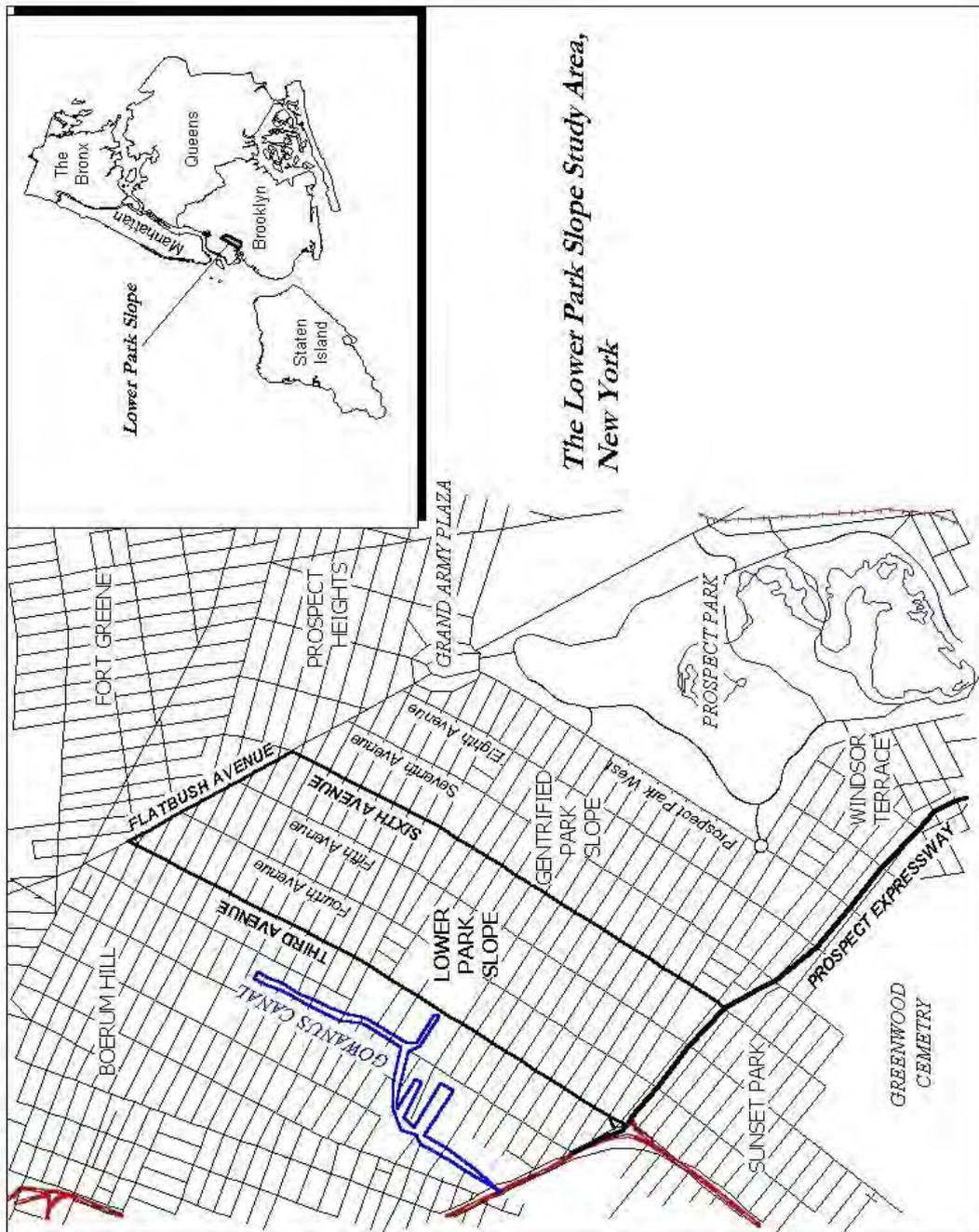


Table 2: Indicators of Neighbourhood Change in Lower Park Slope, 1980-2000. Source:

US Bureau of the Census 1980, 1990, 2000.

| | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Population | 33909 | 31827 | 33940 |
| Total Number of Housing Units | 14022 | 13583 | 14919 |
| Median Household Income (US dollars) | 14923 | 28976 | 42500 |
| Median Monthly Gross Rent (US dollars) | 211 | 563 | 816 |
| Median Owner-Occupied Home Value (US dollars) | 189002 | 249436 | 344854 |
| Percentage of Residents over 25 with Bachelor's Degree | 12.5 | 17.1 | 22.2 |
| Percentage of FIRE Sector Workers | 12.4 | 11.6 | 10.1 |
| Percentage of Professional and Related Service Workers | 20.7 | 30.6 | 38.1 |

Table 3 - Ethnic Origin of Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Residents in Lower Park Slope,

1980-2000. Source: US Bureau of the Census 1980, 1990, 2000

| | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Non-Hispanic: | 55.1 | 60.5 | 64.6 |
| White | 36.8 | 39.5 | 40.8 |
| Black | 15.6 | 16.5 | 14.8 |
| American Indian | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.2 |
| Asian or Pacific Islander* | n/a | 3.9 | 5.0 |
| Other race | 2.5 | 0.3 | 0.6 |
| Two or more races** | n/a | n/a | 3.3 |
| Hispanic: | 44.9 | 39.5 | 35.4 |
| White | 21.6 | 16.1 | 13.1 |
| Black | 1.9 | 4.0 | 2.0 |
| American Indian | 0.1 | 0.2 | 0.4 |
| Asian or Pacific Islander* | n/a | 0.4 | 0.2 |
| Other race | 21.2 | 18.8 | 17.0 |
| Two or more races** | n/a | n/a | 2.6 |

* This separate category was introduced in 1990.

** The 2000 Census was the first to give respondents a chance to identify themselves as belonging to more than one racial category.

Table 4: Criteria for Eligibility to Receive Help from Fifth Avenue Committee

- The tenant lives within the DFZ area
- The tenant lives in a small building that is not protected by the rent laws
- The tenant is low-income
- The tenant is being evicted because the landlord wants to increase the rent dramatically

Priority is given to tenants in the following situations:

- The landlord has other housing and financial options, and is raising the rent simply to increase profits
- The landlord is an absentee owner
- The tenant is a long-time resident of the neighbourhood and/or senior citizen
- The tenant is facing a housing emergency and has no other housing options

Table 5: Similarities and Differences in the Gentrification of South Parkdale and Lower Park Slope

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| <p>Similarities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the history of investment, disinvestment and reinvestment• the crucial influence of non-City policy on rent regulation – Province of Ontario, and the State of New York• the expansion of the professional middle-classes who desire central city locations• the escalating crisis of affordable rental housing to which gentrification has contributed• landlord-tenant struggles, and displacement (qualitatively)• some ‘improvement’ was necessary, but it has gone too far• ‘social tectonics’ <p>Differences</p> <p><u>South Parkdale</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the history of deinstitutionalization and the rooming house/bachelorette building conflict.• lack of organised resistance to gentrification• the City/Provincial government policy contradiction which facilitates gentrification <p><u>Lower Park Slope</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the costructuring of society and space by class and race, and the displacement of low-income Hispanic residents• active resistance to gentrification in the form of community organising• the larger influence of real estate industry in gentrification (the intertwining of politics and real estate) |
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