Multicultural Community Building in an Urban Neighborhood

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the activists of the Whittier neighborhood.

Abstract

This is an anthropological ethnography of multicultural community-building among the almost all-white activists in Minneapolis' largest neighborhood, Whittier. It shows the effects that the discourses, theories, and activities of these neighborhood activists have on the social structures that reproduce class, racial, and ethnic inequality.

The first chapter analyzes the acrimonious battle over the opening of an apartment building for homeless. It shows the construction of the symbols at play, including Stability, Burden, Stakeholders, Gentrification, and Over-concentration of the poor. Chapter two explains how politics in Whittier became so polarized between competing factions of white, liberal, middle-class homeowners, who all share a love of their neighborhood's diversity. The study also illuminates how the faction representing "homeowner interests" achieved dominance. Chapter three shows that while many paint Whittier as very dangerous, statistically it is not. The chapter explains the role that fear, exaggerated talk of crime, citizen crime patrols, media sensationalism, personal identity, and class conflict play in the creation of place and racial segregation. Chapter four explains how ethnic identities and class hierarchies are socially constructed through neighborhood campaigns, and also how the meaning of "diversity" itself gets produced. The chapter details how white and Somali ethnicities are manufactured by struggles over a Somali mall and the parking around it. Chapter five reveals the failures of democracy in Whittier politics, and argues that not only has elected, democratic governance failed, but that attempting it on the neighborhood scale is probably futile and destructive. Chapter six discovers that while the academic literature argues that Americans are largely ignorant of social structures that reproduce inequality, white Whittier activists of many viewpoints are actually cognizant of them, and of their own privilege.

This study finds that the key to understanding the multiplicity of thought and policy on poverty and multiculturalism, is by investigating Whittier activists' theories on neighborhood development. For example, activists opposing more subsidized housing in Whittier espouse that Whittier's health requires more homeowners, fewer renters, and fewer residents requiring housing subsidies. This activism modified class hierarchy, re-imagining it along the lines of the type of housing one inhabits.

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Introduction

Everywhere one looks in the Whittier neighborhood of Minneapolis, white, middle-class activists are advertising multicultural programs. These schemes caught my attention because of my interest in the proliferation of the many and diverse forms of multiculturalism practiced today. In Whittier for example, the logo of the officially recognized neighborhood organization was "Where Diversity Becomes Community," while their rival group was "Embracing Democracy and Diversity," a neighborhood Baptist Church was "A Multicultured People," and on and on. There are a wide range of programs in Whittier that talk about bringing together people of different types. All this activity begged the anthropological questions, what was happening that there was so much rhetoric and activity expended on "building diverse community" in one neighborhood? What did "valuing diversity" mean to disparate activists? What sorts of multiculturalisms were being practiced? What struggles were taking place between competing players? And what were the effects of all this.

The Whittier neighborhood sits just south of downtown Minneapolis, between a poorer, mostly African-American area to the east across the freeway, a wealthier, 95% white area a few blocks to the West, and a growing Latino and Somali small business corridor to the south. The population is noticeably segregated by ethnicity, language, businesses frequented, and ownership status of home. In the late 1960s Whittier's boundaries were established as Lake Street on the southern edge, Lyndale Avenue to the west, Franklin Avenue to the north, and Interstate 35W to the east.[i] Of its 13,000 to 15,000 residents, half are white, a fifth African-American, and another fifth Latino; there are also many refugees from the war in Somalia, some recent immigrant families from Southeast Asia, and many other ancestries. Whittier is the largest neighborhood in Minneapolis in area and population, and second in density only to its tiny neighborhood on its northern boundary.

All of this diversity is treasured in different ways in Whittier, but in the academic literature there is a critique of multiculturalism that finds that some of its forms "merely" celebrate diversity through its cheery consumption, such as going to Scandinavian festivals and Vietnamese delis, rather than working to fundamentally change social

structures that reproduce racial/ethnic inequality (Fraser 1995). With the global rise of free-market neoliberalism (Harvey 2001), the enduring racial segregation in America, the ever-vigilant protection of white privileges (Lipsitz 1998), and the growing gap between rich and poor, I felt it was important to understand the significant and innovative roles that neighborhood activists were playing in these trends. While the whites in Whittier are mostly middle-class, the African-Americans, Somali refugees, and Latino immigrants spend little time in the places of the white social world that surrounds them. Even in the reputedly neutral space of the neighborhood meetings, where policies affecting all these groups is shaped, it is rare to find anyone that is not white, professional, or a homeowner. This dissertation investigates the relationship between neighborhood activism and (in)equality, through the process of multicultural community-building. It answers the question, what effects do the shifting discourses and contested programs of Whittier activists have on social structures that reproduce inequity?

And what could be a more natural subject of research for cultural anthropology than multiculturalism and diversity? Writing over a century ago, Franz Boas was the most influential architect of anthropology in America, and given Boas' liberal perspective on race and culture, contemporary anthropology would seem a natural for studying multiculturalism (Gelya 1997). Surprisingly though, it turns out that anthropology has had very little to say on the subject.[ii] A trend in contemporary academia is to be interdisciplinary, but my research study is interdisciplinary out of necessity, since the fields of Sociology, History, Cultural Studies, and American Studies have been the ones to tackle this thorny topic head on. Perhaps anthropologists do not find the need to discuss multiculturalism since they feel it is already embedded in their work? When it comes to the designing of multicultural programs in America, maybe this is why anthropologists have been disappointed that they have not been consulted by planners of such important things as school curriculums, government policy, economic development, international business relations, international peace plans, or corporate hiring. "Most of us have been sitting around like so many disconsolate intellectual wallflowers, waiting to be asked to impart our higher wisdom, and more than a little resentful that the invitations never come" (Turner 1993:411).[iii]

But while they may be eminently qualified in this area, anthropologists might not be imparting the kind of wisdom that many want to hear. For example, even in American neighborhoods with large numbers of minorities, community groups are usually composed almost exclusively of white, middle-class homeowners, and so after spending years analyzing neighborhood organizations, I might imagine that *I* might be the perfect consultant for advising them on how to increase their minority inclusion. After all, groups complain frequently about the low rate of participation by minority neighbors, while singing the praises of diversity. I might be tempted to recommend to them that if they want more minorities involved, they need to give up a sizable amount of decision making authority to minorities. This would mean that money and programs would shift towards the concerns of minority communities, whatever those concerns may be, and it also would mean that the core mission of the organization might be altered. Everyone wants their board and staff to look like a rainbow of colors, but how many are willing to freely give up actual decision making authority to a group of strangers who may have a different set of goals than you? If mainstream multiculturalism is about adoring diversity while not necessarily including new voices fully into the places of power, then who wants to hear the critique of some idealist academic like myself?

Regardless, given anthropology's scholarship on encounters between different cultures, Perry felt that anthropologists could be helpful by warning the public about the problems and pitfalls of living with and trying to understanding those different from oneself. Valuable are anthropology's critiques of exoticism and romanticism, and its experience as both part and parcel of colonialism/imperialism and an advocate for those colonized and oppressed. For example, Jack David Eller finds anthropology to have gained a distinctive wisdom from its own crisis with the usefulness of "culture" as a concept (1997:255). He warned though that given its tools and methods, anthropology should not enter the fray as either a skeptic of mainstream multiculturalism or an opponent of the anti-multicultural crowd. Anthropology should instead be a force for the "critical study and exegesis of culture," rather than just another interest group using "culture-as-means-to-an-end" (256).[iv] "Anthropology, with its expertise in culture and relativism … should offer a kind of multicultural metacriticism, pointing out where both

sides misuse culture and overestimate its restorative power" (255). But again, how many non-profit employees, urban activists, and municipal bureaucrats are sitting around pining to be the target of "multicultural metacriticism" (even anthropologists themselves wince at the notion of someone doing this to their work).

The trick perhaps, is to traverse the space between ivory tower condescension towards local activists, and using academic research to simply legitimize the position of whichever interest group the researcher considers the most just. This is a simplification of the ethnographic endeavor, but still a challenge of which the ethnographer could frequently remind him or herself. Uncovering the historically contingent social construction of something like "multiculturalism" or "diversity" is a noble deed, but only if done in a way that respects those who are using these terms, while at the same time showing both the existent and potential consequences of particular uses of these terms.

To their credit however, I cannot think of a time when anyone was rude to me because of the research I was doing. I suspect that there were many instances where I was not invited to particular events or not invited to explore certain issues, but I was never once uninvited and almost never barred from anything. Once, at the beginning of a board meeting of the largest neighborhood group, the board was about to take an important stance on a controversial proposal for a new affordable housing development, and one board member made a motion that non-board members not be allowed to observe the meeting. There were three of us guests – a proponent of the development, an opponent, and me. This had been a particularly contentious issue with accusations of lying and racism, and the decision of these dozen or so individuals on the board had the potential of directly effecting hundreds of lives and tens of millions of dollars, and this board member felt she could not be forthcoming with her opinions on the matter if guests were present (I more or less assumed at the time that it was my presence that she feared, but who knows?). However, when the board voted on her motion, hers was the only voice to restrict attendance. To this day, that lopsided vote has left me with a kind of proud faith in humanity, and also gratitude. In the short discussion before this vote, one member eloquently expressed that any visitors that day must have a serious interest in the issue, and that should be honored. Though many of the board members might have been

happier without my prying eyes present, they respected the importance of transparency (and maybe even academic scholarship!). My point is not that people need to fight for transparency, or that you cannot please everyone all the time, but rather that it can be both reasonable and vital that a critical, respectful look be taken at the activities of those who wield more than average influence over the lives of others.

So if anthropological field research is to actually highlight the ambiguity in the uses of "diversity," and offer metacriticism on it, while at the same time bringing an original understanding of how power flows through these ambiguities and uses, then what makes Whittier in particular a useful site? After all, there are reams of neighborhoods in America that are diverse, contested, and have multicultural programs. And while unique in its own ways, Whittier is not so different from any urban neighborhood in America, with its segregation, gentrification, complaints about parking, and fear of drug dealers. I chose Whittier because of its long, rich, well-documented, and contentious history of community activism. Its official organization, the Whittier Alliance, has been among the most active and oldest in the city, having gone through many phases of "neighborhood action plans" with multi-million dollar budgets. Making things all the more interesting are the many other groups in the neighborhood, which often compete and/or collaborate with the Alliance. And fortuitously for me, during the time of my research Whittier experienced a multitude of acrimonious debates ripe for understanding how society works.

For example, the biggest single battle in Whittier in recent history was in the early 2000s over the redevelopment of an old retirement home into long-term housing for those that had been homeless. Chapter One will tell an intricate and intimate story of this conflict, in particular analyzing the misunderstood arguments of those who filed suit to stop the housing program. I found that this was not simply a case of NIMBY (Not In My BackYard) activists against the disadvantaged, because the protesters were not against all supportive housing in their neighborhood, only against what they considered the super-concentration of it. The protesters maintained that not only was the "warehousing" of the in need in one neighborhood hurting "the neighborhood" in general, but also the in need

themselves. On top of this they alleged there were deliberate policies at play that were funneling the in need into their neighborhood, and this was a massive case of discrimination against a marginalized neighborhood that lacked the political influence to prevent this unjust over-concentration of poverty. My analysis ferrets out the precise notions and approaches such as these, which are affecting the current development of housing and services for the in-need in communities across the nation. The analysis goes beyond this by not only showing the ideologies at play, but the processes involved in the creation and contestation of ideology itself. At the same time I show that these ideologies do not simply appear out of nowhere, do not sit unchanging, and absolutely *do* weirdly intermingle with their neighboring ideologies.

In getting to know many of the individual activists, I noticed that those who talked a lot about the "stability" of the neighborhood, also were usually the ones concerned more heavily about crime, about the size of condo units, the "investment" in the neighborhood by renters, about the success of local businesses, about the number of the poor in Whittier, and about parking. In other words, these things correlated together. But in and of itself, to note that certain beliefs and attitudes often seem to appear together is not particularly insightful; and to explain correlations such as these with a single theory is not always useful. In America currently, people who are pro-life are largely also against affirmative action, same-sex marriage, and more regulation of businesses. And people that are very concerned about global warming usually want a smaller role for the military, but more government regulation of business (this pattern is why we can have political parties). And while these patterns are undeniably at work, what we find is that Americans are obsessed with *naming* these kinds of national political patterns, often through dichotomies such as Christian conservative vs. secular liberal, orthodox vs. progressive, fascist vs. communist, gun nut vs. tree hugger, or racist vs. femi-nazi. Social scientists from many fields and folks of many stripes are constantly offering up their theories on these frameworks of difference. It seems everyone has their take on this trope. But when our normal theoretical models (i.e. stereotypes) do not easily apply, we often explain the situation away as an anomaly, or develop a whole new theory that incorporates the new evidence.

I could come up with a social psychology theory of the group who are concerned with parking, condo size, investment, and crime, or a theory of the inner differences between this group and activists who are not as concerned about these issues, but for this study I find it more useful to analyze how these issues are being used, being developed, and making changes in the world, and doing all these things in the *context* of very specific conflicts. “Stability” means nothing in a vacuum, but everything when it comes to fighting against a program to supply free needles on Nicollet Ave to drug users. “Stability” becomes not just something that has some meaning, but also a comprehensive ideology, a theory of community development, a recruiting tool, and an object of academic study.

This study will note patterns in thought, word and action, in the service of explaining such marvels as how neighborhoods change, how power dynamics within organizations shift, how social structures of inequality operate on the neighborhood scale , and how power functions to affect such people as the homeless, the renters, the homeowners, and the landlords. I will not spend as much time labeling and categorizing activists, groups, and movements, as I will analyzing how the activists themselves label and categorize. Words such as “stability,” “investment,” “classism,” “diversity,” and “2 ½ story walkup apartments,” are used so often by Whittier activists because these words do so much. They do their work by producing and effecting actual fights over housing programs, home improvement loans, art museums, and public urination. There is so much labeling going already in neighborhood politics, there’s little need for more from me.

During the time of my research in Whittier, new condominiums were going up, apartment buildings converted to condos, up-scale restaurants displaced dive bars, and historic mansions were renovated by the very wealthy (who began moving back into the neighborhood after a long era of white flight). And with the Great Recession that followed these trends, condominiums failed, storefronts went empty, houses were foreclosed on, and philanthropic giving slowed. But through it all, the local economy, activism and construction stayed surprisingly robust. For example, neighborhood committees continually contested the plans for construction projects, and this is but a part

of the way in which on every scale, every day, and in every corner, "Whittier" is contentiously negotiated. In this neighborhood that is diverse in terms of race, wealth, and lifestyle, but whose political environment is almost universally liberal, intensely activist, and racially conscious, the state of affairs suggested to me that the manufacture of diversity, disadvantage, privilege, and the free-market economy are all different in Whittier than in previously studied neighborhoods. Chapter Two brings this home by giving a history of the raucous neighborhood politics in the decade preceding the battle over the homeless housing program that I described above. What I found is that a particular positions that activists hold on issues such as housing the homeless, can be explained not by a label or theory, but by understanding the constellation of theories that an activist or group holds on housing, society, and personhood. For example, those who advocate for no additional supportive housing in Whittier for the mentally ill and chemically addicted, tend to foresee the effects of the rise of these programs on the "health" of the entire social fabric of the community, and the effects on the fortunes of all its people. The unique knowledges and seemingly contradictory strategies of the competing political factions in the neighborhood are drawn out, in order to show how political polarization is constructed and reinforced on the neighborhood scale.

Whittier today is seen as a re-vitalizing area, and some have attributed this change to the immigrant, small-business owners who successfully moved their commerce into the vacant, low-rent storefronts. For others, the success of the neighborhood was due to the dogged hard work of a small group of (almost all white) homeowners who stopped the "invasion" into the neighborhood of social service organizations and affordable housing, drove out many of the prostitutes and drug dealers, forced developers to build high-quality "urban" structures, and crafted the marketing scheme of "Eat Street" on the neighborhood's main boulevard. These are the kinds of discourses and theories that this study will always analyze for meaning, sometimes evaluate for accuracy, and ultimately investigate for their effects on such phenomena as race and ethnicity, class and wealth, democracy and inequality, and fear. For example, chapter three will argue that while many in and out of the neighborhood talk about Whittier as a dangerous, high-crime place, it in fact is not dangerous at all. My argument will shed new light on how place

gets made, and in particular how urban neighborhoods become synonymous with danger, leading to segregation, gentrification and class itself.

As a result of the strange history of residential migrations and zoning code revisions in Whittier, the neighborhood boasts an unusually broad range of incomes, housing and commerce. Million-dollar turn-of-the-century stone mansions sit literally in between WWII era single-family bungalows and 1970s public housing projects. Scattered throughout the neighborhood are meticulously renovated manors, crumbling mansions, rental duplexes, single-family homes, stately brick apartment buildings, cheap wooden apartment buildings, housing projects, homeless shelters, supportive housing facilities for the mentally ill and disabled, large new condo buildings, and older rental to condo conversions. This housing surrounds such institutions as a world-class art museum, a prestigious art college, a popular grocery coop, a renowned record store, dozens of ethnic restaurants, a huge Somali mall, a Latino themed strip mall, a Vietnamese themed strip mall, over a dozen Asian markets, numerous churches, a few coffee shops, and live theatres. Residents constantly refer to all of this diversity to show their love for both the neighborhood and multicultural living. And chapter four takes on the term "diversity" in the context of Whittier politics, explaining its hard to get at meanings and its consequences for altering structures of inequality. Ethnic identities are being socially constructed through battles over parking and over a Somali shopping mall, as well as neighborhood campaigns to bring customers to the many "ethnic" restaurants. I intimately draw out how all this action is producing the very meaning of "diversity," and conclude that while this "community building" can be successful at selling food and selling the concept of diversity itself, a never ending stream of neighborhood projects could be chasing a perpetually, unfulfilled fantasy of the multicultural, urban paradise.

Walking the neighborhood with the citizen crime patrol was one way that I got to know Whittier, but I "know" it much more through the way that people talked to me about it. One would think that I would have gotten to know the architecture and physical make-up of the neighborhood by physically being in it, but I found it over-whelming trying to understand all the places and architectural styles. I could not always remember where buildings were, or what they looked like, because I do not know much about

architecture, and simply do not have the memory or sense of raw space required. When I walk around now, what I notice are the 2 ½ story walkup apartment buildings, because I have heard so many activists so passionately express their hatred of them. I see old mansions that have been beautifully renovated by the couples who bought them, and I see other mansions that have been somewhat maintained by the supportive housing corporations that house the hard to house. I see this difference because many people from the neighborhood have told me about their respect for the families that have invested so much into their mansions, and about their disdain for the non-profits that "warehouse" the poor and in need within many other mansions.

While 89% of the residents rent, half are minorities, and a quarter are below the poverty line, the board of the Whittier Alliance resists any housing development that is not market-rate and owner-occupied, resists any services that stereotypically attract the poor, and courts capital for upscale businesses. However, this is done all in the name of neighborhood diversity, empowerment and health. It is designed to with the goal of improving the lives of everyone. However contradictory this may sound, it actually makes perfect sense from the perspective of these particular urban activists. And to many, it also makes sense that the neighborhood should be represented by a tiny range of Whittier people – the property and business owners. But at the same time this minority of white gentry also laments the low level of neighborhood participation by people of color, and hires Spanish and Somali speaking organizers to make bridges with them. Chapter five delves deeply into the tragic and complex failures of democracy such as these; and comes to the conclusion that given all the activism in Whittier in the name of "democracy" and "the people," not only has elected governance failed, but even attempting it at the neighborhood level is both futile and destructive.

While interviewing a man who has for many years been contesting Whittier's future, he self-deprecatingly told me, "I have a lot of good ideas on how to solve every problem." Don't we all. And yet, the actual social theories that *non-experts* have is rarely examined, even though it plays such an enormous role in the creation of the society we all live in. For example, as I grew to understand anti-affordable housing activists who are

accused of being immoral classists, I increasingly felt that it was imperative to tell their perspective. Without this perspective, we lack an understanding of a significant factor in neighborhood change, including housing policies crucial to changing urban and suburban environments.[v] In focusing on the discourses and practices of "community building" at play in Whittier, I found it imperative to study the activists' theories of how culture, society, and economy work. These theories are phenomena that activists use every day to try to, in their own words, "empower community" and "improve its stability."

Taking "folk" knowledge such as this seriously is nothing new for anthropologists. While the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski did not believe in the efficacy of magic practiced by the Trobriand Islanders, he did want to sincerely understand the magic and its role in their lives. And in the current era, medical anthropologists work to understand what is known by those around the world who are not Western-trained medical professionals; researchers do this not to represent non-western medicine as witchery, but rather as legitimate knowledge, potentially efficacious, and something which makes sense when seen in context. This dissertation examines how various communities of "knowers" construct their knowledge (Haraway 1989, Latour 1999, Martin 1990, Mitchell 1988, Rapp 1993) of how to build healthy community. For example, in order to reveal the ways that structures of inequality are protected and contested, I have sought out in particular the "discursive repertoires" (Frankenberg 1993) that elide these structures, the projects that fail to address them, and the theories that deny them (Emerson 2000). What my research found is that the talk and policies of community-builders in Whittier, both illuminate and ignore the real life barriers that minorities and the poor experience. And I show the ways that this talk and policy is itself actively refashioning those very barriers in Whittier.

My research was inspired by urban ethnographies that take seriously both the powerful social structures contributing to inequality, and the agency of the marginalized who always adaptively resist even the most powerful of structures (Bourgois 1995, Gregory 1998a, Susser 1982). An inspiration for me are the anthropological critiques of the "Culture of Poverty" concept; these are critiques that explain phenomena like poverty, crime, and urban "decline" not with "pathological" values internal to individuals or

minority groups, but with institutions of the political-economy which constantly maintain hierarchy by restricting the access the marginalized have to wealth and power (Gans 1967, Leacock 1971, Valentine 1969). But while social science theory can trap itself within theoretical binaries (Gibson-Graham 1996) of multicultural/racist, global/local, and capitalism/community, I am informed by challenges which present terms such as "structure" and "agency" as not opposites but constitutive of each another (Gregory 1998b). Some of the most informative theory on social structure today comes out of work on race; my study adds to this literature by connecting racial discourses with not just structures of inequality, but distinct, progressive, grassroots activisms that are both stripping away and breeding those structures.

While this study is in some ways all about whiteness, after this introduction the word is not even used again until the last chapter. By not using the word I might be guilty of dodging some ugly truths that need telling, but I find the word divisive. I once had a white student of mine ask me why ethnic studies such as Black Studies or Chicano Studies were all about making those ethnicities look good, but Whiteness Studies was all about making whites look bad. I answered that these are apples and oranges, because Whiteness Studies is not focused on learning specifically about white *people*, but instead is a vehicle to learn about specific kinds of *social systems* (which happen to have been used by many whites to maintain their own privilege). This is not to say that ethnic studies are not about systems of power, or that Whiteness Studies is not about cultural aspects of communities of people who are white, but it is to say that the primary purpose of Whiteness Studies is not to study the cultural heritage of a particular ethnic group. However, this non-parallelism between ethnic studies and Whiteness Studies is something only a very small portion of the population would know about, and just hearing the word "whiteness" makes most whites defensive instead of curious.

A common answer given as to why there is a need for specific fields of study dedicated to Black or Latino history, is because "American History" is simply white history. It is argued that whites already have departments that specifically study and glorify them, and they are called History, Political Science, Economics, Western Civilization, Literature, Philosophy, etc. In addition, American schools have spent

centuries working so hard to make whites look exemplary and others look defective, that the small sliver of time since colleges have taught conscientiously about minorities, is needed to even try to make up for these epochs of inaccurate representations.[vi]

The reason that ethnic studies are not parallel to whiteness studies, is the same reason that calling a white man a honky is not parallel to calling a Jew a kike or an African American a spook. The reason is power and history. There is a long history of whites using racial slurs not simply to make fun of others, but to systematically degrade them publically in such an evocative way that it reminds all that these people are unclean, underserving, and not to be allowed to access power. Calling me a honky does not anger me because it has no *effect* on my place in society, it is a laughable attack. The reason it is so offensive to call an African American a racial slur is not because blacks are thin skinned, but because unless this slur is stopped in its tracks, it has the potential to directly affect them materially and socially in very real ways. Countering racial slurs and stereotypes against minorities is part and parcel of reversing the history of oppression against them. Similarly, programs of racial preference such as affirmative action are not going to degrade the wealth of whites, but not giving preferences to blacks and women may very well result in the continued suppression of these groups.

The people studied in this dissertation are almost exclusively white, but this is neither necessary or sufficient to make it a study in whiteness (and certainly not an example of "White Studies"). This dissertation is about history, power, and a history of power in Whittier. Again, this does not mean whiteness. The white people in this study are almost all middle class, homeowners, who access a place of political influence that few others are (neighborhood organizations). This is not whiteness per se, but now we are getting into a realm where it would basically be impossible to be a legitimate study and not be about whiteness. However, once this study gets into *ideologies*, which are used to promote and resist policies that effect communities of color and poverty, now you are really getting into whiteness, because you are intimately dealing in systems of inequality.

Whiteness though is not a simply about white people being oppressive. It has to do with everything implicated in and affecting the multiple social systems that influence inequality. I personally do not believe that whites are any more selfish than any others; it

is simply that they are the ones who happen to dominant in the world we find ourselves in today (and much of yesterday and tomorrow). We could come up with a name for studying the system of dominance of any particular group at any particular time and place; Roman-ness, aristocracy-ness, Saudi-Royal-Family-ness; but Whiteness is not only the contemporary system, but one that is larger, more complex, more wide-ranging, and in some ways more ingenious, than other arrangements of difference/hierarchy.

So when white, neighborhood activists in Whittier profess their love of diversity, this is whiteness. It is whiteness not only because the way they do it is distinct to middle-class whites in the area, but importantly in this case, it comes from whites that are actively changing racial and class systems. These are activists who are arguing over political policies that affect the services to, housing for, and political participation of, the lower income, disabled, and darker skinned. "Multiculturalism" could very easily be another name for these policies, because they are specifically enacted in the name of fighting intolerance, poverty, and segregation. I am not challenging anyone's appreciation of diversity, or their desire to live in Whittier because of its diversity; I show how the *expression* of their endearment for diversity is part and parcel of larger and historical technologies of inequity. This discourse occurs intimately in the context of "community building" and "neighborhood development," and I found it closely linked to political positions on such things as housing for low-income and for high-income, crimes associated with the very poor, minority voting rates, and complaints about immigrants.

If the first reason the word Whiteness is not used much in this study is because it would turn many white readers away, the second reason is because, as a white person I find it distasteful. I do not mind the injustice that the research on whiteness lays upon my ancestors and compatriots; it is just that I identify much more on my geographical, political, and social identities than on my racial one. I do not want to be reduced to being white or a part of a brutal status system. However, in feeling this way I may have just made the exact point of Whiteness research – the fact that being white is the unmarked (normal) category that does not have to be referenced to work its magic on the hierarchy of society. I have the luxury of focusing on all my other identities, and ignoring my white identity, while still benefiting every day from it (it is the gift that keeps on giving).

The contemporary literature on Whiteness and race describes racism as not so much involving *overt*, calculated acts of discrimination, as *covertly* built into institutions, laws, ideologies and language (Emerson & Smith 2000, Bonilla-Silva 2000, Gotanda 1991, Lamont 2000, Sears 1997). These are the phenomenon mainly responsible for bestowing the gift of privilege, not the use of racial slurs or insensitive comments. The tropes of color-blindness, meritocratic-individualism (Newman 1999) and liaise-faire economics generate seemingly inoffensive narratives such as "everyone's success in life should be judged only by their individual character and merit" (Frankenberg 1993), "opportunity in American today is a level playing field" (Ansell & Statman 1999), and "racial difference should never be acknowledged" (Winant 1997). However, research shows that these narrative work to thwart people from understanding structural explanations for ethnic inequality (Emerson & Smith 2000). What is interesting is that these narratives, which have been so dominant and pervasive in America, are not operative in Whittier politics. However, studying the academic theory on race and Whiteness has given me the tools I need to be able to accurately reveal the remarkable racialized narratives that are being used in Whittier, narratives which are legitimizing and challenging racial status quos in new ways.

What this study shows is how *heterogeneous* and *situational* whiteness is. The particular ways that white activists in Whittier practice their brand of class and race politics only partially matches to the archetypes that we find in the social science literature or in the national discussions. While many in Whittier are saying "not in my backyard" to services for the homeless and in need, this is out of context. Taken in context, what they are saying is "Why Always In My Back Yard" (WAIMBY?), or "What About Your Back Yard For Once" (WAYBYFO?). This outlook is unique, and could only exist in some of the low income neighborhoods in some cities, since it would not make sense in the wealthier or outlying neighborhoods in Minneapolis, where the *situation* is different because each one probably has no services for the homeless. On top of this, among white middle-class homeowners within Whittier itself there are so many different positions and theories on subsidized housing, that none of the overly-simplified national archetypes about white people could ever encapsulate the heterogeneity of

Whittier. In 1999 John Hartigan published an ethnography on racial situations in a few mostly white neighborhoods of Detroit, in which he had all but identified what I later found in my own research (4),

> Instead of relying on composite views of "race" in a national perspective, we need to dwell more attentively on the disparate and unstable interpretations of racial matters that people develop in the course of their daily lives. In order to think differently about race we need to pay attention to the local settings in which racial identities are actually articulated, and contested, resisting the urge to draw abstract conclusions about whiteness and blackness.

What my study reveals is that the identities of many whites in Whittier are complexly assembled through such things as their love of diversity, of the civil rights era struggles, of the urban, of street level protest, and of the neighborhood's historical significance; and these identities are also assembled by being defined against the neighborhood's Somali refugees, the drug dealers, the renters, the non-profit developers, the Asian business owners, the slum-lords, the city bureaucrats, and the suburbanites.

I am helped in this research by recent scholars of race and globalization that urge a shift away from exposing only the agents, attitudes, speech or actions contributing to inequality, to analyzing the *power dynamics* of which these phenomena are a part. It is unproductive to research race only by studying minorities, or studying whites but only their (racist) attitudes towards others (Hartigan 1997), or by focusing on individual "racists" instead of on larger social structures of racism (Feagin & O'Brien 2003). What had been missing sometimes in the past was placing racial attitudes into the more important context of *systems* of racial oppression (Bonilla-Silva (2003); and I help to correct for that oversight by understanding attitudes towards race and inequality, within the context of activist theories of how to do multicultural community-building.

There is currently a gap in academia's knowledge of how non-elites, such as neighborhood volunteers, conceive of the functions of their own society. Neighborhood activists and employees not only have a vast array of sophisticated conceptions of society, but these conceptions are influencing the policies that are changing cities and the lives of their inhabitants. While social scientists have studied urban activism (Ginsburg 1989, Gregory 1998, Harvey 2001, Susser 1982) and theorized the power dynamics of

inequality (Goldberg 1990, Gregory & Sanjek 1996, Horsman 1986, Omi & Winant) researcher has not studied the ways in which activism itself can be complicit with inequality. While the social sciences have proposed reams of strategies for alleviating inequality, and heavily critiqued the neoliberal and multicultural strategies of nations and corporations (Carrier 1998, Fine 1998, McMichael 1998, Dudley 1994, Hart 2002), the models that the *non-elites* employ for changing society have not been adequately theorized. Without understanding what people know about how communities function, we lack an understanding of how culture changes.

The board members of the Whittier Alliance that fight proposals for non-market rate housing, are routinely accused of simply being racist, classist, and NIMBY, and it would easy for me to write them as bigoted. One way to avoid taking this simple road is to understand their resistance against social service non-profits as based on the theories they develop around creating a healthy neighborhood. And while I would never proclaim them to be racist, classist, or NIMBY, I do illustrate the threads of racism, classism, and NIMBYism that play within their ideas and practice. Hartigan (2000) found that when antiracists today too sharply define whiteness and blackness, it ends up reifying these two subject positions. Instead, he feels that anthropological ethnography can be a tool to highlight the specificities that show the ambiguity in racial identities and in positions on race (395-6). By exploring this ambiguity among the white, multicultural activists of one neighborhood, and not focusing on the hatred of racism/racists, or the tolerance of anti-racism, my study educates on the complexity of whiteness today. Another way to avoid the trap of labeling people as racist or non-racist, is by not trying to discern the *inner* qualities of *individuals*. Instead I focus on the *effects* of people's actions, and on the larger social *structures* that they are working within/on.

It is very important to me to make my best effort at responsibly representing the full humanness of those I studied. There is already a large and worthy body of literature showing that America today is in many ways a racist society, what we need is high quality, social science research that earnestly understands the reasoning and lives of people who are seen as intolerant and unjust, while also holding them accountable for the outcomes of their actions, regardless of whether those outcomes are intended or

unintended. The final chapter explores the reasoning and knowledge that community activists have of the social structures that reproduce poverty and wealth, towards the end of unravelling the relationship between this knowledge and the outcomes of their activism. While the academic literature argues that Americans are ignorant of structures of inequality, I found that Whittier activists of many bents, are cognizant of both structures of poverty and of privilege, and also have heterogeneous, multi-layered understandings of inequality. This suggests that simply *knowing* about inequality does not lead to any particular *position* on it. There are many and conflicting solutions out there to inequality, that can be enacted under the rubric of social justice and multiculturalism.

And while many are aware of the barriers that the poor and minorities face, they are at the same time unaware of the deleterious racial and class effects that their activism has. This is an aspect of their unique whiteness. Many overtly campaign for equality, for minority participation, and against racism, and at the same time many campaign for programs and policies that indirectly create barriers for the poor, create negative stereotypes of ethnic minorities, and indirectly create barriers for immigrant participation in neighborhood-based events. For example, when many citizens consistently paint homeowners as people that contribute to the stability of the neighborhood, while painting renters as non-contributors, and those in supportive housing as negatively contributing, these citizens' words are stereotyping historically marginalized people as not as valuable as those who can afford a mortgage, and this reproduces racial and class hierarchies.

If whiteness today is a covert maneuver to assemble kinder, gentler sounding structures that maintain white middle-class superiority, then portraying the poor and disabled as not contributors, and giving mixed messages to them about their place at tables of power, would seem to be another method for promising white superiority. In which case, many of the forms of multiculturalism that are being practiced in Whittier, regardless of their intent or positive effects on society and individuals, could *also* have positive effects for white privilege. Encouraging white privilege is nothing new, what makes Whittier politics so ripe for a better understanding of the contemporary inequality is its rich, unique, assorted mixture of creative methods of changing old hierarchies.

Chapter 1 – Building Diverse Community by Blocking Apartments for the Homeless

1: Godzilla comes to the neighborhood

One fall day in 2001, a giant, blow-up Godzilla appeared on the roof of a café on a busy intersection on the edge of the Whittier neighborhood of Minneapolis. The monster was placed there in order to represent the Lydia House, a housing program for homeless adults with health problems, which was being proposed a block away.[vii] Like Godzilla, this program was seen by many protesters as a destroyer of community. To them it looked like this – the program would bring into the neighborhood people who, because of their problems, are a "burden" to the neighborhood, which is a problem because Whittier already has a heavy "over-concentration" of the poor and in-need, and this trend could "tip the balance" of this "fragile" neighborhood "back" towards urban decay and rampant crime.[viii] The irony is that in this ethnically and socio-economically diverse neighborhood where 89% of the residents rent, while the *white, progressive homeowners* who controlled the board of the officially recognized neighborhood organization fought heavily against this housing project, the *white, progressive homeowners* of a rival group fought for it.[ix]

The Whittier Alliance had been the neighborhood's long-standing organization since the late 1970s. It was one of the first neighborhood groups, had at times been by far the biggest and most active, and since the early 1990s had been recognized by the city's Neighborhood Revitalization Program as representing Whittier. A majority of the members of its board were charging that their neighborhood had for many years been made into a "warehouse" for the impoverished, refugee, disabled, drug addicted, homeless, hungry, mentally ill, and recently out of jail. They felt the neighborhood was becoming homogenously underclass, and this would further handicap the already marginalized people living there, as well as degrade the neighborhood's socio-economic diversity. However, the Alliance's rival group, the smaller Whittier Neighbors, charged that the Alliance was a racist and classist cabal of homeowners, landlords and business-owners attempting to do nothing more than gentrify the poor out of the neighborhood in order to increase the value of their own properties. In the face of these contending efforts

to promote diversity, help the marginalized, and treat all equitably, what is interesting is not who is right but how this activity changes the actual ways that (in)equality is produced and understood.

This chapter is an in-depth study of a neighborhood-based battle over the opening of one housing program. In a neighborhood that has long been rife with many contentious conflicts, “Lydia” was the most flamboyant, litigious, and visible one. This one issue rendered far more press than any other conflict in the neighborhood, with thirty seven articles between the daily Minneapolis Star Tribune and the biweekly SouthWest Journal. Before being settled in court in favor of the program, the battle generated: a two-year lawsuit that went from district court to federal court and back to district, a year of Sunday morning picketing, an anti-project website, online flaming, and many, lengthy city hearings. I found this controversy to be centrally representative of the polarized conflicts in the neighborhood, and a priceless window into meaningful discourses operating among community activists. While it does not discuss the theory in the social science literature, it is full of “the stuff” of academic theory, diffusely utilizing and producing it. Crucially, it also showcases the theories that Whittier activists have of community activism and urban revitalization. The local County Commissioner commented on Lydia by saying that, “it's all about building healthy communities" (Russell 5/29/03). Well yes, but the question is, whose community?

In listening to the local activists explain their positions on how to build healthy community, another question that I became personally interested in was – what exactly are the theories of community building that they were applying? This chapter is about the incongruent theories of community development that were interacting in one neighborhood over one issue. For example, many of the protesters against Lydia theorized that over-concentration of the in-need causes an “imbalance” between people who help stabilize a neighborhood and those who destabilize it. This imbalance is predicated upon the theory that all neighborhoods can be measured as to how much “stability” they have, and the theory that once the balance is tipped in the direction of too many in-need residents, deterioration predictably ensues. Stability, according to their calculations, is maintained by enticing to the neighborhood residents and business-

owners who are "invested" in (or "held a stake" in), the future of the neighborhood. People requiring non-profit services or government subsidies to get by, are seen as not only not inclined to see themselves as stakeholders, but are usually destabilizing agents in and of themselves. As such they impose a serious burden onto the neighborhood, and its homeowners in particular. Given the protesters theories, combined with their commitment to fairness and common-sense, they demanded that the wealthier neighborhoods of Minneapolis and suburbs accept responsibility by taking on the burden of any new supportive housing that was proposed. As I began more familiar with these theories and their effects on cities, I began to see one of my job as mining the theories – for any intrinsic value they may hold for urban activists and planners, for their value in understanding the community conflicts raging across the globe, and for their value in understanding how people make and exploit theories of how society works. Each subsequent chapter of the dissertation will directly discuss these phenomenon, which I will be introducing and exploring in this chapter.

The conflict told in this chapter is also a way into understanding the complex dynamics of *marginalization*. The activism surrounding the opening of the Lydia Apartments is particularly instructional because rather than reproducing common understandings of race, class, and urban revitalization, my analysis of the conflict will complicate them. This conflict was in no way simply a matter of racism or "Not In My BackYard" (NIMBY) attitudes, it was never a stereotypical fight between neo-liberals vs. tax-and-spend liberals, nor simply a courageous (or tragic) story of neighborhood "little guys" bravely fighting off insensitive corporate/government powers.

The next section of this will give a history of the Lydia battle, but the heart of this case study will be sections three and four where I explore the tropes, arguments, experiences, and theories of the activists. In order to reveal the ways that structures of inequality are protected, created and contested, I will analyze the most meaningful of the "discursive repertoires" (Frankenberg 1993) I found operational in the battle. These will be the repertoires that elide and reveal these structures (Emerson 2000). This chapter asks, when community-builders use their tropes and theories, how are they manufacturing polarization, and how are they changing the real life barriers that minorities and the

marginalized experience? Section five will theorize that a key to understanding the views of the activists and the battle itself is by understanding how activists “think through” location, section six will explore the creative ways that the opponents appropriated narratives of racial and class justice. In section 7 we will jump ahead a few years to examine the explosion of condo development in Whittier, where many of the tools of analysis developed throughout the Lydia case study, will be put to use in trying to understand the meaning of gentrification. The chapter will end by posing the question – who ultimately won the Lydia battle?

2: A History of the Lydia Apartments

"We really don't know how it got to be so contentious," said the president of the Plymouth Foundation (Brandt 9/17/01); to answer her unawareness I offer a history of the battle from start to finish. I also want to understand the architectural, political, economic, municipal, judicial and social factors at work that formed a political ecology, in which the tropes and theories of the activism was crafted and wielded. The structure that today is the Lydia Apartments was once a retirement home that had fallen into disrepair. When the wealthy fled their Whittier mansions in the pre-World War II era, this eventually opened up these hulking buildings to become rooming houses for the mentally and developmentally disabled, complete with a large kitchen and ground floor rooms for offices. Similarly, the flight of the elderly to the suburbs in more recent years led to empty nursing homes, which were ripe for housing the urban homeless. A local news article on the closing of a retirement home a mile south of Whittier, provides insight into the trends in the political-economy that allowed for this opportunity.

Since approximately two-thirds of nursing-home residents use Medicaid, this is a massive public “cost that drives state health budgets” (Russell 2000). In 1983 the state of Minnesota was looking to cut costs, and as nursing homes were extremely expensive, the state wanted to “move people out of institutional care and into more flexible, private, and privatized care” (Russell 2000). Although home-based care requires sending health professionals around the metro to many different private homes, it is much cheaper than the total costs of maintaining a large facility that provides for every need around-the-

clock. To make this transition, in 1983 the state placed a moratorium on building new nursing homes. To legitimize this they argued that there was a “glut of nursing home beds in the state” (Russell 2000). As put by a local nursing home administrator,

> Ask state regulators why the area is seeing a rash of nursing-home closures and they will talk about excess nursing-home beds and the need to find less costly alternatives to nursing homes. Ask nursing-home operators the same question, and they will talk about high staff costs in a tight labor market, inadequate Medicaid increases, and aging buildings, the result of a state nursing-home moratorium.

Because of that moratorium, “now most nursing homes are 30 to 40 years old” (Russell 2000) and not necessarily well cared for.

One of these was the LaSalle Convalescent Home, directly across the street from the Plymouth Congregational Church. And if closed for good five months after a particularly damning inspection by state health officials in December 1999. The home was cited for 13 infractions, while in Minnesota the average nursing home (which is possibly not in the best of condition itself) was cited for only three. Four citations specifically placed residents' health in "immediate jeopardy," including an aging furnace that, unlike the residents, had long ago lost its usefulness. During brutal Minnesota winters it “was kicking out only 40-degree heat” (Wolfe 2000).

For a national nursing-home corporation looking for profits, funding homes in Minneapolis was no longer attractive. According to the home’s administrator, while the charge for the average nursing-home bed in the metro was only $108 a day, if "you go to a Holiday Inn you pay $100 a night. [However], we include health care, laundry and meals" (Wolfe 2000). Faced with numbers such as this, how could institutions for the non-wealthy elderly stay open or even well-maintained? While the moratorium had decreased the ratio of homes to elderly needing care, existing nursing homes for the not-wealthy had fallen into disrepair due to a lack of money. The problem was that the homes that were closing were the ones needed by those most desperate. The administrator above observed that nursing homes are seen as "not modern. They are not attractive … [Therefore] those in nursing homes are those who can't afford to pay for more modern, newer, nicer alternative care" (Wolfe 2000).

Table 1: Lydia Apartments Timeline

12/27/99	LaSalle Convalescent Home cited for 13 infractions
4/7/00	LaSalle Home closes
3/01	Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation buys building for $1.2M
8/01	Opposition in the neighborhood surfaces
9/01	PCNF seeks permission from the city to waive ¼ rule.
9/17/01	Area's Council members Goodman and Niland support Lydia.
10/9/01	Planning Commission gives unanimous approval to Lydia.
10/01	Picketing of Plymouth Church by Citizens for a Balanced Community.
10/01	Opponents appeal but city rules it is too late.
10/14/01	Plymouth invites opposing neighbors to address congregation after service
10/17/01	PCNF reaffirms decision to go ahead with Lydia.
11/5/01	Planning Commission hears appeal after PCNF agrees.
11/9/01	City council rejects appeal by CFBC.
12/01	City Council approves Zoning & Planning Com. Recommendation
12/01	CITIZENS files suit in District Court
2/02	Whittier Alliance votes to support lawsuit against Lydia.
5/02	Lydia Apartments Advisory Committee convenes.
6/02	Lydia House renamed Lydia Apartments and receives $300K.
2002	District court hears suit
7/19/02	Federal judge hears oral arguments
9/02	Suit sent back to district court by federal judge.
12/4/02	Judge McShane hears suit
1/29/03	Judge McShane upholds city approval of Lydia.
2/03	Final closing on 1920 LaSalle, construction begins
4/03	CITIZENS appeals, case to go to State Court of Appeals
5/21/03	Groundbreaking of Lydia.
9/10/03	Appellate court hears arguments
10/03	Donor reception at Plymouth with tour of Lydia
11/2/03	Lydia opening ceremony
12/2/03	Appeals court rejects suit against Lydia.

In April 2001, a year after the LaSalle Convalescent Home closed, the Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation purchased it for $1.2 million. In September it began seeking permission from the city to convert this 140-bed institution into forty separate apartments for single adults needing supportive, long-term housing. [x] The Foundation is a non-profit dedicated to developing affordable, dignified housing to those lacking it. It grew directly out of, and is closely related to, the Plymouth Congregational Church, but is a separate legal entity. Plymouth Congregational occupies the entire city block across the street from Lydia (the church kisses Whittier's northern border, and Lydia sits just

three doors inside the Steven's Square Loring-Heights neighborhood[xi]). Plymouth Congregational is a large, established, and very successful congregation with a progressive bent. It has a highly visible and defined sense of social activism running through most of its practices. Given their mission, reputation, and success, the congregation draws a large number of people from across the Twin Cities metro. While they stress the diversity of their congregation, membership draws largely from white, liberal, middle to upper-class residents of the wealthy areas of southwest Minneapolis and the western suburbs. A typical member may be one who was raised in the Christian faith, and while still finding meaning in that faith, is searching for a spiritual community that is often less "religious" and more philosophical than the one to which their parents took them.[xii]

Six months after buying the property the Foundation submitted requests to the city's Planning Commission for their conversion plans. This included a waiver from the city council's own rule that no new supportive housing facilities could be placed within a quarter-mile from any current ones.[xiii] [xiv] The "¼ mile rule" was enacted in the mid-1990s after the Whittier Alliance unsuccessfully fought against the opening of the Incarnation House, a homeless shelter for mothers with children. The city council member representing Whittier was the original sponsor of the ¼ mile spacing law, but six years later when Lydia was being proposed, he felt that "housing needs have changed since then." The council member for the Steven's Square neighborhood agreed; the Star Tribune characterized her as feeling that "the area would be better off with Lydia House than having the building purchased by a landlord who could make it a low-rent apartment without support services for a needy population … This is the best reuse for this building" (Brandt 9/17/01).

Many in the neighborhood disagreed. Years of experience with dealing with subsidized housing programs had left many in the neighborhood very suspicious of non-profit housing corporations. These residents were more than ready to fight these non-profits, and primed to detect the slightest bit of bad faith on their part. When they heard that someone had plans to put homeless at 1920 LaSalle, they immediately wanted to know why the Plymouth Foundation had the gall to not consult first with the

neighborhood organizations before buying the property for this purpose. Kendra, a member of the Foundation board at the time, explained to me,

> We bought it quietly, because if you know anything about development, you don't announce publicly that you want to buy a property [as this can result in a steep increase in its price]. So I can see how they might think we did it secretly. We had been talking about what would be good for the neighborhood … Some of it was just our own inexperience, on how to be clear with people on what your real agenda it. We want to partner with them, … but that doesn't mean we are going to sign up to do only what they want, which is high-end development. And so I think there was just lack of clarity.

What to Kendra was a lack of clarity, to others was premeditated deception.

A group of individuals from the area that were against Lydia formed a coalition calling itself Citizens for a Balanced Community (Citizens). These citizens were mostly homeowners within Whittier and Steven's Square, some of which were also landlords on top of this, and others owned land and businesses within the two neighborhoods but lived in wealthier neighborhoods or suburbs. Citizens enthusiastically took to the streets and began picketing, unlike Incarnation House, this time they would not be caught unaware.

At that time, city council representative Lisa Goodman hosted a monthly "Lunch with Lisa" chat session with local constituents at the Acadia café across the street from Plymouth Congregational. At her lunch immediately following her public statement of support for Lydia, Citizens picketed outside the cafe while their Godzilla held his own twenty four hour protest on the roof above. The owner of this building was against Lydia, and he ended up picketing outside his own property (afterward, it was reported that the council member was searching for a new spot for her chat sessions) (Russell 10/22/08). Citizens' regular site of protest however became the sidewalk outside of the Sunday sermons at Plymouth Congregational.[xv] To the dismay of many mild-mannered congregants, Citizens would continue to picket them every Sunday morning for over a year. One Plymouth congregant, Olivia, told me that,

> We were certain we were doing the right thing but it was extremely uncomfortable to be on the other side of protests, I mean, we are the kind of people that tend to be the ones who draw attention to social justice, and here we were being protested.

Four years later I interviewed Jackson at the Acadia Café, who was proud to assert, “I was actually one of the nine people who sued Plymouth. Every Sunday for almost two years we picketed; between services we’d come over here [to Acadia] and have brunch.” This troupe had even gotten together years later for a reunion brunch; “I got to know a lot of people who I wouldn’t have otherwise met.”

Jameson however saw the protesters as “vultures.” “They basically harassed the congregants when they came to church … Vultures, they had an enormous inflatable animal that they put up on top of the Acadia café.” Jameson thought that the animal was supposed to be saying, “don’t let the Gorilla into the neighborhood; childish … You can bad mouth that Plymouth is a big money church, but it is just a non-profit army. They are developing so many [affordable housing] units.”

The funny thing is that various people remember that monster on top of the cafe differently. While I determined that it was Godzilla, and many remember it as such, Jameson and another supporter, Lucas, both remember it as a gorilla, and others cannot recall what it was. While sitting directly under where it once stood, I asked a strong proponent of Lydia about the Godzilla. “I didn’t even know what it was supposed to mean. Do you know?” While its meaning was lost on her, everyone remembers its audaciousness. For protesters this monstrousness was the perfect statement, but to Jameson it made another kind of statement.

> The protesters were ill-informed and vicious. The crowning touch was at a meeting where a [protester] guy stood up and said, ‘do you really want level three sex offenders living next door to you.’ Well there’s no way in hell Lydia would EVER have accepted a level three sexual offender. But the guy planted the seed, so the audience just kind of went, huhh, NO. They did some really trashy things.

Criticism of the methods that Citizens’ used was not limited to the Lydia supporters. An opponent of Lydia was quoted in a paper (Russell 2/11/2002) as saying,

> "There are some things I don't agree with what the Citizens for a Balanced City are doing," said [an Alliance] Board Member, noting the group's Sunday protests outside Plymouth Congregational Church. "The red-hot rhetoric against the church has turned me off," he said. "This isn't about picketing little old ladies going to church. This is about bureaucrats downtown.”

However, Citizens would not necessarily disagree that it is more about bureaucrats than church members, and as I will later show, their greatest disappointment to this day is not with the church but the city.

In October the Planning Commission gave unanimous approval to Lydia, in a meeting attended by a few Citizens members and a couple of the Whittier Neighbors, but also where "dozens of people sporting Metropolitan Interfaith Council for Affordable Housing buttons packed the Planning Commission meeting in support of the project, spilling into the hallway" (Russell 10/22/01). The commission clearly was not interested in opposing subsidized housing in its city, and made a "reasonable accommodation" for Lydia to over-ride the spacing rule, but not necessarily on the progressive belief that housing for the marginalized was good, but because of the U.S. Fair Housing Act.

This civil rights law makes it illegal to discriminate against the disabled in their choice of where to live (including people with mental illness, chemical additions, and HIV). Since Lydia was designed to house homeless who were also disabled, telling the Foundation that it could not build at any particular location could be seen as in direct violation of the federal law. Citizens however was focused on the reasonableness and virtue of the ¼ mile rule, and they demanded that Lydia be considered supportive housing, so that it would fall under the limits of the spacing rule. The irony is that by stressing these residents as in need of support, the tenants could also be categorized as disabled, bestowing upon them all the protections of the powerful federal legislation. The Foundation described their own project as needing to include "on-site case management and employment assistance to renters, many who will have a history of mental illness" (Russell 10/23/01).

This same month Citizens appealed the city council's approval of Lydia, but the city ruled that the appeal was filed too late (the city planner said that the appeal was not entered by the 4:30 pm Friday deadline, while Citizens' lawyer claimed it was) (Brandt 10/23/01). However, given the objections, the Foundation's board met to take another look at their project, and while they reaffirmed their original decision to develop Lydia (Russell 11/5/01), they also agreed to allow Citizens to enter their appeal to the city (as city rules only allowed late appeals if the "defendant" was amenable). On November 5

the Planning Commission heard and unanimously rejected Citizens' appeal, and that Friday the full city council upheld that decision (Brandt 11/6/01, Russell 11/19/01). To Citizens, their next step was clear – sue the city in court to uphold its ¼ mile law. Weeks before Citizens had already raised $18,000 for the expected legal battle (Russell 10/22/2001).[xvi]

At about the same time of the appeal to the Planning Commission, the SouthWest Journal noted that "There has been some thawing in the dialogue. Plymouth Congregational invited neighbors opposed to the plan to address the congregation after its Oct. 14 service" (Russell 10/22/08). However, regardless of these overtures, from the first moment that the people of Citizens heard the Lydia plan, to years later when I interviewed many of them, they felt ignored and deceived. These ideological lines had already been scribbled out long ago during past housing battles, but during the Lydia fight they were actively being hardened and reconfigured, by both the protesters and supporters. Throughout the conflict there were tendencies to distinguish and find commonality between the sides. And while the tension between defining difference and similarity was at play, polarization was by far always the bigger player. For Citizens, it did not matter how polite and generous Plymouth congregants were, or how many forums the Foundations held to air grievances and suggest changes, what the Foundation was doing was ignorant, unjust, greedy, and illegal. They felt pushed to the edge and intruded upon.

Once the charge of NIMBY had been thrown out, every remark surrounding this debate had a been given a subtext of NIMBYism. When pro-Lydia activists discussed their position, indignation at NIMBYism was always either openly invoked or lurking behind their arguments. When Lydia opponents spoke, there was often an outright denial of being NIMBY. The director of the Alliance was quoted in the press with, "we are viewed as against affordable housing because we want clarification on the quarter-mile spacing rule – an explanation of when it will be used and when it won't be used" (Russell 10/22/2001). In October the church's senior minister gave a sermon on the controversy entitled "Stirrings and Storms," and pointed out that in struggling within a storm, "We are listening to all points of view," but he stressed that in the end, the church has "a

preferential option to the poor" (Russell 11/5/2001). This re-established their position as a shared and upstanding one; "we" are for the poor.[xvii] For some, after Lydia was officially approved by the city council the matter was closed and it was time for cooperation. While the board of the SSCO originally voted to oppose Lydia, it later decided to cut its losses and work with Plymouth. Since the congregation was inside Steven's Square and already had had a relationship with the neighborhood organization, the board felt it would be counterproductive to have an antagonistic one with them. The two organizations even co-hosted a monthly community dinner.[xviii]

However, Lauren, an unabashed member of Citizens and the Alliance, had her own theory on the turn-around by the SSCO board. She proudly asserted to me that,

> The Whittier Alliance is a lot stronger than the Steven's Square organization, there are a lot of things that Steven's Square won't go against the city council on, like the Whittier Alliance does. [Our city council member] once said the worst things about Whittier were [me and a few of the other regular opponents of supportive housing], because we opened our mouths.

And, "Truthfully, I loved picketing, I loved it. We were out there rain, shine and freezing temperature. We were out there picketing every Sunday." At the Alliance board meeting following the final city council approval, the board approved support of the pending lawsuit by Citizens to stop Lydia, with only one vote against. It also voted to donate up to $10,000 to the cause (depending on whether the organization had a surplus in the coming year) (SW Journal 3/11/02), and made the Alliance the fiscal agent of Citizens.[xix] According to one staff member, it "was an issue people felt very strongly about, so it wasn't uncommon to get checks for $300." In a public-relations effort that June, the Foundation renamed the project from Lydia *House* to Lydia *Apartments*. This was seen as a way to brand Lydia as more of regular housing where regular people lived and lived long-term, and less of an institution where people who were in desperate need of constant help were cycling through. The director of the Foundation was quoted with, "the use of the word house, for a lot of people in the community, communicated more of a group home, halfway-house or treatment facility. That is not what we're about at all" (Russell 6/24/02). [xx] This name change did little to change the minds of the Sunday morning picketers.

The determination of Citizens to make its case in court never faltered. After being bounced around from district court to federal and back to municipal court again, on December 5 the case was heard - "Lawyers debated Thursday whether federal fair housing law intended to protect disabled people trumps a Minneapolis spacing requirement for housing that supports the disabled" (Brandt 12/6/02). [xxi] And on January 29th the court (Brandt 1/30/03),

> Affirmed that a federal fair housing law intended to protect disabled people trumps Minneapolis spacing requirements designed to prevent facilities, such as group homes, from being concentrated in particular neighborhoods. A Hennepin County District Judge ruled that the City Council acted reasonably in waiving a one-quarter-mile spacing requirement for Lydia House.

Citizens appealed, but at the end of that year the state Court of Appeals upheld the previous court decisions. [xxii]

Not waiting for the result of the lengthy appeal, on May 21st of that year construction crews broke ground on the site, and on November 2 it opened for business. The opponents were there. Jameson, a supporter of Lydia, recalled,

> At our opening ceremony they were still picketing, and they kept driving around the block and honking their horns. But somebody, one of our more rational members went out into the street, because the ceremony was outside, and said, can you just give us a half hour. And they did. But then they started up right away … I'd love to see if they ever go over there and see what it's like today.

However, after reading an early draft of this chapter, one of the picketers said he did not remember any protesters honking their horns, but he thought perhaps there were people driving by that were honking their horns *in support of* the protesters. Sophia, another ardent Lydia supporter, also recalled that day to me:

> The day they had their open house there were pickets out there. I had some heated exchanges with a rental property owner. And she gave me this, one of the stock things you kept hearing was, 'well I don't want people coming into my neighborhood and peeing in the bushes.' And I said, well maybe if they had a bathroom and place to live you wouldn't have to worry about that.'

The SW Journal (Russell 5/29/03) reported,

> The foundation handed out seed packets as a symbol of growth. Protesters handed out cans of sardines. "Hyper-concentrated sardines," read the modified sardine

> can labels. "A product of the Plymouth Congregational Church." "When it comes to housing for people in need, our philosophy is pack 'em in tight," the can read." "And be sure to put 'em in politically weak areas, too. Never put 'em in wealthy areas 'cuz rich folks (who vote) must be able to evade their civic responsibility, shift it to other places, and yet, feel good too!"

At the ceremony the president of the Foundation spoke of both the protesters and supporters as idealists. There are "people of good will on each side. … I don't think the rupture is permanent" (Russell 5/29/03). While the battle had struck a real blow to the hearts and stamina of the Plymouth community, the head pastor declared that Lydia was not going to be the Foundation's last project. He saw both the goal to house the homeless and the difficult negotiations with neighborhood activists, in the context of challenges. "We take seriously the challenge … Other neighborhoods need to step up to the plate and offer the hospitality that Whittier and Stevens Square are so well known for" (Russell 5/29/03). The Foundation president had previously offered that while she did not have a plan for how to engage the community in the next project, "there will be a plan … There is truly a commitment to be in dialogue with a wide range of people who have neighborhood and affordable-housing interests" (Russell 2/10/03).

3: Voices from "Citizens for a Balanced Community" – Rule of Law, Burden, Stability, Stakeholders, and Over-concentration

There were certain words or phrases that I heard Lydia activists utter so often that they deserve special investigation. These were words that were both powerfully meaningful to the speakers personally, and were felt to carry such political cache that their very utterance was expected to sway the non-aligned to their side, and make their opponents ashamed. Of the dozens of activists I interviewed on Lydia, I will primarily showcase the words of four opponents and five proponents (all four opponents are Whittier residents, and of the proponents three are Whittier residents and two were Foundation members, both from nearby neighborhoods. I chose these nine because their concerns were representative of the activists). I will first bring you the words and theories of Grace because she expressed so well the objections many had to Lydia, as well as outlining the theories of urban re-vitalization that underlie these objections. Like many of

the regulars on the Sunday morning picket line outside of Plymouth Church, Grace had been on the board of the Alliance for many years, and had originally become involved in the neighborhood because of housing controversies previous to Lydia. Also like many who protested against Lydia, Grace talked to me about how her faith in "the system" had been shaken by the Lydia experience.

> It wasn't so much because I had a problem with Lydia House itself, as what it represented. It was another social service in the neighborhood; there were clearly defined parameters of what was supposed to be allowable, they were supposed to be a quarter mile apart … [When we appealed the city council's decision] the city basically shoved it back in our face … That's not fair, they wouldn't do this elsewhere in the city, they do it here. And that's just not right, that was why I was opposed to it … As far as I know Lydia's been a great neighbor and there haven't been any problems. [But it's not about Lydia], it is about the city not respecting the system.

I interviewed Grace sitting at her kitchen table while she made blueberry muffins and did the dishes. My digital voice recorder sat in the middle of the table with its red recording light on, but to my surprise and relief Grace hardly seemed to notice it once the interview began. When speaking of the city council's decisions to approve Lydia, my recorder documented bitterness in her voice. It was not the kind of resentment that emanates from hatred or a lifetime of feeling put on, but a genuine wound from a single, deeply disappointing experience. It was not simply that the city had made a poor decision, it was a serious abrogation of their responsibility to both their constituents and *the rule of law*. She felt the city had betrayed the residents of this poorer area of town, by adding yet another half-way house, while saving the wealthy neighborhoods from having to accept any responsibility for taking a single one in. This betrayal was so brazen because in order to approve Lydia the city had to blatantly ignore its own ¼ mile law. This showed Grace that the city abides by the laws when it serves its own purposes, but when it does not the city council members "do want they want."

Claire was also involved in the Alliance, but while gravitating towards the position of Citizens, was one of the only two people I interviewed who seemed to appreciate the arguments of both sides. She was not a property owner, but sympathized with business owners and longtime homeowners "who essentially felt that the city had crapped on them for many years [laughs], in terms of not making investments when

things in the neighborhood were perceived as not being very safe. People who had made an investment in the neighborhood felt ignored." In thinking about why the protesters had put so much investment into the neighborhood, she keenly observed that "they have a lot of faith and hopes in the neighborhood, … they didn't want to settle for less than what the full potential" could be for that piece of land, and for the neighborhood in general.

But the rule-of-law issue was the one most often echoed by Lydia's opponents, including Lucy.

> I felt it was against the law for them to put it [Lydia] there, and if you're gonna' have a rule, the ¼ mile spacing rule, and look at that and there's seventeen [supportive housing programs] within the quarter-mile, you can't, you just can't override that. Because if you do then it's done, there's no more rule. You do it once, you have to do for everyone. And our neighborhood is saturated with assisted housing. And it's nothing against the people that are going to live in the building. I just think it's wrong, and I think that they let it happen because it was this nice church, wants to give so much. You know, give by your house then (laughter), not by my house. Plymouth Church promised that they're the ones that [will be] watching over Lydia, but they're not, they're not here [in our neighborhood] at night. And the people that live at Lydia may be fine, but at other assisted living places maybe they're not going to be fine, and when you break the rule you can't reinstate it.

And when I asked Jessica, another protester, about Lydia, she paused for a long moment before answering; "it was about the city not really listening to, the neighborhood. And kind of figuring, um, looking at the neighborhood as marginalized … And just figuring that we wouldn't notice another housing program (laughter). And disregard for their own law. We're expected to follow the ordinances" when we in the neighborhood want to develop a piece of land." If we violate the law the planning commission will tell us that "we can't do that because it's against an ordinance." But she felt that the city only cities code when it generally opposes something they want to build, but when they like a project, it's a different story. And Shelly was clear to me that no matter how small the negative effect Lydia ended up having on the neighborhood, there was a larger principal involved:

> Lydia house is very nice … But the big thing is that it doesn't matter how nice, it's just one more. If you can build that and get rid of the programs that are highly questionable then do. But it's the city just folding and doing, whatever. I won't

> get into a rant here. It was a philosophical thing, it had nothing to do with Plymouth.

Over a Sunday breakfast at the Bad Waitress café, another critic of Lydia, Kenneth, explained his unique position to me. Unlike Grace and Shelly he was not bothered enough by the project to picket it, but like them he was undeniably troubled by the disregard for the residents of Whittier and for the law.

> I wasn't as polarized as a lot of people … I wasn't as aggressively against it … It's not because I don't think it's the right thing to do, and it's not because I don't think that building actually fits that purpose … Lydia house is not a bad option. I am concerned about it though just from the perspective of it being on an unstable block and it going against the city council's own law.

When he considered the issue within the larger context of the particular social geography of that area, he was concerned.

> I think it's the street presence … [On] Nicollet [the commercial boulevard a block from Lydia] … it's common to have a lot of people hanging out, and when you walk past some of the those places it feels like positive energy. I don't know how to describe it, you just walk past and it feels positive, it doesn't feel threatening, it doesn't feel dangerous, or like something is going to explode. It just feels like people hang out. At Franklin and Nicollet, and especially moving north, it's always felt like negative energy, like people hanging out with a bad purpose. Or, people that are maybe, and not everybody obviously, but one or two people who you know are looking for something that's not so good. And they just happen to be there, but it just feels like a place that's not very stable. I have no statistics that show that there's more crime there than some other block, but I can show it anecdotally. … I … consistently feel uncomfortable … down Nicollet Ave. from the freeway to 22nd street. If I'm going to meet up with somebody asking for change, which is fine, but, or somebody that makes comments that you can't tell if they are trying to make trouble for you, it always happens through there.

Similar to all the opponents of Lydia I spoke to, Kenneth observed that housing recovering alcoholics one block from a liquor store flew in the face of common sense, but also like all the opponents, he freely admitted that the ultimate effect of Lydia on the neighborhood did not pan out as he had originally hypothesized.

> In retrospect, it doesn't seem to have affected the neighborhood much, so that concern has gone away. But I'm still left with the concern regarding *process*. You know, the fact that the city, to set up requirements in the city and then to just willy-nilly ignore their requirements, you might just not have the requirements,

> why do that? And you're kind of left with the sense that the city council allowed it to go through, because, you couldn't help but ask if, well is it because the congregation appears to be a congregation that has some people that are wealthy or well-known or whatever, vs. just a bunch of neighborhood ragtag people. Was that their kind of reasoning? It leaves the question in your mind. … But I don't know, I don't know what went through the minds of the city council.

In my interview with Lauren, she implied three factors explaining why the debate became so polarized: power differential, religion, and violation of law. Plymouth "wouldn't stop. And we tried to work with them. And the church just plowed over everybody." She felt that their religious self-righteous did not allow them to hear what the protesters were saying.

> Well they met with us, but they just had a, they want to do something and they're doing god's will, they are on the side of god, and the whole thing … While picketing, old ladies would come by and say why are you doing this to these poor people? And I said why are you doing this to me? I live here. [They responded], well, we're doing god's work. And I said you know what, do it in your own neighborhood.

I when I asked Lauren what they would say to her, she replied that "they just walked away."

"We wanted the city to stick to that quarter-mile spacing. And that's why it got real ugly real fast." For her the ugliness was born out of the government violating its own standing law. Selfishness on the part of a private developer is unsightly, but blatant injustice on the part of government goes all the way to outright *ugliness*. Calling in lawyers and filing a suit was the only option left to a small group of residents up against their more powerful and less law abiding opponents.

Grace had opposed Lydia because of the significant *burden* she anticipated it placing on the neighborhood; the program would increase crime, negligently over-concentrate the poor, and not contribute to neighborhood stability.

> Our understanding was that … this was sort of transitional housing for people who were coming out of alcohol and drug abuse, it was a stop for them before they went onto totally independent living. So if you are truly going to help people like that, that didn't seem to be geographically a good spot to house them. Now it seems like it's worked well, so in hindsight [long pause]. But at the time, there were so many other social services in that area. We were talking to people who

> live on Pleasant Avenue and they're telling us that we have mentally ill people that are running down the middle of the street in the middle of the night, and, and unattended, and wandering into our backyards. And you're hearing from these people who … own property on Pleasant … And they're telling us that these people aren't being taken care the way they should be, and now you are going to put someone else in … Again the neighbors were saying, we don't want this, and this is why. It isn't because we have a bias against people who need this kind of assistance, it's because we're inundated with it already. And some of the institutions that are already in place are not really doing what they should to be doing to take care of the people they already have.

For Grace, any supporting housing program posed a risk to its neighbors because these programs were never managed well enough. Opponents told me that adding "yet another" supportive housing program to an area that already has many, adds fire to an already volatile level of people who are often low-functioning and/or criminally-inclined. Grace viewed the track record of housing programs in the neighborhood as quite poor, and saw no reason to think that the Plymouth Foundation was any more trustworthy than the many other social service organizations that had intruded upon the neighborhood over the years. Grace compared it to a men's homeless shelter nearby:

> What bothers me about St. Steven's Shelter in particular, is that I don't think that they provide the infrastructure to adequately house that population, and so because of that … We had them pooping in our vestibules [of our building], because they didn't have bathroom facilities to adequately meet their demands … Would I want to live next door to it? No way.

Nor she thought would anyone considering moving into Whittier. They would see how many social services were in the area and choose instead a neighborhood with none, especially if they were parents. She saw that those who used shelters and assisted living "as more of an at risk member of the community as I would say, you, or your wife. Especially if they are living next door to me."

Grace theorized that the "burden of concentrating" supportive housing in one area had a cumulative effect on the *stability* of the entire neighborhood.

> If all of the neighborhoods are evenly taking that responsibility, if all of the neighborhoods have it [supportive housing], it becomes a moot point … [But as it is now] it has the potential to deny our neighborhood of some of the influences that help make it stable. I don't see social service programs as being a stable influence to our neighborhood. I see families and homeowners and business as … stable influences. If you have an imbalance there then I think it compromises that.

In Grace's understanding of the dynamics of neighborhood development, it is not enough to keep negative influences out of a fragile neighborhood, residents also need to *add* a great deal of positive, sustained effort into the continual construction of a stable community. But at this the social services fail, "cause I don't see what contribution they're making to the neighborhood."

> I doubt if they make any contribution honestly. I think that if you have a healthy economy … people are making a contribution to that, either through paying taxes or volunteering or educating, you do something, you give something back, and I don't see them giving something back … There has to be a place for them, I mean they're here, and you don't just jettison them off to some island, but at the same time, there has to be an even, um, it has to be balanced. Families that come in here contributing a tax base, they're, they have an interest, hopefully, they have an interest in the livability of the community they are living in so hopefully they will take steps to be a part of that process.

"Without knowing what their stories are," Grace was wary of bringing into the neighborhood people that required non-profit services for support. "If they're employed and they've been clean, I think we all deserve a second chance." However, she did not trust any social service organization to care about the backgrounds of its clients, or to be responsible for them.

One reason for this distrust is because the people at the Foundation, as well as the church, did not live in the neighborhood, and so were insulated from the conditions they bred. I asked if it made her mad when supporters of Lydia had accused opponents of being NIMBYs.

> It makes me mad if I don't know where they live, because, um, my experience has been that there are a lot of people who freely throw that [accusation] out and then drive home to [the suburb of] Burnsville every night … [But] if you call me NIMBY it's not going to make me mad because you live in my neighborhood and you're part of all this as well … My understanding, and this is all based on second hand information, is that most of them are coming from outside the neighborhood.

Burden, contribution and having a stake were tied together for Grace; they only make sense when served together. She and the other protesters were perfectly willing to accept the burden of living in a largely poor inner-city neighborhood, they felt pride in contributing to help fix the problems. But if you live in a wealthy neighborhood without

supportive housing then you are not living under a burden, you do not have a stake in the fight, and so your contribution is probably trivial or duplicitous.

> *Grace*: That's like somebody who lives up at Kenwood and throws money at Plymouth Congregational and says that I'm contributing [to society]. No you're not!
>
> *John:* It's not about money?
>
> *Grace*: Right, right.
>
> *John*: So it's more about things like volunteering on the neighborhood crime patrol?
>
> *Grace*: Get out there and do something, if you're living in Kenwood and you're throwing money at Plymouth, you don't really know what's going on here, you might get your quarterly newsletter saying what they've done with your money for the last few months, but you're not out there seeing it for yourself. You know, by, um, getting out there and actually doing, even if you're not immediately changing something, you're at least understanding the process, you're understanding how you got to where you are and how to get to the next place. It enables you to be more fruitful in the long-run, than just, throwing money at it.

Wyatt was another strong Lydia opponent who was also a block leader in the neighborhood, and had "worn out shoes" on a citizen patrol crew. His block was on a slow-moving, narrow street, and like all the residential streets in the area, was blessed with a grassy "boulevard" between the street and each sidewalk. And like many of the surrounding blocks, this one contains a mix of 1960s apartment buildings and older mansions in various conditions. Some of the mansions are more modest and owned by middle-income families who bought them back when real-estate in the area was much more reasonable, and a few had recently been condo-ized. In recent generations though, the often crumbling mansions had mostly been desirable only to assisted housing programs. Wyatt had originally heard about the Lydia proposal from an Alliance board member who "had been struggling to improve that corner, [and] when Lydia House was announced he was discouraged." Several board members had asked Wyatt to join their effort. When those concerned about over-concentration first heard about the Lydia proposal, they "begged" the Foundation to build affordable housing instead of supportive,

"but they wanted a facility that would have drug addicts." If simply an affordable program the residents,

> Would be poor, but would still be working … We asked Plymouth to do a population that wouldn't be as difficult to handle. I used to walk the area, and it was a challenge. We picked up condoms and drug paraphernalia … And they brought in a population that was very troubled and very needy.

It is ironic that in this case they were asking *for* affordable housing, as these are the same activists that are critical of affordable housing projects in Whittier. However, on their scale of who would be more disruptive, drug addicts rank higher than the poor. While neither is thought of as contributing to the neighborhood, at least criminality is not necessarily inherent to the poor.

> Lydia House moved in 70 criminals. That's OK, but their friends come in. It becomes very challenging. Those of us working full time and have our own lives, we put a lot of time [into the neighborhood] … Where were these people going to go at night, we were one thousand feet from them[xxiii] … The Plymouth church people come on the weekends, but they are not there on Thursday night when we are doing block patrol … And no one cared what would happen in the neighborhood, it was very frustrating. We offered to show them what the neighborhood was like at ten on a Thursday night.

"We were concerned about putting a challenged population in there," and that included people with disabilities. He felt that once the disabled reach a certain concentration, their presence begins to challenge the area in which they reside. Even if those in need do not make the environment less livable for their neighbors, they attract or invite in others who will. "It puts a lot of pressure on neighbors … You just can't take any more, the neighborhood becomes dysfunctional." The Alliance was desperately looking to bring in neighborhood heroes, people who would help the neighborhood overcome its problems, not people who may be overcoming personal problems.

The concept of a distinct group of people who are "stakeholders" is central to Citizens' theory of neighborhood health. Wyatt theorized that to uplift a neighborhood,

> We need people who have a stake in the neighborhood. Have to have a city environment that is supportive of neighborhoods, after school programs, police. It needs to uh, uh, foster as much homeownership as it can. We didn't have the

> support of city government, we didn't have much homeownership, we had a highly disadvantaged population.

It was the combination of a lack of municipal support, a plethora of the disadvantaged, and dearth of homeowners that he worried kept the neighborhood from improving. He made a clear distinction between those who had "a stake in the neighborhood" and those who did not. Along with the disadvantaged, another large set of people in the area that had "no stake" were the people at Plymouth. Whittier was a disadvantaged area, but Plymouth Congregational and their foundation had all the advantages. "Plymouth church has the resources, but they were interlopers, they came and took from the neighborhood and put very little back. They perceived themselves as helping the community" but were not. Wyatt reported that while the church's pastor likened the church's help of the disadvantaged "to Jesus' mission," Wyatt felt their strongest motivation more basic.

> They did it because it is very profitable, they enjoy substantial tax benefits. They are the largest land holders in the area. Can't you do something that won't damage the neighborhood? But they used their power, money, and prestige to get Lydia [passed]. We were exhausted … You never realize how much cash and political power they have. The numbers were staggering, Lydia is a cash cow … I was so angry, building a financial empire, and doing it for wrong reasons.

Wyatt expresses a critique of the system which combines the economic and political with the ideological and religious. Like Grace, Wyatt "felt the city let us down, and the mayor especially." Within the context of a city government and social service system that are both corrupted, the church was able to take advantage of the system by forming a legally separate, non-profit foundation that could rake in large sums of public money at the expense of the neighborhood. While it was done in the name of helping the city and the neighborhood, Wyatt saw it as only helping increase the coffers of church, while decreasing the guilt of the wealthy suburban do-gooders. Because their stake was in their own profit, their own mental well-being, and their own neighborhoods, they were toxic to Whittier's health. If the disadvantaged brought problems to Whittier, it was Plymouth that was bringing in the disadvantaged.

Wyatt on the other hand saw himself as on the streets daily, fighting for the neighborhood, and having the fortitude to live with its warts. And while, "We did a lot for these people [at Plymouth], they called us terrible things, people who wouldn't live in

a million years next to six sex offenders." "They called us NIMBY, racist … It was so unfair to be labeled. They had no idea what it was like for us." "My nemesis was James Gertmenian, [the head pastor], he was eloquent, and he kept the moral high ground. And no one [at Plymouth] cared what would happen in the neighborhood." The irony of these words is that Wyatt was described to me by a Lydia supporter as a slick talking public relations man who could make a good public argument. And while Wyatt accused those at Plymouth of not caring about the neighborhood, he himself was accused of not caring about the poor. Wyatt however proclaimed to me that "I'm to the left of Democrats." He railed against the Republicans for not taxing the wealthy enough while fleecing the poor. While the right wanted to repeal the estate tax to allow more transfers of money to the rich, "The immigrants have had a raw deal, they worked their butts off and pay their taxes, and a lot of the benefits they don't get." When I asked if he had been advantaged in any way in life, he strongly replied, "Sure I've been advantaged, I've been terrifically advantaged, going to good school, good graduate school, things I wouldn't have had if I was black."

Of all the phrases and arguments utilized by opponents of Lydia, the most commonly used was of the *"over-concentration"* of the poor. Regardless of its effects and its prevalence in Minneapolis, nationally "from 1970 to 1990, the number of high-poverty pockets more than doubled and the number of persons living in these neighborhoods increased from 4.1 to 8.0 million" (Goetz 2003:25). This had been made worse by the 1949 Housing Act, which called for tearing down dilapidated slum housing, and replacing it one for one with new public housing, but instead of dispersing the public housing, it was built in the same area as the tear downs. Since slum clearance happened near urban cores, where that dirt was much more expensive than in outlying areas, it was done at high densities in order to economize development for the poor (Goetz 2003:32). On top of this, the "Neighborhood Composition" rule required the racial composition of the public housing residents to match the composition of the neighborhood it was built in. Plus, "the government's advocacy of racially restrictive covenants in its FHA homeownership assistance program and its refusal to prove such subsidies in diverse

neighborhoods, were also overt act of racial discrimination" (Goetz 2003:44). Local rules added to the segregation,

> many suburbs avoided public housing by simply never creating local housing authorities … In Cuyahoga County, Ohio, the PHA built all of its units in Cleveland, and for 25 years did not build a single unit of public housing in any of the 66 suburban municipalities.

Local control of public housing meant that local politicians located it away from white and middle class communities, and "most public housing units nationwide (nearly 700,000) were built before the civil rights laws of the 1960s" (Goetz 2003:33). It was not until slowly in the 1960s, with pressure from the Kennedy administration, HUD, congress, and the courts, that high rise projects, segregation, and overt discrimination were discouraged, and dispersal was encouraged. However, lack of enforcement of federal antidiscrimination laws, local control of various programs, and suburban resistance to integration, maintained a status quo for years afterward, until in the 1990s a second generation housing effort focused on creating income diversity, which however was contested in almost every suburb it was applied to (Goetz 2003:44-9).[xxiv] In the Twin Cities itself, a 1976 law required "fair share" assessments of housing needs in the metro, but according to Goetz, the law is routinely ignored (2003:89). Progress however was made; between 1975 and 1982 in the metro, the share of subsidized dwellings in Minneapolis and St. Paul themselves dropped from 82% to 59% (2003:97).[xxv]

"The ugly American history of residential intolerance" (Goetz 2003:61) is well documented in the literature and news media, but is the resistance in Whittier against subsidized housing a part of this intolerance, or a challenge of it? Whittier is no all-white suburb (although it was a century ago), and its (few) homeowners (almost) never have any (public) complaint about the race of the affordable housing residents, and the white homeowners themselves have never been in agreement over proposals for new subsidized housing. What my study does is show how battles over housing for the in-need do not simply need to be a matter or white vs. minority, racists vs. non-racists, the feds vs. locals, progressives vs. conservatives, neoliberals vs. government interventionists, or individualists vs. structuralists. What I show is how strains of all of these identities,

ideologies and projects are woven throughout contemporary community struggles in the multicultural age.

In Minneapolis, the ¼ mile law had for many neighborhood residents validated both the legitimacy of their rights and their pain suffered at the hands of concentration. So when the city did not honor this law, those against Lydia felt that the city council had revoked their confirmation of the neighbors' suffering, thereby rejecting neighborhood residents' very right to have worthwhile viewpoints. Like many other Alliance activists and Lydia picketers, Jessica owns rental property in Whittier and has always been concerned about its value and the safety of her tenants, as well as the overall quality of life of all those in the neighborhood.

> There are like 25 of them around there. It really creates, I'll give you an example specifically, when I had our [rental] buildings … a block away from St. Stevens which had the men's shelter, and Loaves & Fishes [food shelf], anytime that, if I had an appointment showing between 4 and 5 o'clock, I would never rent that apartment because of the … infiltration into the neighborhood. They might have been fine but they looked scary. It was detrimental to my business … They would approach people for panhandling, I'm not saying these people don't have a need or anything, but when you get 25 of them in close proximity, it's a disadvantage to the businesses that are trying to run a business. Right near us was Katari house, a battered women shelter, that was fine, but for us that was 3 of them within a block … Loaves & Fishes and the men's shelter always created trouble … It's too much burden for such a small area.

When I pressed her for more specific examples of burden, she reluctantly told a story about a panhandler who was hanging out in an alley by a bank of four garages. "And this is *second-hand* information, there was, from what *I* understand," a panhandler who was told by a resident to leave the alley, and soon after a fire burned down those garages.

Jessica nuanced her definition of burden however by showing how the amount and kind of burden that social services posed, varied depending on their location and type. A few blocks west on the other side of Nicollet, Pillsbury and Pleasant Avenues have many institutions, but they are interspersed quietly and unobtrusively between houses and apartment buildings. Jessica seemed to me to be saying that these institutions were less institutional than the huge space that the Loaves & Fishes soup kitchen required, or the long, block buildings of St. Steven's homeless shelter or Lydia. The

edifices on Pleasant were the old mansions, with front lawns, mail boxes, backyards and garages. For Jessica this is where you do not notice the clients as much.

> That makes a big difference … It might create a different kind of burden … If you, if the homes that had, say, people with mental disabilities, which was supportive housing, they were victimized more often by the element that would come in to the neighborhood because they knew that there were vulnerable adults here.

Jessica seems to be saying that these houses for the mentally ill are less of a burden because their residents do not clump; they go about their days in an individualized manner, not in groups. This has a vastly different look and *feel* to others, than the large accumulation of marginalized people that appear every day at 5:00 for a free meal on the corner of 22nd Street and 4th Avenue.

However, the mentally ill present a whole new risk that the simply hungry to not. By dint of being vulnerable adults, theorizes Jessica, they attract to the neighborhood criminals who would prey upon them. The presence of these outside criminals then put everyone at risk and on edge.

> You end up with people standing at a bus stop who are marginal. They are capable of living in a group home situation and taking the bus but not always capable of depending on themselves, and we had information that those people ended up as victims, and so you put a bunch of em' in a spot where they are going to be taking a bus and they were victimized … Our crime stats were high, they were particularly high in that area. The whole idea of that kind of concentration isn't healthy for a neighborhood.

It is almost as if the a severely mentally ill person walking down the sidewalk is not bothersome in and of itself, but the problem is the occupying of this space by a defenseless mind, because this implies more dangerous people circling in the shadows around them. One or two marginalized persons in one spot does not a problem make, but "a bunch" always to be found in the same place, offers too tempting an opportunity for those willing to exploit them. Over-concentration is not about the homes themselves that serve those in need, it is about where those individuals end up when not at home. Are they dispersed, or are they to be found clumping on the same street corner?

"I don't think that the issue was they [in supportive housing] would be committing crimes. [But] it would kind of depend on what they were in there [the

housing program] for too." This is another level of risk that Jessica was theorizing, while only a small portion of those in subsidized housing might be there because of committing serious crimes, those few individuals are responsible for a large impact on the psyches of the rest of those in the neighborhood.

> For affordable housing and supportive housing, there is the criminal element that ends up living there, and then you have them living in your neighborhood too. If you're talking about Loaves & Fishes [soup kitchen], they are just hanging around. If you are talking about mentally handicapped adults that's one thing, but a sex offender is another thing.
>
> With a transitional home for people you have just released from prison, and you put them in a neighborhood where there's drugs and other issues, they're going to be vulnerable, the neighborhood is going to be vulnerable, and the neighborhood never has an opportunity to get to where they aren't on guard all the time … Linden Hills doesn't have to be on guard all the time.

It became amazing to me how parallel the opponents arguments, exact words, and feelings were. Another opponent told me, "It becomes too much to bear for the neighborhood. Especially people living next door to supportive housing are impacted. The residents are vulnerable people who can become victims." Becoming a bit tired in this interview of hearing the same buzzwords and arguments, I tried to pin her down. "What exactly is too much to bare, crime?" "No, but affordable housing and supportive housing" influence people to not develop in an area or move into it. She relayed that when people shop for a home they are given the web sites that detail where predatory offenders live, and when they see the many offenders that live nearby they often say "I'm not interested." Of course, I had already heard this line before, and regardless of its validity, I realized that ultimately it was a safe one to make. Those worried about being neighbors of the in-need could always resort to the defense – "I don't actually have any problem with the poor or disabled living near me, but others do, and the more in-need we house here the more the non in-need will stay away from housing, shopping, and dining." The argument deflects prejudice from the arguer, onto others who are not as appreciative of the grittiness of the urban. This is a theory of human behavior that also deflects criticism away from the disadvantaged themselves. It says, "there is nothing wrong with each of them in and

of themselves; the damaging behavior comes not from a mentally disabled person or a recovering addict just trying to get by in the world, but from those afraid of them. Even more harmful are those so low as to pray upon the vulnerable."

Lauren, the protester who absolutely loved picketing Lydia, put another nuance onto the theory that over-concentration causes instability. Her theory was that it was not simply the number or density of social services that lead to problems, but the *imbalance* between social services and other services. "We needed all kinds of services, and not just social services and Lydia Houses."

> Phillips had 153 social services agencies in that neighborhood. And look at the crime, the violence, and everything else there. Well, Whittier at the time that Lydia House came about, I believe had 143 … The inner-city is being dumped on dumped on dumped on, on and on. How much can you take of it? A neighborhood needs to be social services, businesses, all these different categories in order to make it successful … I don't know if I'm explaining myself right to you so that you understand … You need schools, and that's why we tried so hard to get the Whittier school in.

When the school board opened an elementary school next to Whittier Park in 1997, Lauren felt it would provide a counterweight to the morass of housing for the poor. It was bestowing the service of education upon the children and families who already lived here, and an attraction to others considering moving here. Another counterweight to the over-abundance of housing for the poor was "expanding the business and homeownership in the neighborhood. It's all got to be there, and if you are top heavy on one, it [the neighborhood] doesn't make it." Lauren felt that there needs to be "some high end-housing … [as] it's easy for a lot of low-end housing landlords to just let things go to pot. So we really need to um, have a little bit of everything." "It needs to be a balance."

While over-concentration was the most often heard trope espoused by the protesters, I feel that "*contribution*" holds the most promise for representing their perspective. Their overconcentration argument is based on categorizing the in needs as different from others. Among multiculturalists today, classic minority groups such as blacks, Latinos, or gays are all seen as equally holding potential for contributing to the neighborhoods they live in, but this is not the case for such groups as the homeless,

chemically dependent, developmentally disabled, mentally ill, or chronically unemployed. However, the Foundation is trying to change this, as we see in this newspaper article at the time (Brandt 12/6/02),

> Attorneys for the Foundation … and the city said that spacing requirements are better suited to such undesirable neighbors as adult bookstores and massage parlors, not the supportive housing they're planning. "You can't put disabled people in the same category," foundation attorney Mary Yeager said. "You can't say there's too many disabled people in one neighborhood," Yeager said, any more than one could say there are too many blacks or Jews.

This is a characterization that held a great deal of weight in the realm of law, and also holds weight in contemporary public opinion. Anyone who would publicly attempt to claim today that too many Jews or blacks can ruin a neighborhood would be lambasted. The foundation attorney was in effect trying to tinker with the cultural framework of minorities a bit, and work it enough to allow the disabled to slip into the same category as the historically subjugated black and Jew. While the attorney's objective was to win in court (by convincing a judge to place Lydia residents within a formal class protected by a particular federal law), a consequence of her argument could oblige a public re-imagination of the disabled as equally valuable a part of society as all minorities. This then this would take the focus off of the disabled homeless' "lack of ability," and therefore off their lack of potential to contribute to neighborhoods.

For Citizens however, the knife's edge was not who has been historically discriminated against, or who is protected by laws, or who is disabled, it is whose past could reasonably predict their future effect on the neighborhood. To them, classifying the homeless, mentally ill, or substance abusers as disabled would simply be a disingenuous trick, a loop-hole maneuver by slippery lawyers for hire and by non-profit profiteers (like Republicans see Democrats as using the Endangered Species Act as an deceitful back door maneuver to block logging and mining companies from using America's natural resources). For Citizens, the cold, hard fact of the matter was that Lydia residents would be a burden to the neighborhood. The protesters seemed to care not a whit as to what ethnic group the residents may belong, and had no truck with the disabled in theory. They evaluated people according to what they actually did do for the neighborhood. The greater good was the health of the community, and besides, Lydia could and should be

put in another neighborhood. For the opponents, appealing to tolerance, past discrimination, civil rights laws, race, or class, was to miss the point.

A factor in the polarization was the categories under which Lydia residents were defined. The Foundation describe them as "homeless adults with disabilities such as mental illness, HIV/AIDS and chemical dependency," while some opponents have defined them as "criminals" and "drug addicts." These labels have power to induce fear in those who share physical proximity with them. Jessica explained to me that as far as the old building at 1920 LaSalle, "I would go for adaptive reuse nine out of ten times … Using it for senior housing would have been a better option … It wouldn't have been the lightning rod that it was" as it would be "more sensitive to the neighborhood." Jessica felt that placing the mentally ill and chemically dependent in their midst instead of the elderly was simply inviting an acrimonious debate. She saw the Foundation as purposely making the choice to house "homeless" instead of a different category of people that would be much less burdensome.

However, for the Foundation and its supporters, feelings of burden never entered the picture. Since they did not define people as contributors or burdens, they did not see how the issue would be a lightning rod. For Sophia, the board of the Alliance

> Was totally selfish, it really to me brought out the difference between the Whittier Neighbors and the Whittier Alliance. The Alliance is people who own property and businesses in the neighborhood but don't live here themselves … They represent their own selfish business interest rather than the quality of life in the neighborhood … There were threats, this guy had gone to a planning commission meeting just to get information, and his landlord said if you support Lydia you're out on your ear.

The strength in the charge that some of Citizens owned but did not live in the neighborhood is based on class: these landlords are in this fight purely for profit; they fear subsidized housing will lower their property values and sales and drive away clients, and care naught for the actual people living around Lydia, including those without a home. Plus for Sophia, this was ugliness that was compounded by their ugly tactics, and together his made Citizens gruesome.

Jessica was aware that Lydia supporters had this impression of her, and she perceptively pointed out,

> If you take one side and say you are not in favor of any more supportive housing, you're pretty much perceived as unsympathetic, and possibly racist, unchristian, and just the capitalist of the worst form. It really is kind of an unfair assumption. Look at Acadia [café a block away] and they are just trying to run a business, and have to deal with [homeless and drug dealing] issues.

In contemporary America "racist" is one of the least favorite categories to be placed into. Those in the public eye take immense pains to avoid the disaster of being caught in a racial media scandal (it can be a career ender, e.g. talk show host Don Imus or U.S. senator George Allen). The very use of this word in the Lydia debate instantly added polarization. But just the perception by someone, that someone else even *perceives* one as racist, is incredibly polarizing itself. To be disabled is to be pitied, to be homeless is to be looked down on, to be racist is to be despised. And the fear that others are attempting to stick this label onto you, can in turn make you hate them.

4: Voices from "The Plymouth Foundation" – Faith, Activism, and Understanding Others

> We've been on that [Plymouth Church] site for eighty years, and we were right across the street [from the old nursing home], and it was sitting empty for two years. We had this infant foundation with the skill set to do something. The timing was right. Every time you came back to the question if we were doing the right thing, it sure felt like we were.

Wanting to understand the perspectives of the many groups that played a role in the Lydia battle, the director of the Plymouth Foundation connected me with two women who were active members of the board at the time of the conflict. The first, Olivia, I met at a Dunn Brothers Coffee down the street from the Foundation's office, itself a five minute walk from Lydia. She was a smartly dressed, energetic, middle-aged woman who was eager to tell me her thoughts. She grew up in the Twin Cities, lived in Minneapolis, and had been a member of the Plymouth church for thirty-five years. In the past she had done some non-profit work on poverty in Asia, and during this time that she was frequently travelling abroad,

> I kept thinking back to here [Minneapolis]. We've got homeless people here, we have homeless people in India. I think there are great similarities. And part of my frustration about what we do in this city in this community is that we really do have a lot of resources here. I think there is no excuse for homelessness in Minneapolis. There is, there are excuses for places in like Cambodia, there were years of war, we don't have that happening [here]. We live in a wealthy community. I had heard that the Foundation had just barely got started, and I called and said I'm interested. How can I help?

The second board member was Kendra, who had been a member of the church for ten years and lived in a wealthy neighborhood in SouthWest Minneapolis. Both Olivia and Kendra expressed to me a great deal of pride in Lydia, because of what their organization collectively had accomplished (but while they did a great deal of volunteer work, neither ever bragged to me about anything they personally did). For example, Olivia was proud of how Lydia provided "safe, clean, and dignified" homes to people in desperate need of them, while Kendra was really happy that Lydia was "a really safe place for the tenants where they feel cared about."

What I took away from my interactions with people from the Plymouth Foundation and the Plymouth Church, was their strong pride in social justice activism, their faith in people, and their value of trying hard to understand those different from themselves. While their viewpoints are thought-provoking in and of themselves, this study of the Lydia battle focusses heavily on understanding the arguments of the *opponents*, and I provide the proponents' views not as a counterpoint, but to provide context for our understanding of the creation of the opposition, and its effects on both the neighborhood and debates over where to locate the homeless and disabled. I will show that the crusades of both the proponents and opponents are about bringing justice to the people of the area, but where the opponents express their mission primarily in the form of deeply held values and faith, the opponents do so primarily in the form of deeply thought-out social theory.

Earlier in the chapter we met a protester who told of the "negative energy" at the large intersection a block away from Lydia; in contrast, Kendra talked much about the "positive energy that you can feel" at Lydia – "It's so powerful." She told me a story I had already heard from another supporter, about a Lydia resident who had "reunited with

his daughter and grandchildren" at a Lydia anniversary party. "They're sitting on his lap eating ice cream and cake. It's just heartwarming to see that … they are re-connecting with their family and friends." Once Lydia had been running for a time, Olivia became quite proud of its *stability*. She had expected frequent turnover of residents, but found that there were residents who were living there longer term, and they began to create "self-sufficient" lives for themselves. Residents began "working part-time for pay, many of them began volunteering in the community… they organized a food drive which the church helped with and made food baskets for people ... They plant gardens." Olivia was expressing not only that the individual residents became stable, but that Lydia itself was becoming a stabilizing force on the neighborhood. "We got notes from people in the Steven's Square neighborhood, who said I'm just surprised and in awe with what happened with Lydia … The building is beautiful, it's a stable part of the neighborhood." Likewise, Kendra was also proud of their accomplishments. The

> church … created this real community. We have residents out there who are serving in gardens in the neighborhood, serving on the safety patrol, several who have been able to move on and get their own apartments, some who may stay there for decades. But it really, there's something, everybody says when they go in there, the energy is good. So my goal would be for us to create housing for people in lower incomes where there is really a sense of safety, and outreach into the community, where they feel like they are part of the community they live in.

Another supporter claimed that Lydia would also contribute to fighting crime because instead an abandoned building, it would be full of people who would put more eyes and ears on the street, ready to call the police when something was amiss. And in the words of the county commissioner for the area, "I have trouble saying something is wrong with supportive-housing. I think it is an asset to the community" (Russell 3/25/2002).[xxvi] The head minister at Plymouth exploited his opponents' language of "investment" by saying, "The unambiguous bottom line is that 40 formerly homeless men and women will be able to close their doors and say, 'This is mine. I belong here'"(Russell 5/29/03).

In expressing this delight in what they had helped wrought, Olivia and Kendra were making a larger argument for how much Lydia's stability was contributing to the neighborhood, but while for the opponents the theory of contribution *was* the footing of their opposition, for the supporters I sensed that it was more of an after the fact rebuttal to

the criticism they received. Olivia was eager to convince me that the residents were not doing anything destructive to themselves or the neighborhood, pointing out that all must be free of drugs and alcohol. The theory imbedded in their arguments was that the residents would not contribute to the street drug-dealing industry, but also would lead even-keeled, productive lives that would help the area. While Olivia was not insincere, she was piggy-backing upon her opponents' theory of community contribution; she had internalized it out of political necessity. Her main concern seemed to be for the residents themselves, and for the society as a whole.

However, that is not to say that those at the Foundation didn't think about the neighborhood residents, it is just then when they did, they (mostly) thought about different ones than Citizens did, and thought about them in a (somewhat) different way. Kendra, feeling like she did want to do in neighborhoods what the neighborhood organizations wanted, but feeling frustrated that in this case what they wanted conflicted with her principles, told me, "There is just no way that a church with a *social justice* view of the world is going to come in and say oh yes … let's come in and gentrify the neighborhood. I mean, no!" In trying to understand the actors in this contest, and put that understanding down on paper, I thought a lot about what social justice meant, trying to connect it with the actions of those supporting subsidized housing in the neighborhood vs. those not. But without question, the protesters would consider themselves as fighting for social justice, and both the sides were advocating for the poor and marginalized, just like both felt they were following the rule of law, creating stability, contributing to the neighborhood, and were stakeholders in the neighborhood. So what is the difference between them?

In a sense much of this dissertation is about answering that question in order to get at the nature of multicultural, community activism, but at this spot in the dissertation I am showing their similarities, in order to complicate the meaning of the tropes used by the actors (e.g. stability, contribution, stakeholders). So while Citizens primarily makes appeals to the rights of long-term, community-involved residents, property owners and business owners, and the Foundation to the homeless and disabled, and while Citizens argued for the fate of the drug addicted already in supportive housing in the area, and the

Foundation for the fate of the drug addicted not yet housed, "justice" of the "societal" kind was on the hearts and tongues of everyone involved. However, like liberals and conservatives in America, they had different theories of how to enhance the prospects of the poor and in-need. In the end I realized that while not a platitude, the term "social justice" had no self-explanatory meaning, it was just that by convention people today happen to use it in the context of activists more on the left (an even more arbitrary title).[xxvii]

This is why I found it very interesting to read a newsletter of The Whittier Neighbors, who consider themselves the true progressives and leftists in the neighborhood, which seemed to consciously avoid issues of justice and civil rights. The Neighbors saw themselves as sharing much with the Plymouth Foundation, while nothing with Citizens except for a zip code, but I found that they did share with them a propensity to strategically employ the trope of neighborhood "*stability*." At the July 2001 board meeting of the Whittier Neighbors, it voted unanimously to support the Lydia project, and their next newsletter urged readers to express their support for Lydia to their county commissioner and city council member. The newsletter argued that "tenants will be required to engage in productive activity."

But nowhere in the two paragraphs about Lydia does it argue for Lydia on the basis that it will be adept at helping people in need, or that supporting the homeless is something that should be done in its own right (because people deserve a nice place to live). The newsletter builds its argument on the grounds that Lydia will not hurt the neighborhood; the tenants will be incredibly regulated and kept in order. The facility will "be highly managed" and each tenant will have to sign a lease agreeing to strict "behavior standards." These standards will be enforced by a round-the-clock team of specialized experts such as "finance managers … and housekeepers."

The newsletter portrays tenants as having the potential to contribute to society because they will all receive job training and some will even "be employed full-time." And says this in such a way, that it appears to assume that everyone knows that working forty hours each week is the ultimate in being a fully functioning individual member of

society. While activities like volunteering, going to school, caring for children, and studying your faith are all valued and are also done full-time, these pursuits are not considered as ends in and of themselves; it is the attainment and maintenance of a "full-time" job that completes a life (the only deed that needs doing after this is to retire and/or die). "There are rumors in the neighborhood that this is going to be a shelter. This is NOT a shelter. This is permanent housing for our low-income neighbors." Like "affordable housing" or "housing project," "shelter" is perceived by the writers of the newsletter to be a nasty word. The reason it is made so explicit that it is not a shelter, is because shelters house people only temporarily, and this implies that the residents are not really neighbors. A neighbor has the connotation of the friendly homeowner next door who you chat with while he responsibly mows his lawn. A neighbor is someone you borrow a wrench from; meanwhile those in shelters do not have wrenches to loan, and may not trustworthy enough to loan one to. I attribute their use of the stability trope by the supporters of Lydia as something borrowed from their opponents.

Both Olivia and Kendra expressed a sophisticated sense of how their activism related to their *faith*, a sense that I found was based on the mutual exchange of diverse ideas. For Olivia,

> One of the most compelling parts of my faith that is reinforced at Plymouth [Church] is that there isn't one true faith, but that people experience spirituality in a myriad ways … There's a motley assortment of people [at the church] … We question, we argue, get to know other religions … What we have in common, what we can learn from one another. When I spoke of the sermons this is one of the central themes as well as social justice … If there were anything about Plymouth is the most important to me is that, it is multiculturalism in a different, in a different way, with a focus on religion. It's how do we learn from one another, what do we have to contribute to one another … In Plymouth for example there is absolutely no interest in proselytizing.

Or as Kendra put it, "some of the tenants [at Lydia] are much more likely to proselytize us than we to them." Both were stressing that they belonged to a Christian church that respects others' ways of believing so much that they did not try to convince others that their way was the right way.

Olivia's pride in the church originated from her appreciation for the urban, progressive, and activist aspects of the church itself.

> I've never not lived in a city, I couldn't imagine not living in a city … I'm not a very active Sunday worshiper. I was Lutheran as a child and I was forced to go, you had to be bleeding or throwing up to not go. And I hated it. We made fun of it … Later I started having children, and my husband and I hunted for a church where my children wouldn't be tainted by the silliness I grew up with.

Unlike her parents' church, the one of her choosing was a place where she could learn about others different from herself. However, what made the church a particularly special place for her was that everyone, together, was committed to the pursuit of trying to understand others. While I am sure that the inner-city diversity of the neighborhood within which it sat was a selling point for Olivia and others at the church, the neighborhood's diversity seemed to lack for her the quality that made the church special, its *unity* in diversity. Not only did was the neighborhood quarrelsome, but she saw many as just plain mean, stubborn, and ignorant.

Olivia seemed be invoking two different inter-related communities, the church (of which the Foundation was a part) and the wider world; the neighborhood around the church was the immediate part of this wider world. While she spoke of the church as a strong community of people mutually committed to such values as learning from others and social justice, the world beyond the church seemed often to lack these qualities. The world was a frustrating place full of people who deserved to be heard and respected, but often did not reciprocate in kind. It was not that the world was a nasty place, it just was not Plymouth. However, "part of our faith is that you contribute to making this a more just community, a more just world." Olivia very much respected the Plymouth minister for his open-minded way of trying to change the world.

> An amusing thing, our senior minister was mentored by a real liberal and ardent protester, when he heard about the [Lydia] protesters he said to the minister, you must be doing something right, that you're stirring up controversy, but not intentionally. Listen and understand and keep plucking … Having been a protester myself as a younger woman, I understand the point of becoming highly visible, I mean, how are you going to make a point by not becoming highly visible … [However], we didn't think they [the Lydia protesters] spoke for the community. We listened, we acknowledged their frustration, but much of what they had to say we didn't agree with … Some people from that group went out and covered the neighborhood, going

> door to door to door, telling people that there was going to be a lot of black people coming in and de-stabilizing the neighborhood … We just didn't agree it would destabilize the neighborhood.

This story about blacks had circulated among the Foundation and the church, and regardless of its veracity, it makes it easier to discount those who have been painted as outright racists.

The Foundation however did see itself as having made attempts to include neighborhood voices in their process. A year before the Foundation was formed, and three years before it bought the Lydia property, the church had created an Outreach and Vision Committee to examine how the church relates to the community. Even the name of the Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation made an attempt to cry out that this church *did* care about neighborhoods. Also, the head pastor lived in a modest house in Whittier, and had said that "while the tradition seemed to be for Plymouth's ministers to live elsewhere in the city, I felt it was time for us to show our commitment to this neighborhood by my living here" (Russell 11/5/2001). We see how the exact spot in which he lived, was a statement.

The great frustration and disappointment of Olivia came not from knowing that some fought against Lydia, but that see saw them doing it in a way that left little room for dialogue between differing ideas. When talking about the opponents' perspective she told me,

> I understand that concern, but when we would say to them we understand the concern but we want you to understand the path we've taken … It will be alcohol and drug free. We have a very reputable management company who will work with the people … And they just dug in, and they either didn't trust us, or, I mean surely they didn't trust us, but I think that it didn't matter what we said. They don't know us from anybody, and they weren't open really to hearing.

In the face of Olivia's self-perception as a fighter for social justice, a fair fighter, and one who takes the time to understand those who disagree with her, the apparent unreasonableness and incivility of her opponents made easier it to define them as simply wrong. Also, she saw those who were against Lydia as fewer in number than the proponents, and not representative of (or representing) the neighborhood. "I don't give a

rip about *my* neighborhood organization," she told me, and she assumed the vast majority of Whittier residents felt the same about the Alliance. So instead of the voices of the protesters, the voices of those beyond Plymouth that held the most meaning to her were the ones congratulating the Foundation's efforts to make change.

> So each time we won a lawsuit [against Lydia], or when people came and talked so compellingly in support of the project in court, it also reinforced what we were doing … We were continuously contacted by organizations and people in the community who said please keep moving ahead, this is important, we need to do this … We are continuously told by leaders in government that we inspire them and they need us to do this work.

Kendra was quite emphatic that while the drama and hostility of the conflict was regrettable, the criticism only helped strengthen her commitment to "the least fortunate."

> Some members of the church said [to us at the Foundation], what have you done to irritate them so much? … But whenever we reflected on what are we doing and why, it just really seemed like the right thing to do. … It was an extreme situation. There just wasn't any affordable housing … And I think the controversy around Lydia made us stronger in many ways, and one of them is to make us go deeper into what are our foundations for why we are doing this.

But I asked her if the opposition ever discouraged her.

> No … It did cause us to reflect. Are we doing the right thing? People are upset, and we also have a huge population in tremendous need. And so anytime you have this kind of conflict you've got two good values butting up against each other. It's so easy to want to say it's a difference of good and bad. It's not. It's good and good. They were trying to stabilize the neighborhood in the best way they know how, and we were trying to reach out to the poorest among us.

It is ironic that while one of the protesters' main complaints about the people of Plymouth was that they did not live in the neighborhood, Olivia painted the protesters as wealthy business owners who lived outside the urban core, including one of main leaders of Citizens,

> Bill Nep would be a great example, someone who owned property here but lived in the suburbs … There are a lot of people in the Whittier neighborhood who aren't involved in the Alliance, and we were hearing from many of them including residents that they were supportive.

The image that Lydia proponents had in their minds of Bill Nep loomed large, as an icon of everything wrong with the protest. Olivia particularly hated that Bill Nep was

constantly accusing the Plymouth Church and the Foundation members of personally profiting from the Lydia development. When I joked that part of the grants Kendra secured for Lydia went to buy the Prius she drove up in, she joked back,

> Don't I wish. Yep that's that greedy Plymouth Church. Some people don't understand it, and so they believe that. But the Bill Nep's of the world know it [that Plymouth's profiting was a myth]. It was the disingenuous piece that used to irritate me. Not that they didn't agree with us, that's fine. It was the manipulating the facts. He's a business man and he understands the facts … It is very, very easy to generate a lot of heat, and things get distorted on both sides.

The other side of the coin was that the opponents felt strongly that religious zeal on the part of the Plymouth members was distorting their understanding of the seriousness of the problem of over-concentration, and stopping Plymouth members from actually being able to understand those different from themselves. Claire, who while agreeing that Citizens did understand Plymouth's perspective, would still

> get really frustrated with the church and the folks there, because I think they came in with an attitude of god is on our side, in some ways. In really righteous sort of, they were very dismissive of concerns that people in the neighborhood had. I remarked to someone once, everyone is so striving for higher ground, that no one is going to have enough oxygen.

Claire, holding a sort of middle ground in the fight, seemed able to provide an valuable perspective on Citizens' members like Bill Nep. Claire theorized that the protesters did not have a general problem with the marginal or with helping them, but did exploit the fear that *others* had of the marginal. When making their argument to the public,

> I think they were making some spurious links. Like there were instances where Bill Nep was out taking photos of people out drinking at the corner of Franklin and Nicollet waiting for the bus. And so I think it was this thing of, the other, demonizing these folks … as a means to further their own argument. In the end it wasn't that they had personal dislike, or even didn't want to see the people get the support that they need to succeed, but that took a back seat to (pause), you know, we, we don't want to see another supportive housing.

Ultimately though, Claire's main concern was not with any particular position or strategy used in the conflict, but with the polarization.

> I don't think there were any easy answers and it wasn't a black and white issue. I felt … frustrated … I wasn't out there cheering people on involved with the issue

> who were doing this. At the same time I think we missed some opportunities to have some more constructive dialogue … They were really firmly entrenched in their positions.

When a group takes a position that is seen as against any particular group, the easy accusation against them is that they simply do not like or are afraid of that group because they are different from themselves. Claire offered a more nuanced opinion on how the protesters felt towards supportive housing residents.

> I don't know if it's quite to the point that they feel threatened, but they don't feel safe around them either, and I don't know if they feel that they are criminals per se. These are people who had very comfortable middle class upbringings, if not more, and again I'm probably making assumption after all, they're not gating themselves in Deephaven [a very small, exclusive suburban city] … People get scared, it's the unknown, and people might not act, quote end quote, normally … I think these people who didn't fit into their vision of who they wanted their neighbors to be, people who were positively contributing to the neighborhood.

5: Location, Location, Location

Citizens was not against the Lydias of the world, they were against this Lydia in this neighborhood; they felt that this exact facility in an outlying neighborhood or suburb would be just fine.[xxviii] It is a matter of location, as much of the claims about Lydia's potentiality centered on appeals to locality. The supporters of Lydia also cared about location, but they viewed space differently. What was most important to them was helping those in need, and if those in need are most easily and economically assisted at 1920 LaSalle, then who among us deserved to stand in the way?

A number of proponents of Lydia told me that while they had no problem with placing housing for the homeless in outlying areas, the problem was that the medical, vocational and other social services that residents would require were in the city center, and without better bus service, how would the housing residents get to the city? So I asked an opponent, Wyatt, if he thought the solution to the problem could be to build supportive housing outside the city core, while expanding bus service to the outlying areas so that the residents could get to their jobs and services in the city.[xxix] He corrected me with, "the jobs though were not downtown, they were in the suburbs, the residents weren't working in downtown office buildings, but in 1st tier suburbs."[xxx] In an effort to

demonstrate that everything, besides the will of the public, was already in place to allow the homeless to live beyond the urban core, he told me how he previously lived in far south west Minneapolis, "without a car and survived just fine." Therefore "every neighborhood should take its part" in accepting supportive housing, and be "a successful role-model" to those that needed help.

The members of Citizens were totally baffled as to how the folks at Plymouth could in good conscience place Lydia in their neighborhood. "I feel utter contempt for that church. They were so self-righteous, for locating it in our neighborhood. I told the head pastor that he should preach that his congregants should take a homeless person home every weekend." Grace felt that,

> Plymouth members will talk one way but their actions don't really mirror what they're saying, they'll throw money at it, they may sit on the board for non-profits … they may contribute every year, but at the end of the day they don't want to go to bed at night knowing that Lydia's across the alley behind their house

Congregants are *accused* of living in the wealthy southwestern neighborhoods and suburbs, and the force of this charge is that not being from "here," they know little about here, and are little affected by what happens here. Having no "stake," they have no legitimate position from which to know what is good for the neighborhood. And more importantly, they have no right to introduce wild-card elements into a community "on the edge."

While the opponents of Lydia were commonly lambasted as selfish, Not In My Backyard types (NIMBY's), they themselves took this discourse of NIMBY-ism and creatively turned it around to their advantage. They claimed that the true NIMBY's are the Plymouth congregants, who are backing the development of homeless housing in someone else's neighborhood instead of their own. And the Foundation is acting as the classist agent steering subsidized housing away from the wealthy areas. One picketer of Lydia saw the church as "doing a shell game, it's not the church that's doing it [the Foundation would tell us]. They had the foundation that was protecting them … But it was the church that was directing it … But they said it's not the church." When I asked her if she thought that Plymouth was consciously engaging in sneaky tactics, she answered that "it was delusional on their part. They liked to think they were saving the

neighborhood, that they were doing good things, but when it became very obvious … that many people didn't like them, they said, 'please like us' (laughter)."

> But I listen to a lot of Plymouth saying 'I wish we had more of this in our neighborhood,' and I really don't think they do. And I really believe that … It's a disruption. I live four or five blocks from St. Stevens [homeless shelter] and I have a closed-in porch and when the weather gets cold I have people asleep on my porch. That is not a problem … But the word is getting out that this is a good place. If I [go out to] get the newspaper and they're there I boot them out.

She asks the Plymouth members, "are you prepared to have them sleeping in your bushes."

While opponents felt strongly that subsidized housing should be placed in even the richest of neighborhoods, they also knew that "real estate is too high, so it's not really their fault. I don't think the city wants to put a supportive housing location on Lake of the Isles, because Lake of the Isles is a tourist destination." Also, the hefty property taxes that the city reaps from the private homes there is not lightly given up. However, Jessica felt that even with the incentive of more property taxes and the political pressure from wealthy residents, ultimately the city government still has the ability and responsibility to make the right decision. Residents near the lakes do not want supportive housing, but Jessica held the government to a higher standard than she did these homeowners and Plymouth Church, and since the government started off from a higher point, it had farther to fall in her esteem. And so while Whittier did have cheaper land and many large old buildings fit for supportive housing, Grace felt that,

> That doesn't mean that Whittier needs to become the social magnet in the city, so that people who represent a certain [wealthier] city ward can clean their conscience by saying that these people, [homeless and disabled], are taken care of but they're not in my ward's backyard. That was my frustration.

Where the opponents of Lydia see hidden, selfish intents in the machinations in the location of Lydia, proponents see happenstance. For one Whittier Neighbors member, Sophia,

> It was just perfect serendipity. That building lent itself very well to that purpose … It wouldn't have been made into apartments easily … It doesn't make sense to send people into the suburbs for supportive housing, when the social services they

> need, the jobs they can have. They have to be working or declared unable to work. And uh, and it gives them stability, because it is supportive rather than transitional housing. They can live there the rest of their lives if they wish. That seems to me the best way to go to solve homelessness. They had him in a halfway house clear out in Bloomington and it was difficult for him to get jobs because of when the busses ran, and the curfew at the house … He had to be there at six for the meal.

And while Sophia saw nothing inherently improper with supportive housing in the suburbs, she appealed to basic economics to make the case for the Lydia site.

> This is where you have big old buildings. It's a lot better use than tearing them down or condo-izing everything… They had said we've had enough [supportive housing around here]. But it's partly because of the buildings here … That's simply a function of the buildings here … These are the ones that have enough bedrooms to make it pay.

Olivia also found Lydia's placement simply a matter of geographic common sense. "The homeless already live in the community, they are living under bridges and wandering around, this is a great idea to bring them inside and let them live in a decent setting." Similarly, another proponent, Terrence, found that for those in need of supportive housing,

> They're already here [in this neighborhood], they don't choose this neighborhood because there are lots of porches to sleep under, they choose it because it's close to downtown … You have to live in the city center in order to get anything on the bus system.

Given that the Foundation had made a real commitment to housing the most in need, for Olivia, Lydia "just seemed like such a natural" for this site because of its proximity to "a congregation of people who are extremely interested in community outreach" (as a bonus, the building had been "beautifully taken care of"). Lydia was a perfect fit based of proximity, structure, mission, and aesthetics. I heard from one person that if the Foundation had been prevented from providing supportive services at Lydia, the Foundation planned to still house people in the building, but "just move the social services across the street" into the Church. It "didn't need a zoning permission [to rehab the building for housing], it would just be an apartment building," while across the street there happened to be people to help the residents. While acknowledging the fact of an unusually high number of supportive housing in the area, this was not a "concentration"

for them, it was a needed service to people who happened to already be living in the neighborhood. Terrence observed that because of the geography of real-estate and transportation, "you're not going to buy a two million dollar house in Kenwood, and you're not going to go out to Eagan far from the bus lines … It's not an intentional concentration."

Proponents were not simply idealists, but saw themselves as pragmatists (likewise the opponents are not simply realists). Terrence observed that supportive housing is "the highest use for that property" not only because serving the homeless is such a noble cause, but because realistically no one else is going to use that building. He is aware that the vision of the opponents is for decreased supportive housing and increased single family homes, but "no one is going to tear down Lydia and build … a cute little Victorian cottage." He found it economically not feasible, and so supportive housing is not just a fantastic option, it is the only option; it is either a group residence or a boarded up building.[xxxi]

For all the proponents I interviewed, the *form* of the housing follows from how a structure *functions*, and who is most in need of its shelter. A building designed (formed) for a nursing home can be easily modified (to function) as supportive housing. And while the many mansions in the neighborhood were originally built for wealthy families, now they can quite nicely be transformed into rooming houses. Kendra told me, "I think they [Citizens] really believed that we could turn that building into a school or something, and you really can't. All the architects agreed." She saw it as in essence a bunch of one bedroom units. It is a bizarre irony, palaces built for industrialist families who at that time wished to live on the outskirts of the city, now a century later have become the ideal means of providing everything that the disabled require. For a Whittier Neighbor member who got to throw a shovel of dirt at Lydia's ground breaking ceremony,

> I think there's a point where you've got to say, other parts of Minneapolis need to take this on. But I think you need to do it on a case by case basis. If there's a building that's vacant and available and no one is coming forward with another use, then what's the next best use for it.

However, the proponents' portrayal of location as destiny elides the political; it is as if the only factors working to place the homeless in Whittier are coincidence (or

irony). One supporter, Claire, was able to relate a specific explanation of power with her value for having diverse neighborhoods. She had grown up in a diverse neighborhood herself and felt that "diversity" was one of the strengths of Whittier, and that this diversity should be emulated in other Minneapolis neighborhoods that do not yet have diversity. Just as the poor benefit from having wealthy around as role models,

> People who are millionaires should be around folks who are very poor. Because I think it connects us as communities. It doesn't cut you off from seeing how others live, and the challenges they go through. That said, to situate supportive housing over on [the very wealthy] Lake of the Isles or even in parts in [relatively wealthy] south Minneapolis, are the residents going to have access to public transportation if they don't have a car … That said, I think in the more affluent areas of town you have people who are politically connected and have resources to fight these things, and use zoning code, which can really be a double edged sword … It seems to be an ever changing barometer depending on … who's asking … [This is] fed to some degree with the way our city is set up, with city council members having a lot of say on what goes on … [and with] who's got the connections and built up those relationships.

The city of Minneapolis has what is often referred to as a "weak mayor" system, where the real power is given to the city council, and Claire was pointing out that if one has resources and connections, influencing one city council member can go a long way towards influencing the way the city as a whole responds to any development project. The influence upon government decisions that comes with geographic concentrations of wealth cannot be ignored, and Citizens have not. However, at the same time the arguments of the opponents ignored their own privileged social position as upper-middle class, college-educated, and land and business owning whites, instead focusing on their identity as victims, and on their advocacy for the poor.

The politics one illuminates or does not, is contingent upon whose community you are building, and upon the kind of place one wants to make. Proponents are interested in exploring ways to build community within Lydia, and make Lydia a special place that functions well and is a model to others. Their opponents are exploring ways to build community among long-term residents of Whittier and Steven's Square, and make the neighborhood a special place that functions well and is a model to others. They see Whittier within the context of the city and metro in respect to its ratio of supportive

housing, while proponents see Lydia within the context of the homeless population in Whittier (and their own church) with respect to its high number of homeless. Make place inside one building and one church, for the benefit of the residents, congregation, neighborhood, city, and nation, or make place Whittier for the benefit of Whittier-ites? Change the face of homelessness in general, or change the change the exact geography of where the homeless will get housed?

To put another spin on the geographic level at which one focusses and on the political level on makes arguments about, take this "mixed use" perspective that I heard in a tape of an Alliance focus group – "Instead of subsidized housing here and there, I want a percentage of each building to have affordable housing. We don't want to ghettoize anyone. There was big opposition to Lydia House, and my God, people need to live somewhere." Requiring for profit developers to fund a small percentage of units as affordable in new condo or apartment buildings is not a novel idea, and is being done in some places, but what this perspective does is show how one's view of the geography of poor does not simply have to be a matter of neighborhood by neighborhood, or building to building, but can be broken down within buildings. If the call of Citizens is to "spread em thin" so that the poor do not do damage to any particular area, and the poor will always be exposed to role models, then making a few units in each housing structure affordable seems to accomplish this goal. And if ones calculus is to think through location ("locational thinking"?), as opponents and proponents seem to do, then this makes sense.

6: The Appropriation of the "Over-concentration" Narrative

"Minneapolis is the most racist city in the country." This was not the voice of someone exasperated with white "NIMBY's," or angry about substandard public housing; this was told to me by Wyatt, the opponent who had characterized Lydia residents as "criminals." How would it come about that a wealthy, white man who did not want to live near anymore homeless people, would accuse a city, that is agreeing to allow a homeless shelter, of being racist? And on top of that was complaining about being discriminated against, ignored and, derided. Was he crying reverse discrimination? [xxxii]

No, he was making a much more interesting claim, and I will show how Wyatt's argument makes sense within the context of both his life, politics in the metro, and the history of segregation in urban America.

Almost all the members of Citizens were middle-class, white homeowners, who were trying to stop housing for the disadvantaged and disabled. This put them in a poor rhetorical position from which to make moral claims of discrimination. Citizens did not feel discriminated against on the basis of their race, class, gender, sexuality, religion or any of the standard categories; it was their geographical position that in their view placed them in a discriminated against category. While the felt that the poor, drug addicted, criminal, deranged and disabled were being catered to by a "deluded society," neighborhood homeowners were left out in the cold. And the protesters could have tried claiming reverse discrimination, based on everyone feeling sympathy for the homeless but ignoring the needs of the homeowners. However, while charges of reverse discrimination may gain traction when used by lower-class whites against minorities benefiting from affirmative action, in liberal Minneapolis, if the professionals that made up Citizens were to claim reverse discrimination, it would have damaged their cause rather than garner sympathy. Lydia opponents were also unlikely to cry reverse racial discrimination, because they did not feel that their race had disadvantaged them in any way. In fact, many were quick to point to their own privilege and acknowledge the disadvantages minorities face. But while reverse discrimination was not an option, reversing other discourses was.

A time-honored rhetorical strategy is to appropriate the arguments of one's opponents by taking their logic and applying it in a new way that actually supports one's own case, as the proponents did when arguing that Lydia residents would "contribute to the neighborhood." I will analyze two interdependent arguments made by the opponents to Lydia that use this reverse tactic, both of which have been creatively borrowed from discourses traditionally used by poor, inner-city minorities. The first argument was that when the city and non-profits "dump" the indigent in Whittier and Steven's Square, these neighborhoods were being discriminated against because they were in a relatively poor area that lacked the political clout to stop the dumping. The second argument was that

this dumping results in an "over-concentration" of the poor in one area, which harms everyone in it, especially the poor themselves. I will analyze these two rhetorical strategies, both of which avoided the pitfall of using the opponents' own race or class as a place from which to argue their case against Lydia.

But first, where did the anti-Lydia activists hear of these two arguments, for while the activists saw themselves as sophisticated progressives were more aware of the issues and the streets than the vast majority, they were not people involved in the struggles of minorities. While they lived in and walked around in the inner city, and probably knew a few more people of color than your average white suburbanite, they were, for lack of a better word, very "white." So while the language of oppression, inequality, prejudice, and struggle was highly developed within many minority communities in America, I do not believe it made it to whites in Minneapolis in any more than a superficial way. Over the years however, the media had published many stories about the ongoing battles over public housing and deconcentration.

> The lesson of deconcentration for these [central cities] neighborhoods was that they had already done their share, more than their share, in fact, and should resist further poverty concentration by opposing concentrated social services and affordable housing (Goetz 2003:115).

However, I suspect that it took one particular, fellow middle-class, white, homeowner to bring to them the language they needed to express and legitimize their cause. In 1997 a Minnesota congressman, after spending years trying unsuccessfully to pass affordable housing legislation that would de-concentrate poverty, published a widely read and ground-breaking book titled, Metropolitics: A Regional Agenda for Community and Stability. Myron Orfield's Metropolitics detailed out injustices of and solutions to over-concentration, but more importantly, it spelled out the particular structures of local politics that worked to preserve subsidized housing in the central cities and out of the wealthier suburbs. "In a *regional context*, by centering affordable housing in the most desperate neighborhoods, it moves against the grain of a long-term strategy to establish access to opportunity for people and stability for core communities" (Orfield 1997:77) (italics mine). While the language of deconcentration and of prejudice against minority poor was not new, what was new was a locally popular and readable book, that gave

neighborhood activists a definitive evidence of how exactly Minneapolis neighborhoods had been discriminated against, and gave a compelling vision of deconcentration as a regional problem. Even though not a single one of my informants ever mentioned this man or this book to me, I believe that this was main single source from which there arguments flowed. "While Orfield's efforts failed to convince the affluent and developing suburbs that regional equality was necessary, his ideas were very influential among politicians and citizens of the central cities and inner-ring suburbs" (Goetz 2003:116).

Regarding the two arguments on over-concentration used by the Lydia protesters, the first I will analyze showed the opponents as perennial victims of a city that allowed, and even encouraged, the "ghetto-izing" of their neighborhood by program after program that housed the unemployed, homeless, drug addicted, alcoholic, mentally ill, and criminal. Opponents explained that society often "warehouses" these groups into lower rent areas so that those in middle and upper-class neighborhoods are insulated from the hypothesized negative effects of living among those with fewer resources. They saw Lydia as bringing increased drug dealing, muggings, litter, prostitution, graffiti, vandalism, pan-handling, housing degradation, empty storefronts, fast food restaurants, and generally a less hospitable place to live and do business. And this would viscerally and daily affect all the members of the community, including the residents of supportive housing.

This argument was predicated on the opponents' identity as members of a marginalized neighborhood. Regardless of how many resources they personally had as individuals, members of Citizens constructed themselves as belonging to an amalgam that had little voice in city hall, as compared to the wealthier outlying neighborhoods who were the main contributors to political campaigns (on a national scale, it was charged that when HUD moved to pressure suburbs to accept low cost housing, Nixon reigned HUD in, "Nixon was moving to protect his own sizable suburban constituency, and also respond to the dominance of suburban interests in Congress." [xxxiii] They were living and struggling in a part of the city that had been discriminated against ever since earlier generations of the wealthy had fled long ago. While almost all the opponents had wealth greater than the average American, the average resident of Whittier had far less.

Opponents aggregated themselves out by homogenizing the people of Whittier and Steven's Square into a single, disadvantaged group, from which any one of them could then lay claim to membership.

In recent decades the area had seen increases in crime, degradations in housing stock, and the empty storefronts typical of neighborhoods experiencing dis-investment. Given all these on-going trends, opponents were able to access urban, political discourses from around the nation that blame city governments for neglecting inner-city neighborhoods. Whittier-ites found themselves in a position to identify with arguments that explained how subsidized housing programs (and slumlords) were purposely "warehousing" minority poor on inner-city land that had lost its value with the flight of whites and businesses. Because Whittier had been labeled as a "distressed" neighborhood by the city (as opposed to the lower category "debilitated" or higher one "stable"), those of Whittier could reasonably re-use grievances from the whole set of complaints from across the nation that are typically leveled by advocates of inner-city neighborhoods.

Feeling like they were on the losing side at every turn, the protesters exploited this experience in order to cultivate their identity as underdogs. And since their opponents were politicians and corporations (non-profit ones ironically instead of the multinationals usually being accused of over-bearing), this was a logical rhetorical move to make. While *they* stuck to principles, their opponents had the power to ignore the ¼ mile rule, and simply do what "they want to" to profit, or to take the easy way out. The picketers saw themselves as street fighters against powerful but naive foreigners who were invading their neighborhood.

The organizations that represent the losers, from the Alliance to Citizens, are small, localized, with little money and resources, and no direct power over anything. Meanwhile, he non-profit developers that the losers attempted to keep out of the area often have much larger budgets and paid staff. And the politicians and city bureaucrats who supported Lydia do have direct power, and over half of the city council members represent wards with greater wealth and much fewer supportive housing. Wyatt observed that "if you put affordable housing in Edina or Linden Hills you would have a riot" by the residents there. Citizens characterized their opponents

as an indomitable alliance of convenience between nonprofits greedily desiring the land in their inner-city neighborhoods, and bought-and-sold politicians representing the wealthy in the outlying neighborhoods.

For Jessica, "I understand the church mission thing, I do understand that, but maybe they need to be more sensitive to Whittier or other neighborhoods." Their sensitivity was key because she saw them as holding the power in this relationship. If the protesters' shouting or lawsuits could not stop the project, then hopefully Plymouth's own scruples might. Jessica saw both Plymouth and city government as "the big guys" with all the "money and authority," while her Whittier Alliance was the "small guy in this power struggle." Kendra from the Foundation even validated this power differential. "To be honest we had more power than they had. The protest and lawsuit came out of a position of powerlessness, we had a lot of support on the city council. The mayor was helpful, we had the powers that be."

Lydia opponents extended the NIMBY argument beyond just the people of Plymouth, and up the political ladder to government officials who had the direct power over to approve or deny Lydia (Brandt 11/03/2001).

> According to opponents, seven of the city's 10 planning commissioners and five of its 12 City Council members have no facility like Lydia House within a quarter-mile of where they live. Only one planning commissioner and four council members have more than one such facility nearby. Opponents also said that only one of five church board members living in Minneapolis has more than one such facility nearby.

And as one opponent told me, "None of the council members wanted to be an advocate for us because it meant that Lydia House could come to their wards." Jessica was angry at Plymouth, but reserved more of her resentment for city hall, as it was a democratically elected body that was supposed to be representing her interests. She absolutely felt that the burden of social services "ought to be shared" by all, and with an smile joked that "the basement of the city hall should be opened up every night for the homeless;" this would be "poetic justice." Imposing the "burden" of the poor into the personal lives of those inflicting Lydia onto Whittier-ites was a common fantasy of opponents. Of course, this flight of the imagination only worked if one imagined the homeless as a burden. To those supporters at the Whittier Neighbors who routinely spend nights volunteering at

neighborhood shelters, the fate imagined by protesters would not really be a punishment. This is why, while the Whittier Neighbor's support for Lydia made Citizens members angry, they did not accuse the Neighbors of being hypocrites or self-serving; they were merely deluded.

But who is the big guy and who is the little guy depends of course on where one is sitting and what theories of community building one is exploiting. If one limits one's view to just the *neighborhood*, on this scale the homeowners can be seen as the big guy while the individuals who are poor and disabled, the one's served by social services, are the little guy. The arrangement of this little/big guy trope is dependent upon the context within which you view it. On the level of *city* politics, those against more social services in the inner-city can easily be viewed as lower on the totem pole. And why not, neighborhood organizations are notoriously impotent, and poorer neighborhoods notoriously snubbed.

A second argument that opponents of Lydia appropriated for their purposes, is that the "over-concentration" of the poor victimizes the poor themselves. One claim made was that this warehousing discriminatorily segregates of the poor from rest of society.[xxxiv] From this claim followed the activists' theory that the resultant density of these already struggling people, impairs each individual struggler's own chances of a successful life.[xxxv]

During the Lydia conflict the Star Tribune published this letter to the editor from a critic of Lydia, who the newspaper dubbed "Weary in Whittier" (1/30/2002):

> Last week we commemorated the life and work of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. It's easy now to see how wrong it was to separate people for reasons of race, to put them in a ghetto, to ensure they didn't disturb our satisfying lives and safe neighborhoods. Today we have a new brand of segregation and, ironically, it is supported by some of the descendants of people once contained in ghettos. I am speaking of Plymouth Congregational Church's Lydia House supportive housing project in south Minneapolis. The project has received the support of the Seventh Ward's representative on the City Council. It is spearheaded by a congregation that comes to our neighborhood each Sunday to worship. And it seems everyone wants to do God's work so long as it is not performed in [the wealthy neighborhoods and suburbs of] Linden Hills, Wayzata or Woodbury. Here in Whittier, where our schools are earmarked to serve only the poor, where one can

> grow weary of watching yet another crop of addicts striving for recovery, I wait for someone to come down from the mountaintop to tell us that God's work is truly worth doing in everyone's backyard.

Weary likens the efforts against Lydia to the struggles of Martin Luther King. Weary, who happens to be a white lawyer who donated to John McCain's 2008 Republican presidential campaign, goes for the moral high ground by arguing for the rights of blacks, poor children, and drug addicts. Weary critiques the sanctimonious, suburban bigots who are trying to cram into the Whittier area more of the unwanted. And he legitimizes his lambasting of politicians, suburbanites, and foreign do-gooders, not of course on the position of being white, a lawyer, or a Republican, but on his living "here in Whittier," where he has a front row seat to each new "crop of addicts." I am not accusing Weary of hypocrisy or discounting his arguments, I am showing the relationship between political position, the arguments used to justify it, the geographic location from which those arguments make sense, and the identities exploited to make those arguments.

A leader of Citizens, Bill Nep was also quoted in the press charging discrimination against vulnerable adults. "The practice of clustering supportive housing is highly discriminatory to the clients and bad social policy … It seems to be the de facto policy of the city of Minneapolis to place vulnerable adults only in high-crime areas" (Russell 10/22/2001). Grace surmised that it was highly illogical to house drug addicts in an area swarming with drug dealers. "It didn't seem, um, to me at the time that they were going to be helping people by dumping them into first of all an area where they can go out their front door and buy a dime bag. It's not, uh, an incredibly, legal, part of the neighborhood I guess."[xxxvi] Theorizing on addiction and basic human behavior, Grace pointed out, "It's like taking someone who's on Weight Watchers and moving them in over a candy store for six months, it creates a huge temptation for them." [xxxvii]

Two years after his last letter to the editor, Weary in Whittier is published again in the Star Tribune (12/10/03),

> Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak learned during his campaign that … "white, more affluent residents were happy with the police; minority members and the poor were not." He and Council Member Lisa Goodman push more and more city-subsidized affordable and supportive housing projects into neighborhoods where the poor and minorities already live. Both face the same intense learning curve

> regarding Minneapolis' policy of minority and economic segregation. Poverty and racial segregation breed crime and contempt for the law, and result in strident attempts to police it – ergo, "unhappiness" with the police, as Rybak might put it. Granting variances for Plymouth Foundation's Lydia House and Project for Pride in Living's Collaborative Village Project's placement in poor and politically powerless neighborhoods to keep them poor and powerless shows that neither Rybak nor Goodman has learned much from the Hollman lawsuit decree and, perhaps, they do not want to.

The Hollman lawsuit in Minneapolis was one of many nationally that resulted in court orders for the destruction (and more de-concentrated, quality construction) of a minority-dominated, large public housing project. These large projects, made most famous by Chicago's Cabrini Green, were deemed discriminatory in the way that they clustered together the minority poor. Whereas in the previous letter by "Weary in Whittier," he likens the Lydia proposal to the segregation that Martin Luther King battled, here he likens the suit against Lydia to the creation of super-block "projects."

Weary also theorizes that by concentrating subsidized housing, the resultant concentration of poverty and minorities will "breed crime." This is very different than saying that the poor and minority are criminals, or even have a propensity toward crime. It is an environmental theory of behavior, which speculates that when society separates the poor from the rest, especially in such a callous way, this condition leads to attitudes ripe for crime.

One of these attitudes is "contempt for the law," which can sprout from being found contemptible and shuttled into substandard conditions, and can lead to acting out against the society that does not want you. This is a theory of behavior that sympathizes with those holding less political pull, and ultimately blames those in power for the crime that ensues from their decisions. It is a power-cognizant perspective on social problems; as it points out social stratification and the abuses of that stratification. But at the same time it also highlights the burden that the poor are, because they are the ones committing the crimes, and denigrates them as a homogenous group lacking agency and respect for the law. In this perspective, the concentrated poor present a problem to all of society, but the powerful are the ones ultimately responsible for creating the crimes that so unsettle everyone.

Three weeks before Citizens lost their final court appeal against Lydia, a similar case against another nearby homeless shelter was also lost. Six blocks east of Whittier down Franklin Avenue, non-profits were breaking ground on Collaborative Village, a residence for twenty formerly homeless families (later the criteria switched to people who had a physical or mental disability). Fifteen neighbors of this building along with the organization for the Ventura Village neighborhood, had sought an injunction against the home, making the same case as Citizens (coincidentally, while Whittier lies across the street from Lydia, Ventura Village is across the street from Collaborative Village, and like the Steven's Square organization, the organization representing the neighborhood that held Collaborative Village, Philips West, did not join the lawsuit).

A U.S. District judge however ruled that those living near the project "hadn't shown irreparable harm from the building to warrant a preliminary injunction" against it (Brandt 11/14/03). On top of the harm these particular neighbors claimed they would personally suffer from the home, they had also argued that since there were already nine similar housing facilities within a quarter mile of this new one, city approval of it "served to concentrate minority residents in discriminatory fashion" (Brandt 2003). These residents borrowed from Citizens' discourses of injury and discrimination, and unfortunately for them, also borrowed their legal efficacy.[xxxviii] However, for Citizens, these are not simply strategic arguments that are a means to a political end, they intimately feel injured and discriminated against.

What is interesting is the way that activists' use of the over-concentration narrative skirts a strange path in and around the usual dichotomous debate over poverty – are the poor to blame for their own poverty or is society? [xxxix] Those fighting against Lydia did not weigh in on the debate over why people were poor, and while it is possible that many may have blamed the poor, and this could have contributed to their seeming lack of interest in the poor themselves, their words and activism were laser focused on the issue of the concentration of poverty, and not poverty itself. The import of this for me is that their theories on this concentration were focused on the failures of the helping industry and the government, *macro* issues, to be sure. They may stereotype, distrust, and at times disparage the poor, but they were urban activists interested in systems change.

They were trying to draw attention to the ways that non-profit development agencies were organized and obtained their funding, and the ways that class politics strong armed municipal, state, and federal policies into channeling the poor into already poor neighborhoods.

7: Gentrification is Relative

The meaning of gentrification

Whether or not those protesting Lydia are a disenfranchised group being discriminated against, they are, relatively speaking, still the gentry of the neighborhood. In this chapter we have seen the ideologies and strategies that the protesters used to try to stop one particular project for housing the poorest of the poor; in this section of the chapter I will show how these ideologies and strategies are responsible for helping to: raise rents all across the neighborhood, convert affordable apartments into homeowner condominiums, and raise the price of those condos in general. In short, we will see the race and class relations that are gentrifying Whittier.

To me, gentrification has always had a distinctly negative connotation, since in the media and academia it is narrated as an unjust process where snobby, unthinking whites with their lattes and Volvos push regular folk out of their homes, destroying a genuine, local culture and replacing it with a corporate or chic culture emptied of humanity. And while in Whittier, the activists that want supportive and affordable housing use the word gentrification in this vein, by spitting it out with disdain and fear, those against affordable housing talk about gentrification as a good thing. At first this confused me, not because they wanted those things that go along with gentrification, but because they would openly identify with a word I had assumed was pejorative by definition.

The term “gentrification” was coined by an academic who referred to it as something invading a neighborhood by thoughtlessly displacing established ways of life (Glass 1964:xviii).

> One by one, many of the working class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle-classes – upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews and cottages – two

> rooms up and two down – have been taken over, when their leases have expired, and have become elegant, expensive residences.

In a chapter entitled, "Is Gentrification a Dirty Word," Neil Smith points out that when the word "gentrification" began to gain political traction, some sympathetic to the effects of gentrification tried unsuccessfully to rename it "neighborhood recycling," "upgrading," or "renaissance" (Smith:30). In Whittier advocates of market rate housing and better quality buildings did not often use the word gentrification, nor did they also use any euphemisms, even though they knew that gentrification was a dirty word. Gentrification may be an accurate description of the work by some in Whittier, but the term has warts that Whittier activists knew better than to encourage grow larger on their movement. These *gentrificationists* are proud of the pressure they have placed on non-profit developers to not build more subsidized housing (I will call those advocating for higher quality homes, gentrificationists, and those actually moving into these homes, gentrifiers). While rising rents may displace some in Whittier, the gentrificationists believe that rents are already so low, that increasing them a bit would not be pricing out the low-income. Gentrification is synonymous with urban renewal.

Analyzing gentrification is useful in this study not only because gentrification itself has an effect on the diversity and inequality of both ethnicities and classes, but because arguments over what *gentrification* means, can tell us so much about what it means to build community in the name of *diversity*. Gentrification and diversity are two things that would appear to be mutually exclusive, but this is not necessarily. Take the example of black neighborhoods in Chicago or Washington DC that have become attractive to urban-minded, white professionals; isn't adding some whites to an almost all black neighborhood adding diversity? Technically yes, but civil rights proponent would counter that simply mixing the races is not the ultimate goal, social justice is. And if displacing minorities is divesting the most vulnerable among us from their homes, then that is not just (and de-segregation is mostly not about whites moving into minority neighborhoods to take advantage of cheap rent and restaurants, but about breaking down the barriers that minorities experience to *moving out* of ghettos and into white neighborhoods).[xl] However, my informants who are against affordable and subsidized

housing would counter that middle class newcomers to neighborhoods such as Whittier are displacing crime and a low quality of life, and replacing it with neighborhood health, stability, and prosperity, and that this actually benefits all the other lower and working class residents in the neighborhood who did not get displaced. Some find middle-class professionals moving into low rent neighborhoods to be exploiters, but another perspective is that they are a progressive, brave vanguard who are doing the work of de-concentrating poverty, by bringing into a "ghetto" a variety of professions, incomes, and backgrounds.

Given the raging debates in communities and academies across the world over gentrification and over diversity, the relationship between these two discourses is worth examining closer. [xli] What I will bring to this conversation is the specific strategies, arguments, and tools that community activists use to lay the political, social and physical bedrock, which allows for fellow middle-class professionals to move into Whittier. Corporations, mayors, artists, "yuppies" and "NIMBY's," have all heard about their supposed roles in gentrification, but we have not heard the roles played by individual community builders, individual multicultural organizations, and individual neighborhood meetings. When activists in Whittier call for gentrification, what *exactly* are they hoping for, and how does higher housing costs fit into their theories of urban renewal?

Controlling the condo craze

The condo craze came to Minneapolis around the same time it arrived in many cities across the nation, the mid 2000s, and like the "invasion" of supportive housing projects in the decades prior, this trend was also seen by many as something that needed controlling lest it get out of hand. The brunt of development was in the warehouse district just west of the central business zone, where about a dozen large, glass and steel condo cubes were erected, interspersed among warehouses converted into loft residences, while luxury townhomes were built along the warehouse district's northern zone on tracts along the Mississippi. These homes became the thrust of a reversal of white flight; middle and upper class whites were moving "back" to Minneapolis. Gentrification though means something very different when middle class whites are replacing long defunct industrial

warehouses rather than working class minorities. The lofts downtown would replace nothing but mice, empty lots, and long unused machinery. Unlike the gentrification that displaces the poor, this is the *cool* version, where high ceiled, exposed brick warehouses become the haunts of hip professionals, bringing art studios, coffee shops, and upscale restaurants to what was the legacy of urban de-industrialization.

Whittier however saw the gentrification trend on a smaller scale and from a distinct perspective. Since Whittier is residential, it did not experienced as much of the cool kind of artsy, lofty gentrification, but instead the kind that does displace lower income people; many rental apartment were turned into condominiums. And while in downtown everything going up would be high end and spacious, many in Whittier worried about slipshod construction in their neighborhood, and were fearful of tiny condo units that would not support families, which they predicted would not keep residents long-term. Before the 2008 housing crunch of the Great Recession stopped condo construction in its tracks, two large condo buildings were put up on Nicollet Avenue right across from each other. One of these went up on an empty lot next to a liquor store, the other displacing a gas station (to the elation of many in the neighborhood). One block east of there, a concrete, high ceiled, county office building was converted into mid-ranged, mid-sized condos (which my wife almost bought a unit before we got married).

Local merchants and activists previously had done the work of branding Nicollet as "Eat Street," due is its many and global restaurants, and one of the new condos capitalized on this marketing by calling itself Eat Street Flats – "as DELICIOUS as the neighborhood." Those in Whittier who welcomed higher-priced housing and businesses were for urban renewal, but their vision of renewal was not the same as that of the developer of Eat Street Flats. There are many different kinds of roles that a gentrifier can play, and different roles often have contradictory plans for what *gentrification* looks like. The pro-gentrification home-owners in Whittier are incredibly suspicious of developers, who come promising "high end" construction. At one Whittier Alliance committee meeting I attended, a developer was trying to sell the residents on his large condo project, by arguing the advantages of increased population density. One resident piped up with, "this word density is getting a lot of use. Rampant development is ill-considered,

developers come and make money, then leave, so we're left holding the bag." This "bag," is ill-conceived, cramped, cheap, unattractive, multi-family housing, what is considered a cash cow for the developer, but a burden for the neighborhood. Having different motivations than both the developers and the new condo owners, the existing property owners wanted a different result from gentrification.

When the developer of the Eat Street Flats came to the Community Issues committee of the Whittier Alliance to get approval for with his plan, he received a cool reception. Some found the design boring, others found it cheap, but one resident used a word that is the worst, most despicable thing one can level at a building, "suburban;" it is the curse of death for any architect's plan. To make it more "urban" residents called for a full brick façade with metal accents, a more creative design, more articulation, and a style more "compatible" with the existing architecture. A few months later a Vietnamese property owner on Nicollet also received the dreaded "cheap and suburban" stamp for his modest one-story proposal. Adding insult to injury, the critic said "it looks like a big cheap sprawling box." Boxes are not distinct, boxes are not scrumptious, boxes do not help brand a street.

However, red brick, metal balconies, and variation (diversity?) are classy. They bring a higher class tenant to the inside of the building, bring a larger and higher class clientele to all the businesses on Eat Street, and capture more well-heeled home buyers. I suspect that the activists at the meeting that night also very much wanted to see a nicer building when they walk down the sidewalk. They planned on living here long after this building went up, and cared about how it would *feel* to them to have a more handsome structure in that space. The Eat Street Flats plan showed wall-mounted air conditioners poking out from each unit, which the residents found ugly. They asked instead for central air, which would leave the façade unmarred by industrial looking, noisy machinery. The developer agreed to go with brick and central air, but later came back to the Alliance proposing to do brick only on the sides facing the streets, while making the balconies and windows larger. The rationale was to take the money saved with a part stucco exterior and use it to create high quality interiors and add a "green" roof. The activists present felt that the neighborhood would be the loser if any part of the exterior was downgraded, and

later that month the Alliance board rejected this trade off (however, it ended up with nice looking stucco on most of the non-street facing walls).

There is a philosophy among the development watchdogs in Whittier that holds that – just because this has been a "depressed" neighborhood, it has incredible potential. They feel strongly that the neighborhood should not jump at any old construction pitch that comes along; this is what the city did when it agreed in 1978 that Kmart could replace part of Nicollet Avenue itself with a huge Kmart. While the Eat Street Flats developer may have been putting in nice, new, market rate housing where there currently stood an ugly gas station that was responsible for hordes of 911 calls, these Alliance activists feel that they should wait until the right plan comes along that will make Whittier not just more market-rate, more home-owner, and more safe, but distinctive. They see themselves as bulwarks against the attitude of, anything-is-better-than-what-we-have. "There was a time we had to pay people to build here, now we pick who comes and we can influence what they build."

At the second presentation by the Eat Street Flats developer, he tried to butter up the audience by saying how the neighborhood was up-and-coming, and how he wanted to be part of the great transformation of Nicollet Avenue. Sounds good, but these neighbors had seen a million proposals, and were not swayed by flattery; they already knew their neighborhood was special. The developer had been told at the last meeting that because balconies were only being put on the Franklin and Nicollet sides of the building, he had "sold the First Avenue side short, which is a special street in this neighborhood." Another problem was that the developer also could not yet say whether the project would be rental or condo; a resident replied that "we have identified that we are interested in ownership, we can't approve of this idea if you won't say whether or not it will be rental or owned."

The call for owner-occupied, higher-price, and larger, living units

Gentrification is the replacement of the lower classes by the gentry, and the gentry, by definition, are property owners. While high price *rental* can definitely gentrify a neighborhood, the more direct route is through owner-occupied condos (the gentrificationists would prefer to have more owner-occupied single-family *houses*, but

when a developer can put 54 condos on the same amount of land that would holds four houses, the economics dictate the usage). The reality is that the last big group of single-family homes that will ever be built in Whittier were developed over half a century ago, and there have been only a handful of houses sporadically built since then (Manhattan has only one freestanding house left, and in 2013 it was on sale for $13.5 million, reduced from $15 million). While the nearby suburb of Edina has been recently "terrorized" by a huge rash of "tear-downs," where small houses built in a prior era are bought and demolished in order to shoe-horn in "McMansions," Minneapolis is moving more and more towards higher density multi-family housing, especially along inner-city transit corridors, such as Nicollet Avenue, which will probably soon once again have trolley lines.

But the interior of buildings was also of importance to Alliance activists, because they theorized that the higher the quality, and larger the interior, the more stable it will make the neighborhood. This theory rests on the assumption that the nicer the home, the longer the tenants are likely to stay. "Stability" is a major buzzword among Minneapolis activists, and in the world of neighborhood activism in general. A stable neighborhood is seen as one where residents stay a long time, but it also implies resistance to certain negative deviations, such as falling property prices, closing businesses, and loss of character. Stability is seen as having no negatives; it connotes family, safety, neighborliness, peace, and profit.

Two years after first pitching the Eat Street Flats plan at Alliance meetings, the developer came back asking for support for their request to the city planning department to increase the number of units from 54 to 63, without changing the building's shell. Since this development would be across the street from Whittier's northern neighbor, the developers also had been updating a committee of this neighborhood as well. When the developer explained this change to the activists in this neighborhood, they wondered where the space for these nine extra units was coming from. The answer from the perspective of a committee member was – from *cannibalizing* the other units. A watchdog activist chimed in bitterly with, "so much for stability, people are just going to grow out of these places." What she meant was that, as soon as the tenants make more

money and can afford a larger place, or as soon as they have children and need more room, they will move out.

While some activists did not mind telling me they were for gentrification, the language around gentrification is thorny; no one wants to be seen as insensitive towards the poor. When a developer came to the Alliance with a plan to convert the old Midwest Machinery building into apartments, and his original plan got panned, when he returned and told the suspicious crowd assembled that he had increased the price points because that is what the committee had requested at the previous meeting. A resident however was quick to correct him by saying that it was not that they wanted more *expensive* units, but *larger* units. I wondered if this call for bigger units was simply a smokescreen for more expensive units. Was the main priority getting wealthier people into that building, and activists did not want to say this for fear of being exposed to attacks as classist? I do not know the answer to this question, but I do know that arguing for "stability" is a better tactic than arguing for keeping the poor out. I also know that these activists genuinely do want larger units, and I know that no one's only priority in Whittier is attracting money.

However, at other times I have heard higher prices have being explicitly asked for. The same activist who wanted it known that he was not asking for more expensive units, a few months later was telling the developer, "don't sell this neighborhood short on what people can afford." Another activist told this developer that he was undervaluing the potential prices of the units they were planning. And this same gentrificationist suggested to the developer of another condo conversion project, that "the neighborhood has been undervalued … and your condos could be sold at a higher price point than expected." Comments like these are partly what drove one anti-gentrification activists in Whittier to theorize that their opponents care only about increasing property values in the neighborhood.

> They want to be like Kenwood [the extremely high rent neighborhood one mile west], that's what they aspire to, but they can't afford it … But they would be there if they could, and they want to turn this neighborhood into that, … except more hipper, …[but] you aren't going to have Lake of the Isles [here, maybe just] the downscale version of it, might be SOHO or Tribeca, some upscale market where it's dense and still hip.[xlii]

Regardless of their class aspirations, these activists care deeply about the quality of the new buildings near their homes, the quality of the experience of those that will move into them, and their own "quality of life" that they tie so closely to developments in their neighborhood. The 1916 Midwest Machinery building had been long empty of gear deburrers and lathes, but it still retained it brick construction, the "cathedral" roof style, and a first row seat on The Greenway (the old railway right of way converted into a bike/walk path). And these attributes, not the boring machines, was what many in the neighborhood had an emotional attachment to. So when a developer came to the Alliance committee with his plan to turn it into condos, he talked big. The building's shell would remain the same, but the new interior would be heated and cooled by thermal temperatures provided by tubes drilled far down into the earth, while cars of the local auto-sharing non-profit would be parked inside. But on their third visit seven months later, they said that while they had really wanted to keep the original building and go green with it, the economics did not support it; their green plan was going to cost it 25% more than they originally estimated. Instead they would demolish the building, and instead of 58 units it would have 129. This is what the Alliance activists call the "bait and switch" which they know so well and hate so much, and they were ready for it.

"The skyline of the design is very boring." "This looks like a people warehouse to me. You need to go back and redesign this." "When a building gets put up we want people to say, my god, have you seen the building that just went up in Whittier." "I live near to this, and I don't know if I'll stay if this four story building goes up because it will block my sun." "I've lived in this neighborhood all my life and I like the brick in the building." "The design of the building is lacking and not inspiring, detailing is minimal, nothing that defines an appealing design." Ouch.

The close tie that these detractors have with their concrete environment is based on how buildings personally make them *feel*, as well as their *theories* on the effects that buildings have on their neighborhood. Talking about how buildings "feel" can sound so, well, touch-feely, or bourgeois (*a-la* "I am just feeling so weary of my Room & Board living room set, let's go shop Anthropolgie"). But whether the style of your furniture is getting you down because you fear not appearing stylish to your friends, or the architecture you walk by is making you mad because it is inspiring drug dealing rather

than grandeur, this feeling is not only very real for that individual, but does have material effects on the community. For the gentrificationist who wanted larger and more expensive units, he himself had years ago bought an old apartment building in the neighborhood and rehabbed it into its current beautiful condition. This project had been financially risky for him, and he had invested a great deal of his time and sweat into both the building itself and the social environment in which it sat.

In an interview he told me,

> A neighborhood is social group, support group, educational group. The building … was literally filled with crack whores and drug dealers. I was kind of naive in that aspect, since I got that first bunch out I think I've only thrown one person out since. Some of my tenants have been there many years, the rents are probably reasonable. That building is kind of its own little community, we watch out for each other.

Here he was partly defining community as – not crack whores and drug dealers. He was not defining it as upscale or trendy, but simply relatively free of drug addicted prostitutes and the men who sell them drugs. And what had been important to him was having stopped the drug dealers from walking through his front yard, and having "developed some life-long friends from his tenants." Depending on one's perspective, this man could be many things, classist, community builder, property developer, crime fighter, or someone who cares about the people around him. Gentrification it means many different things to many people, and does many different things for and to many people.

What I really learned from this man though was how his dedication to nurturing caring community is understood through his prejudice against low cost housing. "For being 90% rental I'm amazed by the sense of community in the neighborhood. I've gotten most of my people from being involved in the Whittier Alliance, people who have lived here for years, whether they rent or own there's a real sense of community." There is community *in spite of* the lack of gentrification. For someone who cares so little about how much money "his people" have, his activism is so tied to the amount of money his new neighbors have.

The condo crunch

While big condo projects were going in downtown, scattered throughout Whittier many apartment buildings holding between 4 and 54 units were also being converted into condos. For the larger ones, developers would buy the building specifically to convert it, but for most of the smaller ones the existing landlord would do it themselves, hoping to make a bundle by getting out of low end rentals, with their stained carpets and mangled blinds, and into medium range condos with hard wood floors and granite countertops. However, there were three main problems I heard about from various activists – loss of affordable housing, shoddy construction, and the rash of condo foreclosures that followed a few years later. This triad of complications affected many American cities, and seeing how these problems played out in Whittier politics can teach us about the dynamics of urban housing in general.

Among Whittier activists, the first problem of rising costs was only a problem to the advocates of affordable housing. A newspaper article (Russell 2005) found that,

> Tenant advocates say developers are converting apartments to condos at a rapid enough rate that city-assisted affordable housing gains are being wiped out. A new study … suggests 1,350 apartment units [in Minneapolis] affordable to people making 50 percent of metro median income (MMI) were converted to condos in 2003-2004 (Fifty percent MMI was $38,500 for a family of four).[xliii]

This however was not a problem at all to those in the Alliance who believed that Whittier already contained way too much affordable housing to begin with.

For the Alliance gentrificationists, shoddy construction was a major factor that contributed to the decline of neighborhoods. The higher quality the conversion, the more likely it was that the new tenants would have more to offer the neighborhood. Plus they believed that the more expensive and better quality a building is to begin with, the more likely it will be that the new owners would keep it looking nice. A conversion done on the cheap would translate into tenants and owners who were not as invested in their property, into properties falling in value, and into a neighborhood of broken windows.

But when the real estate bubble popped around 2008, condos were hit particularly hard, and in Whittier even more so than downtown. Falling values and foreclosures were particularly stinging for those in Whittier who had been working for decades on

increasing both home values and home ownership. When an apartment building down the street from me went condo during the condo craze, it was renamed "The W," and one of its advertised features was

> Incredible location next to Nicollet Avenue Eat Street with an abundance of shops, restaurants, and specialty stores … It is one of the city's oldest neighborhoods, having been originally settled in the 19th century, and is named for the poet John Greenleaf Whittier. [xliv]

While converting it from rentals to condos the owner of this building was helping to increase the ratio of homeowners to renters in Whittier, however, the owner was not an activist, only a speculator. Most of the units in this particular condo conversion were not renovated; they still had the same cheap white carpet, white walls, and white, plastic counters that the renters had before them (I had rented a unit once in a sister building two doors down with similar styles. After I moved out that building it changed its name to Eat Street Apartments, even though it was not even on Nicollet "Eat Street). So after condos prices collapsed, one could buy a studio unit in The W for as low as $35,000, which is hardly a gentrifying price point.

Not only that, but since it became so hard to sell condos, many of the owners that moved out ended up renting their units, hoping for a day when prices would rise and they would not lose so much of their investment. What the neighborhood ends up with is not only rental units, but a building that has repossessed units, a discordant condo board, a bankrupt condo association, lawsuits against the original developer, and a whole bevy of actors not interested in taking ultimate responsibility for anything on the property (to make matters even worse, The W was sued by W Hotels and had to rename itself, but it did not have any money and so instead of the stylish wooden sign with a big W, it had an amateurish sign with sloppy black letters on particle board painted white.). The gentrificationist claim is that the more money residents have invested in their homes, the more invested they will be in the well-being of their homes and their neighborhoods. In their view, people who invest only $35,000 would not be as likely to contribute as much to the neighborhood. And while many condo conversions were intensive, the optional upgrade offered at The W was a $30,000 Ikea makeover, with shiny red plastic cupboards and a low-end wood floor.

What I personally found fascinating is that the monthly mortgage payment on these units could be way below what the monthly rent on them had been. I wondered, why wouldn't any single person, including college students, just buy one of these homes, then just sell (or walk away) when the time comes, maybe even with a profit? However, the gateway to this prize is having the credit rating and down payment to get a good mortgage, and this is the difference between many of the previous and new tenants. Whenever developers pitched their conversion to the Alliance, they would always also promise that the current rental tenants would always have first shot buying their unit before it would be released to the open market. However, in my conversations with developers and neighbors, I have never heard about any tenants that took advantage of this offer. This is where class makes all the difference; having lots of extra money needed for a down payment can save you lots of money, just like being poor can often make your cost of living very expensive.

While volunteering with the Alliance one day in 2005, I could not help telling a fellow volunteer that my wife and I had just bought a converted condo in the neighborhood. He was excited for me, especially since he had just moved into his condo a few blocks away. But as we reveled in our new homeownership status, he also mentioned how some had criticized the condo conversion explosion because it had depleted affordable rentals. My field notes later that evening read,

> before that moment, it had never occurred to me that I had a part in the destruction of affordable housing, that I was displacing people that needed economical housing. And before this moment of writing, I hadn't connected my purchase with gentrification. But of course, how could this not be gentrification? … My wife and I with our master's degrees and professional jobs. Even though I make little money, I'm still the gentry. And what of the family that was living in this unit before they were kicked out for the conversion? Before now I had been only concerned with getting a good deal on the price, fighting for my rights against real estate agents, investigating how big the parking spaces in back were, and wondering how I could get onto the condo board. I wonder who that family was, and where they are today. How long did they live there, and what was their rent? … Was their move difficult? Do they live in a less desirable place? Were they mad to be kicked out?

Bodies, identities, and neighborhood architecture

While people buy houses in Whittier because of the neighborhood's "diversity" of buildings and people, I have found that once nestled into those houses, these new homeowners often begin to resent having to share their block with dense housing, renters, and bland architecture (ironically, in the last few decades, the re-development of urban public housing sometimes goes along with gentrification, as seen in the steep increase in home prices around Cabrini Green when its demise began to be plotted [Goetz 2003:67]). While almost all of the mansion owners have come to their blocks long after the apartment buildings did, I sense that they feel as if their rights to the neighborhood go back to when their house was built, which could been a century ago. One's length of tenancy is the neighborhood has always been something of a bragging right; the longer one has lived in Whittier, especially if they have owned their home the entire time, the more prestige it brings. And it is as if living in the old mansions of the logging and milling magnates, allows the new resident to merge themselves with the history of the prestige of the concrete itself.

American homeowners make their homes part of their identity. If buying an ultramodern new condo in a downtown tower is supposed to validate one's sense of being active and up-and-coming, and moving into an "artist loft" in a converted warehouse in the old industrial part of town allows feeling avante-guard, then residing in a mansion in Whittier bestows upon the inhabitant all the grandness and antiquity of those who built it to house their family, servants, horses, and carriages. But once enshrined in your castle (as some of them actually appear), there is always the tension between two fantasies, living urban and living exclusive. As owners will tell you, they specifically picked Whittier because it is not suburban. What activists perceive as a lack of history in the suburbs is one reason they hold so much disdain for them. To live there for them would be a life devoid of a heritage; like livability crimes detract from their quality of life, so do spaces lacking an "authentic" past.

Being not-suburban is central to their identity, but everyone, in one way or another, wants to feel part of exclusivity, whether it be in a gated community, working in high-tech industry, a member of a natural foods co-op, a tagging crew, or a writing group.

And if you appreciate that you own and reside in an old mansion that once housed the elite of Minneapolis with all their antique refinery and formal cocktail parties, it can be difficult to not feel like the lower-class people living in the humble apartment building next door, are cramping your *style*. It also means one does not share much with them; not only are they of a different class and possibly ethnicity, nationality and language group, but their home and their neighborhood means something different to them.

Urban means density, and up for debate is not only the degree of density of people, but the proximity of them to your own body. At an Alliance community meeting a landlord of a modest apartment building came to ask for support for her application to the city to install balconies as part of converting her building to condos. At issue was putting them on the sides of the building, by extending them out almost to the property lines on both sides. While the neighbor on the west side was all right with the balconies, the couple on the other side felt balconies would intrude upon them. "I don't want to be brushing my teeth and look out and see someone else brushing theirs, they would be right there." For two people living in a mammoth house on a large lot, they must have wanted this property for its space. But space is not just for moving around in or keeping your things in, it can also be a buffer to use between you and the others moving around in their space. The area at the edge of a property is supposed to be this buffers, and where people are not supposed to be. That is why they hold barriers such as fences, trees and shrubs, or empty spaces like gardens, lawns and rocks. The grass bordering your neighbor or your sidewalk are spaces where the resident might go rarely in order to do some mowing or some such, but you are not expected to actually leave yourslef there for any amount of time. Instead of being used, these spaces are designed to make sure no one is using them (like the four kilometer wide Korean DMZ).

Another activist at the meeting put it this way, "if you put in balconies the residents won't be contained, they will bring their lives out." Being a community meeting of an organization that advocates for eyes on the street, vibrant urban living, and neighborliness, this is a very funny thing to say at (or say anywhere). But again, there is the tension between urban-ness and exclusivity. Urban living is synonymous with being in touch with the pulsating life of the city. If no one brings their life out of their home,

then the city would be considered dead. It is the sharing of life that makes for camaraderie and vibrancy; community does not exist without people being willing to show their lives to others, to have them vibrate off of you. It seems that the more square footage you have been granted the right to use, the more you feel it is your right to not hear or see your neighbors. And owning a huge house with a huge yard is apparently not compatible with brushing your teeth with your neighbor. Motion eight at the meeting read – "The Whittier Alliance Board recommends that the apartment building owner at 2424 Blaisdell take a look at a new design for the balconies and planters and consult with the adjacent homeowners." In the end the balconies were put in on the front and back of the building instead of the sides, and for seven years I enjoyed that balcony very much, thank you. This building was the very one that my wife and I bought a two bedroom unit in a year after that meeting, and we had nice neighbors not only in the building but on both sides as well.

Accusations of, and ignorance of, classism

Much to the chagrin of the gentrificationist, they have routinely been called racist by their critics, both inside and outside the neighborhood. According to one enemy of theirs, "I think they think we [affordable housing advocates] are bringing poor people into the neighborhood, and the poor people were drug addicts, crack heads and rapists, and prostitutes." The gentrificationists had been long seen by their detractors as trying to keep minorities out of the neighborhood by working to close the subsidized co-op housing, discourage affordable housing projects from going up, preventing any more supportive housing programs from opening, and continuously pushing against many of the social services for the in need. A battle-scarred enemy of this camp however told me that,

> I actually don't think it is racism, I think it is classist, which is almost as bad to me because it is insidious, it's covert, you can't look at somebody and tell whether they are poor or not, so you can pick on people. I think a lot of it was that the people who were against this thought we were going to import drug dealers and crack heads, and give them a place to live in our neighborhood, and then the overt argument was that we were warehousing the poor and that was inhumane.

This activist was a member of the Whittier Neighbors, and describing the Alliance and its core members, those of The Neighbors routinely echoed to me a common discourse that almost always went exactly like this – *"they are not so much racist as classist."* Members of The Neighbors regulars told me that what the Alliance is really after is not so much a homogenously white neighborhood as a homogenously non-poor neighborhood.

Some critics have gone so far as to claim that the gentrificationists are just "suburban wannabees," but the irony here is that these same people are the most vocal in their disdain of the suburbs and its homogeneous "inanity." Another characterization of them is that they are wannabees of the almost all-white, all upper-class Kenwood neighborhood, which would be a more plausible claim than them wanting to live in the suburbs, since Kenwood is also near downtown and many ethnic restaurants. However, if these activists did want to be free of the poor or minorities, there are neighborhoods in the expanses of southeast Minneapolis that have comparable property values to Whittier, but are solidly white and middle-class, and instead of having only 10% homeownership, have the opposite. And some of these neighborhoods have an urban feel with their own restaurant/café/entertainment corridors.

So if those heavily advocating for less subsidized apartments and more market rate houses are not "wannabee" of suburbia or even whiter urban neighborhoods, and if they do come to Whittier specifically for the diversity of ethnicities, lifestyles, and architectures, could they still wish they could have all of that, but without the lower classes? I am reminded of what one past employee of the Alliance had to say about his employers,

> I think, that everybody likes diversity, it's interesting, we have a very diverse neighborhood. Whittier was great for embracing gays and lesbians, but the one underlying thing that all the diverse people had was middle-class. So if you were a black man, and you had an education, and you were middle class, you were fine. If you were Indian and middle class you were fine. If you fit the middle class stereotype you were fine … So yeah, they were diverse, they like diversity, as long as you're middle class we like diversity. We don't like diversity if it makes us uncomfortable, and we're all uncomfortable if we're not middle class.

I cannot vouch that the gentrificationists were essentially classists, but they do appear to not understand what being classist was. One interview in particular brought this

home to me; it shocked me because of the level of ignorance about inequality showed by an intelligent man who had an advanced degree in political science from a liberal university. Like many others, when I asked him what he liked about the neighborhood, he replied, "I like the mix, I don't want to live where it is homogenous." But after we had discussed housing development in Whittier and I had mentioned accusations of classism, he defensively shot back at me, "how can the Whittier Alliance board be classist?! They don't care what kind of car people drive." It is true, I cannot think of a single activist in Whittier of any political persuasion that would give a hoot about expensive cars, fashion designs, the firm one worked in, or the size of their flat screen television.[xlv] However, as admirable as this may be, this is entirely NOT the point of the classism charge against them.

They are not being accused of caring about what class people are in terms of the brands they conspicuously consume, but accused of caring about what class people are in terms of their actual income (in the formal economy, that is). No one is saying these activists are prejudiced against anyone who does not have all the most prestigious stuff; the basic charge is that the gentrificationists at the Alliance have an ugly prejudice against the poor, assuming all kinds of nasty and untrue things about them as a group. And yet, this intelligent and educated activist had no idea that being classist could mean something besides caring about what someone drove. The comment about not caring about cars was akin the cliché, "I can't be racist, some of my best friends are black." It was as if since he was not concerned with one particular way that class is expressed (your car), this meant that nothing else he did could ever be classist; as if his activism could never result, intentionally or unintentionally, in maintaining social structures that inhibited the poor.

My research did not test for how classist or non-classist individuals were, but it did test for mechanisms that reproduced class hierarchies. The gentrificationists did not understand that their objections against certain types of living quarters, translated into placing barriers in the way of particular, historically maligned, disadvantaged groups (e.g. the homeless, the chemically addicted, the out of work, the destitute through no fault of their own, the mentally ill, the developmentally disabled, the physically disabled).

When I asked one gentrificationist if she ever felt that the Alliance was racist or classist, she said no – "I didn't see that." She felt that they were instead "*development* oriented … Being pro-development doesn't mean you want to push the poor people out … Developing two contaminated gas stations is not pushing poor people out." It could mean this though if the gas stations are replaced with condominiums that end up driving up the rents in the buildings around them (if the Alliance is pro-development, does that mean that their rivals at the Whittier Neighbors are anti-development? Development is relative; the Neighbors are pro affordable development). She had been at a community event where the developer who erected The Eat Street Flats condos on an old gas station "was accused of being a gentrifier, and that wasn't fair because they build housing that's affordable. The Arts Quarter [they built a few blocks down Nicollet] has affordable units that were subsidized and kept below market rate." True, some developments such as this one were set up to have a small ratio of units permanently subsidized, so that those who normally would not quite have been able to afford a condo in this building, now could. However, the smallest units at the Arts Quarter were originally offered for over $200,000, so anyone who would have been able to afford it would have had a well-paying, steady job and making way over the average Whittier income.

The Great Recession more than halved the value of every condo in Whittier, and one of the causes of the great recession was that credit had been too easy to get beforehand. The irony here is that the easy credit that had allowed many with little money to be able to attain the American dream of owning a home in the early 2000s, had not only left many of the people financially ruined, but also opened the door for others with not a lot of money today to buy condos at bargain basement prices. Unit #320 in the Arts Quarter Lofts that sold originally for $303,000, was dumped for only $130,000 in 2012, while unit #305 went from $250,000 in 2006 to $110,000 six years later (both are two bed two bath, under 1,000 square feet). And remember that Alliance activist whom I had celebrated with back in 2005 when we had both bought condos, he had shelled out over $300,000 for his beautiful high-ceilinged home in a high quality building; in 2013 it was being offered for rent for only $1,500. And he was smart to rent rather than sell, because the rental market in Minneapolis in 2013 was very tight. If he sold he would have to take

at least a $150,000 bath, but can hopefully rent it for only a few hundred dollars a month less than his mortgage plus association dues. His other option of course would be to sell short or just walk away, both routes however would damage his credit rating, and could severely impair his ability to get another mortgage in the future.

As for my condo, it went from being worth about $200,000 when we bought it in 2005, to maybe $90,000 a few years later. However, because only two of the building's twelve units ever sold, it is deemed by buyers and bankers as unstable. Even if someone was foolish enough to want to buy our condo, no bank would ever lend them the money to buy it, because it is in an association where the majority of units are owned by one person, and occupied by renters instead of owners. Even if we wanted to do a short sale and our mortgage bank agreed to it, it would still be impossible, as any buyer would have to pay in cash.

For that activist who had defended his camp against accusations of being classists, he continued to insist his activism was not anti-poor; "The Whittier Alliance isn't against renters, they are against landlords who don't take care of their properties, the landlords are the problem. Some take impeccable care of their properties. The bad ones bring in drug dealers who are bad renters" (renters don't kill neighborhoods, landlords kill neighborhoods). The problem with this discourse though is that it still stigmatized renters and the disabled as not as good as homeowners, and as powerless pawns. If I explained this to the gentrifications I know, they would be perfectly capable of understanding my point, and may not even deny it. But *their* point is that this is not their problem; they have already provided more than their fair share of subsidized housing to the world. And a more important belief for them is that if more subsidized housing was introduced in Whittier to help the few that would move into it, this could catastrophically hurt all 15,000 people in the neighborhood. This is not merely a utilitarian argument (that the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few), because they point out that those few can be helped perfectly well in wealthier neighborhoods, where the low density of those in need will make no real impact on those neighborhoods. Also, moving more in-need into Whittier is not just a simple matter of "the many" having a slightly lower quality of life, but of the businesses failing, innocents being mugged, the in-need themselves being

exploited by non-profits and drug dealers, and a neighborhood going over the tipping point.

8: Who Won?

The neighborhood never did spiral out of control (perhaps in part because of the gentrificationists, who knows?), but as the single most fought over, and theorized over, object in Whittier, what effect did Lydia itself have on the neighborhood after it opened? Years after opening, everyone, including the most virulent of protesters, agreed that Lydia had been a success; no one would say that either the Lydia residents nor their neighbors had been directly victimized by the program. Ultimately, the greatest long-term effect of Lydia on the neighborhood had less to do with what happened after it opened, but instead with what happened in the fight to keep it from opening. The most lasting and deepest effect was polarization, and not just between not just a few activists in Whittier, but between a much larger base of homeowners and community organizations throughout the city on one side, and on the other side a giant cluster of non-profits, municipalities, churches, and anti-poverty advocates spread throughout the area.

The battle had other unintended affects; Kendra from the Plymouth Foundation explained that "we got a lot of press for it. As painful as it was on both sides, it put us on the map in a way that no tiny little foundation could ever have gotten" normally. The Foundation gained experience, reputation, donations, and future contracts, but while it continued developing properties elsewhere, it did not dare to propose another development in its own neighborhood. And according to some, this *was* the larger purpose of the protesters. Randall broke it down for me – "the people who opposed Lydia lost the battle, but they won the war." After Lydia, those who might have wanted to build supportive housing in Whittier "didn't have the stomach to come back and try it … That was Bill Nep's whole strategy, we are going to make this so painful they will go away … Bill was crazy at times, out of control." For Wyatt, while the experience of fighting Lydia had "soured" him on neighborhood activism, and the patrolling and picketing had worn him out, he did feel some sense of victory. "The neighbors may have lost the battle, but

they won the war, because [since Lydia] no one has tried to put another supporting housing project in the neighborhood."[xlvi]

This is true, and other non-profit housing developers also learned the lesson of Lydia. Simpson Housing Services, which is headquartered in Whittier and works to advocate for and house the homeless, began planning a new twenty unit building towards the end of the Lydia fight, but it will not be in Whittier and it will not be a short-term shelter (Russell 4/17/03).

> Sidestepping controversy about too many facilities in inner-city neighborhoods, a dynamic new director plans south-side or suburban development. Simpson Housing is expanding beyond its traditional emergency shelter and transitional housing programs into permanent supportive housing for families. Simpson has neither a housing site nor a budget for its first project yet, but one thing is clear: It won't build in Simpson's own Whittier neighborhood or the city's inner ring, he said. The decision reflects recent neighborhood tension over supportive housing, the director said … Unlike shelters or transitional housing, long-term supportive housing has no time limits for tenants. It provides an apartment with services -- such as mental health services or employment coaching -- to help stabilize people's lives … Among his other achievements at [the suburban church he used to work at], the new director helped lobby to relocate … a family shelter from downtown St. Paul to [to suburb of] Maplewood, where 40 percent of the church's congregation lives, he said … The proposal to move the shelter to Maplewood faced huge resistance from the business community, residents, and, initially, the City Council, the director said.

And while St. Stephens Human Services, which runs a men's and a women's homeless shelter in Whittier, has expanded its offices by moving into a big building on Whittier's Nicollet Avenue, their new services are outside Whittier. St. Stephan's goal is to create housing that is perceived as creating permanency, stability, responsibility, and community. Fortunately, this goal can be shared by all involved. After all, what person wanting a home would want only a temporary one, or a bed that may be lost to the fellow who got in line before you at the shelter the next day when it reopened. And for the city of Minneapolis that has put a great deal of money and infrastructure into, "Ending Homelessness," ridding itself of the stigma of having homeless on its streets, and not angering its homeowners, steadiness sounds very attractive. Regarding permanent apartments vs. over-night shelters, the director of Simpson Housing had "been told the city and county look favorably on these kinds of permanent solutions" (Russell 4/17/03).

The political pressure to inject “steadiness” in a neighborhood can be fantastic, whether it be a studio apartment for someone living on the streets, or a three bedroom loft condo for a middle-class family. And while the Great Recession endangered this stability, including turning many condos into rentals, the end result of economic and political forces was that while hundreds of condo units where built/converted in Whittier, no shelters were. Even for those converted condos that reverted back to rental, the rent on them is much higher than before the conversion. And this is why the sad story of my condo has a happy ending; in the fall of 2013 my family moved out or the condo and into a house a few miles away, and we rent out our unsellable condo at a profit. Because rents had risen so much in the neighborhood at the same time that interest rates nationally had dived so low, our total cost of mortgage, homeowner fees, and other expenses was substantially below the rent people were willing to pay for me, the gentry, to live in it. But the same sized unit across the hall, which was never converted, rents for $300 a month less. We could theoretically keep the condo until the mortgage was paid off, and by that time circumstances would probably have change enough that the condo would have more than regained its value, and be sellable again. So all the years in between of making a tidy rental profit each month, will end in us owning a valuable condo, free and clear.

Chapter 2 – How Politics in the Whittier Neighborhood Became So Polarized

1: It's All About (activists') Theories of Housing and (national) Theories of Polarization

"For three years, the Alliance's every moment was marked by distrust and anger" (Holt:5); so reads the 1995 report of a professional consulting firm brought in by the Whittier Alliance's funders to try to solve problems plaguing the organization. Polarization is a major theme of this entire study, but this chapter especially so. This chapter is the story of how Whittier activists coalesced into acrimonious factions in the mid-1990s. I will argue that the key to understanding Whittier politics lies in researching the theory activists hold concerning *housing*, and more specifically, their theories on how different forms of housing affect the "stability" of a neighborhood. While the previous chapter dealt largely with issues of supportive housing, the debates during this era were mainly over subsidized co-ops and cheaply built rentals. In terms of who wins presidential elections, we all know the expression, "It's the economy stupid," but in neighborhood politics it might as well be – "It's housing (stupid)." A board chair from the Whittier Neighbors told me that in the mid-1990s "the most contentious stuff was at the [Whittier Alliance] housing committee meetings, because the housing committee would, uh, sort of decide where all the money was going to go … It's always been about housing." And a board chair from the Alliance explicitly told me that the debate in the neighborhood had always been about affordable housing.

Many studies of neighborhood politics in America have shown the prominence of issues of housing (Goetz 1993, Goetz 2003, Stoecker 1994, Saltman 1990, Sanjek 1998, Abu-Lughod 1994, Susser 1982, Gregory 1998, Maly 2005, Davila 2004), but my study diverges significantly from these in two ways. The first way is by studying informant *theories*. This complex focus allowed me to not just give my informants more agency, but also allowed me to go beyond seeing Whittier conflicts as only based in racial or class differences. Instead I saw them as also grounded in competing *philosophies*. Anyone paying attention to Whittier politics could quickly identify the stated stances that factions

took, but my long-term research intimately explored the relationship between their stances on neighborhood issues in Whittier, and the crafting of their theories on how to improve urban neighborhoods in general.

The second way this study is different is that while the traditional way to explain conflicts over urban housing developments is with a Marxian perspective of the haves vs. have-nots, in Whittier I found that the current conflicts over subsidized housing are between white, middle-class, homeowners and other white, middle class homeowners (low-income, black, co-op residents had been active over a decade early, but as we will learn in this chapter, the low income co-ops have almost all died out, and partly because of the battles at the Alliance).[xlvii] Most of the these activist homeowners in all the neighborhood factions love living in a diverse urban environment, preach multiculturalism, and yet they find themselves hating each other. An academic study of Whittier politics in 1994 (Goetz 1994b:321) noted that while,

> most studies of urban redevelopment have focused on conflict between business-oriented coalitions and community-based residents … In Minneapolis and St. Paul however, development conflict is occurring between community residents and is based upon relations of property. Housing status, whether renter or owner, is the political divide … separating those wanting to enhance the commodity value of land from those desiring to create and preserve an affordable living environment.

This is very correct, except for the implication that the divide between residents is always between renters and owners. I found that the divide opens up between positions on renting and owning. The poor, the renters, and the minorities in Whittier are simply not fighting for much of anything, on the neighborhood level at least. Few ever attend any neighborhood meeting (and this of course is one of the major complaints against them by those in Whittier who do not want more subsidized housing, see latter chapters). Instead the divide is between homeowners for more subsidized housing in Whittier and homeowners for less, making it not a battle between classes or races, but between different ideologies, *over* race and class.

Polarization is the word of the day in American politics, and my interest in American culture and anthropology started over a curiosity about the divisiveness of the (so-called) culture wars. I wanted to know what “Americans” really “believe” when it

came to affirmative action, gay rights, school prayer, Latino immigration, flag burning, and multicultural education. I was to enter the academic and popular discourse on the culture wars that had grown to a fever pitch in the 1990s after Reagan had stirred up the pot with his "take back America" message, when fundamentalists and "angry, white men" became energized to enter the political arena in a way that had not been seen before. [xlviii] Talk of a "culture war" was everywhere, but feeding on it and growing alongside it was the "polarization" narrative. This narrative is about how incredibly divided Americans have become on political, social, and economic issues, and pitted conservatives against liberals, or fundamentalist Christians against secular humanists. And while the narrative specifically naming the "culture wars" has in the last decade been rephrased or rechanneled in other national conflicts such as over terrorism or "the other 99%," the lamenting about polarization has only grown. The Red State/Blue State map of the 2000 Bush vs. Gore presidential election added explosive fodder to this narrative (Fiorina 2008) (tempered a little by others creating the "it's really all purple" map breaking down voting by county instead of state and showing gradations instead of absolutes).[xlix] But with the birth of the Tea Party movement and with the "gridlocked" US Congress during the second half of President Obama's first term, it seemed as if everyone in the media and politics was throwing around the polarization paradigm, blaming it for everything under the sun and accusing their antagonists of fostering it.

Lead by sociologist James Hunter in the 1990s, sociologists were hotly debating the worldview reasons for this supposed divide among the American masses. Hunter, widely credited for popularizing the term "culture war," famously set up the orthodox vs. progressive paradigm, where Americans belonged to one of two worldviews, each based on deep-seated ideological "allegiances to different formulations and sources of moral authority" (1991:118). The Orthodox view believed in respect for tradition, in God, and in a transcendent right and wrong; while progressives were deeply committed to fashioning a secular "good society" based on the worldly lessons of past injustices. Meanwhile, linguist George Lakoff (1996) theorized the difference between "conservatives" and "liberals," by using metaphorical and cognitive models. While conservatives model their political/social beliefs on the strict father archetype, liberals

think in terms of the nurturing mother archetype. And in her ethnography of the gay marriage debate in small town Oregon, Arlene Stein understood the opponents in terms of traditionalists and non-traditionalists (2001).

While these academics were trying to tease out of the essential characteristics of the two apparent camps, a related debate was happening over the nature of the polarity and the category formation itself (as opposed to the nature of each categories in particular). These academics often question the true extent of polarization, and this caused me to ask the question – are the polarized Whittier activists who share so many identities and lifestyles really that far apart, or have they just embellished minute differences and discursively whipped themselves into a combative lather over nothing much? For example, Hunter portrayed a fundamental war between individuals (organizing into groups) who deeply hold distinct and opposing moral visions, but Miller and Hoffman (1999) and Robert Wuthnow (1996) viewed American culture wars as public *wars of words* between competing ideological camps. The question here is – do people arrange themselves into camps because of their pre-formed, long held and unchanging moral visions of the world, or are the camps themselves arranging people's ideologies based on the rhetoric they are disgorging? Instead of the lines being drawn between people who have always held one of two deep-seated world views, perhaps the sides are formed and re-formed by the language of the debate itself, which leads people into perceived camps that only then become increasingly polarized by way of the ideologies each side arrives at. These "wars of words" researchers resist Hunter's pessimistic portrayal of an America consisting of two groups of perennially opposite people with "un-reconcilable" differences (Hunter 1991:34). [1]

Meanwhile, a debate among political scientists is over the reasons and extent of polarization among the electorate, and specifically among the political elite such as the US Congress (McCarty et al 2006). Fiorina and Abrams (2005, 2008) criticize Alan Abramowitz (2010) for exaggerating a severely polarized American population, and point out that skeptics of polarization wonder if the situation is simply just a matter of some fragmentation or heterogeneity rather than true polarity (Fiorina 2008:566). Fiorina points out that while it can seem that there are two divergent voting blocks, this can

obscure the fact that within any American social group there is great heterogeneity, and there is varying commitment to any particular issue or candidate. "For example, in 2004, the exit polls indicated that almost one third of white Evangelicals voted for [liberal Democrat] John Kerry, as did more than one third of gun owners. Thus, differences in the size of these categories of citizens must be discounted by one third when translated into political differences" (Fiorina 2008:568). Other problematizing questions remain, are American really polarized globally or just on certain key issues such as abortion? What about the fact that each person, on each issue, feels a different level of intensity for that issue? And, is what we perceive as polarization really just a midpoint between two separate *consensuses* on an issue (Fiorina 2008)?

In the 2006 election, the effort to increase Republican voter turnout appeared to backfire because Republican strategists made gross assumptions about how people would vote, based on their consumer patterns. "The correlation between social characteristics and political preferences vary over time" (Fiorina 2008:568).[li] They assumed that people were less complex and malleable than they really were. And as far as categorizing Americans by worldview, "whether or not one is an absolutist or a relativist conveys relatively little information about political positions" (Fiorina 2008:569), such as how they feel about the rights of the accused. [lii] Fiorina argues that while the research does show more polarization among political elites than among the masses, there is no good evidence that this elite polarization has translated into polarization among the people. However, I will show that in the context of politics in Whittier, no matter how you slice it, there are deep, incontrovertible differences between the two main factions, which cannot be explained simply by discourse analysis, social psychology, political jockeying, economic interest, or social standing.

These factions truly *believe*, in the old-fashioned sense of the word, quite different things, hold different core values when it comes to community building, know a very different set of knowledge about the world, and practice different strategies for realizing their divergent goals.[liii] The evidence presented in this chapter is not directly in support of or in opposition to the sociology and political science evidence about the magnitude of polarization on the national level; I cannot speak to that. What I do is give a detailed

analysis of the ways that differences within a polity are made to be profoundly ideological, seemingly unresolvable, and unquestionably disturbing.

When researching polarization, the investigator is continuously tempted to essentialize the different groups as opposites of each other, and overly-dramatize the tragicomedies they execute. The researcher always has to wonder if he or she is looking at an actual state of polarity or just the informants' narrative about a polarity. At each step, the researcher should be asking him or herself the questions, what is the relationship between the polarity and the story about it? Have I gotten trapped within the "polarization" paradigm? And is this a problem? These are not necessarily answerable questions, but I can conclusively state that the sorting out over the years of activists into two groups, has had substantial *material* effects in the neighborhood, not the least of which is the disappearance in Whittier politics for many years of almost anyone who did not fit into one of these two factions, or did not wish to be harassed by this overly-harsh environment (the chapter on Democracy will deal directly with this).

By 1994 stories about dysfunction at the Alliance had been so fully developed and had travelled so far, that its outside funders, who normally sat isolated in office towers a world away, got word of the trouble and forced a consulting firm upon the organization. They consultants (Holt:5) ended up finding that,

> The intensity of the conflict was fueled by the narrow interests of a small but feisty group of individuals; a dispute with the Whittier CDC [Community Development Corporation] over fees for administration; racial and class divisiveness; discrimination lawsuits; political maneuvering; a revolving door of board members; and several complete turnovers of the entire Alliance staff.

While I do not dispute any of this, I do assert that this in-depth, quality assessment, packed with specific, excellent suggestions for how to easily improve the organization, did barely any good for anyone. The reason is because it did not look into the heart of the problem. It dealt with trivialities, such as the number of board members, instead of why there was such a massive cleavage opened up within this small organization. The problem within the Alliance came down to differences in both fundamental theories on how to nurture neighborhoods, [liv] and on deeply heartfelt principles regarding who the

organization should be serving. Since the consultants did not address this, they failed; the problems did not resolve, and soon after a large number of committed volunteers conspired together to attempt to decommission the Alliance. Being an ethnographer as opposed to a paid consultant, my study will take into account a multiplicity of factors creating this conflict; I will analyze how the organizational structure of the Alliance, neighborhood politics, municipal politics, demographic shifts, political-economy, urban construction, and individual personalities, are all related to each other.

2: "The Homeowner Revolution" – Naming and Then Explaining a Revolution

A defining moment in the history of Whittier was the March 1992 annual meeting of the Whittier Alliance. The Alliance had been born in 1978 out of an unbelievably well-funded and ambitious process that spent over a year deliberating the needs of the neighborhood, the type of organization that would represent it, and the strategies it would use to meet these needs. During that process and for fourteen years afterward, there were innumerable heated debates on these issues that saw multiple, amorphous and shifting viewpoints, and while neighbors could be at each other's throats, the big battles took place were between those inside the neighborhood and those outside. Entities such as city hall downtown, development corporations, the state government in St. Paul, and the drug dealers and prostitutes from across the city who traveled to Whittier to do business, were understood by the neighborhood insiders as outsiders who did not have the neighborhood's interest at heart. These outsiders came into the neighborhood to exploit it, or they made decisions from on high that adversely affected it. [lv] But at the Alliance annual meeting on March 11, 1992, this dynamic changed. The conflict that day and the playing out of this same conflict over the next four years, bred multiple factions; these were factions that eventually were reduced down to two rival organizations. The biggest battles were no longer between "us inside" Whittier and "those outside" of it, but between people and interests within Whittier, for even when outside interests were resisted, they often had allies within the neighborhood that could be focused on and vilified.

Going into the 1990s the Alliance was robust and busy, but not without internal conflict and troubles. It had nineteen board members and a whopping eleven staff, most of them full time. The staff was working on a multitude of new and old campaigns, including putting together a comprehensive directory of 340 businesses in the neighborhood. However, at the same time there was talk at the January board meeting of the possibility of having to lay off staff because of lack of funds. Signs of the debilitating wars soon to come between board members and staff members were evidenced in board meeting minutes. At the February board two members voted for a motion to document concerns about the staff office being messy, and about "staff attempts to influence committee and board members at election time last year."

The annual meeting was held in the assembly room of the Whittier Park building, but the room proved too small for the unanticipated throngs that showed; there was a record turnout of over 200 (Goetz 1994a:12). The guest speaker was long-time Minneapolis mayor Don Frasier, and while this surely must have been a coup to nab him, and may have made the event more attractive to people, the turnout had little to do with a big name outsider and everything to do with the election campaigning within the organization itself. "Days before the election, a flyer signed by five homeowners was distributed denouncing the NRP [Neighborhood Revitalization Program] plan and urging neighbors to attend the meeting" (Goetz 1994a:12). According to a newspaper article (Leyden 1992c),

> The election took place in an open meeting in which many newcomers took part. At the end of the evening, seven of them were elected, shifting the balance of power on the 20-member board. Also, three of the five alternates were newcomers, and three of the four seats reserved for business representatives were filled later with newcomers.

The significance of this is not that the newcomers were all there to change the course of the Alliance in the same direction, toward what they called "homeowner" interests. A longtime opponent of this creed told me that at this 1992 annual meeting "there was a sort of a coup d'état at the Whittier Alliance, where a group of, what I call the white militant homeowners took over." But who were these "homeowners," what did they want, and what exactly are "homeowner interests"?

Many in the local media, local academia, and local activism seem to all call it the "homeowner revolution," and also agree that it was precipitated by a huge amount of money that was about to be delivered at the Alliance's doorstep (instead of continuing to use this amorphous "homeowners" term, I will substitute it here on out with "Friends of Whittier" (FOW), the name these revolutionary "homeowners" would soon give themselves in order to run on a common slate for board seats).[lvi] Because of the lucrative grant that started the Alliance, the Alliance had always been incredibly well funded for a neighborhood organization, but a new program administered by the city was promising to spread twenty million dollars a year for twenty years out to the city's neighborhoods, and Whittier was poised to grab the lion's share of the first disbursements. The Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) was created in 1990 to fund neighborhood organizations, "this money was to be used as "start-up" funding for projects to revitalize" distressed neighborhoods (Harff). There were 81 neighborhoods in the city (at that time), but the NRP had selected only six of them to be in the first round of applications for that money. Whittier was among those chosen because it was among the largest and densest neighborhoods, and seen as in desperate need of help but also with a robust organization. Given the clearance to compile a detailed proposal for how exactly to spend the NRP money, the Alliance had the initiative, resources, and expertise to submit the first request for funds, for over thirty million dollars, and the NRP seemed willing to grant most of it.

There were many conflicts going on as part of the huge process of creating this NRP proposal, but if one got all their news from the Minneapolis Star Tribune, one would think all the conflict was between the Alliance and the NRP office downtown. The newspaper reported that these two groups had unknowingly been set on a collision course because the Alliance had assumed that its job, as the champion of the neighborhood, was to come up with the best, more ambitious plan possible based on what people *in the neighborhood* said that they wanted. Meanwhile, the NRP had assumed that in putting together a plan, the Alliance would consult with it, and assumed that in doing so the Alliance would gain a more realistic view of how much money it really could get from the NRP (Leyden 1992a). However, "most participants on both sides seem to fully

support the revitalization process and expect the new program to run into kinks. They see current differences over the Whittier plan as healthy. ‘In this case, we are truly inventing the wheel,’ said Sudduth. ‘It's one of the truly great things to happen to this city’ ” (Leyden 1992a). At a distance, it can seem like Whittier’s NRP proposal was the result of pure neighborhood democracy in action, and coming from “the neighborhood,” as a whole.

However, there were (at least) two problems noticed by later researchers of the NRP. The first phases of the drafting of the NRP proposal seem to have been done mostly by the staff with the approval of the majority of the board, but “a year after beginning the NRP process, when the Alliance held a meeting to hear final comments about the plan before it was presented to the city, a group of homeowners spoke out against it” (Goetz 1994a). They stance was that this money would be thrown down the well by continuing to prop up irresponsibly run housing co-ops instead of helping the homeowners who bring resources and stability to an unstable neighborhood. While at this time the more propertied interests seem to have not had much of a voice at the table, within a year from then they would have the lion’s share. In a neighborhood of about 13,500 residents, after the revolution it ended up that only “57 people cast the final ratifying vote on how to spend $29 million over the next four years. Of that group, the majority consisted of white men who own property in Whittier but lived elsewhere” (Lopez Baden 1992). Leyden details the situation (1992c):

> The story in Whittier … began on Jan. 31. It was then that the neighborhood submitted its initial multimillion-dollar plan to the program's policy board. One of the proposals called for renovating 100 apartment units for low-income families each year at a cost of $ 3 million per year. That upset some homeowners in the neighborhood, who felt that it already was overloaded with low-income housing, in much the same way that it had become overloaded with halfway houses in the 1970s. "The new hue and cry is: No more multifamily low-income cooperative housing,” said … the newly elected chairman of the Alliance's board of directors. "I think we've done our fair share.” He said many homeowners who participated in the NRP process felt that their input was not reflected in the plan. They thought the staff had emphasized low-income housing initiatives because they could develop the projects, he said. "And you had a weak board that acted as a rubber stamp." In the end, the city approved a final $29 million plan that allots $ 6.7 million for housing for low-income families, with $ 3 million of that coming from NRP money, said Jack Whitehurst, from the NRP staff. The plan also calls for

> increasing home ownership from the current 11 percent to 30 percent of the neighborhood. It allots a total of $ 8.2 million in city funds that could be used for rehabilitation loans and mortgage loans, he said. NRP funds constitute $ 1.7 million of that amount. There were other complaints from homeowners related to strengthening social service programs. For example, concerns about prostitution in the neighborhood had translated to setting up a safe house for prostitutes rather than getting tough through law enforcement, said a new board member. The concerns prompted a slate of candidates to run for the board in the March 29 election under a general philosophy of greatly increasing home ownership.

Between the Alliance's birth in 1978 and the 1992 revolution, the Alliance had developed "330 units of low income housing … The Alliance was one of the most productive nonprofit low income housing producers in the city" (Goetz 1994b:329).[lvii] These homeowners, the FOW, feared that the new NRP money was going to accelerate this prolific production of affordable housing, as well as be funneled into all kinds of social service programs for the in-need. "The rate of home ownership had declined two percentage points since 1977 – from 12% to 10%, which was a city-wide trend – and the Alliance's new leaders were determined to reverse this pattern" (Holt:5); no more would single family homes be torn down in order to build shoddy apartment buildings that breed crime and apathy.

And while the FOW did not necessarily have a problem with public funds going to social services and affordable housing, they were sure that in Whittier, they were already drowning in both of these. In an opinion piece in the neighborhood newspaper, one Alliance board member railed against the NRP plan,

> The proposal is packed with new and expanded social service programs, while briefly noting physical improvement … All residents should be concerned how the NRP money will be spent and prioritized. When money is given to the Whittier Alliance from NRP, will it be spent on new single family homes or used to purchase another apartment building owned by the Whittier Alliance? Will it be used for a school or for their extravagant paychecks? Will we have an improved business district and streets or will it be used to further their bureaucracy and increase our social dependency?

Less than a year before this a very similar revolution had occurred in the neighborhood directly to the north. While the Steven's Square neighborhood is much smaller, its extremely high percentage of renters and one mile-long border with Whittier make it like a sister neighborhood. A vote by the Steven's Square Community

Organization in favor of rehabilitating a condemned, 26 unit apartment building into affordable housing, precipitated anger among a group of neighborhood landlords and homeowners. The board elections the day after that vote "resulted in eight out of nine board members being replaced. Whereas renters had dominated the previous board, the new board included only two renters … One week later the new board voted to rescind support for" the rehab project (Goetz 1994b:327-8) (the landlord group had also been upset that the previous board had opted not to apply for the first round of NRP funds). While the fight in Steven's Square was mostly between renters and property owners, the battle in Whittier turned out to be between a diverse group of property owners and four other groups that mostly shared an interest in directly helping the in need – the employees of the Alliance, social service organizations, housing co-ops, and a different set of homeowners (renters were not present).

In his 1994 research on the "Homeowner Revolution," as he called it, activists told University of Minnesota professor Ed Goetz that for each of the past five years the Alliance board had never adequately represented "the neighborhood's diversity. American Indians, Asians, Hispanics, low-income residents," and renters were also not seen much on the board (Goetz 1994a:12). In fact, the only real change on the board between the years before and after the revolution, was an increase in the number of landlords and business owners (almost all of whom did not live in the neighborhood) (Goetz 1994a:12).

Would these two camps have formed and become polarized if not for the money that was about to come from the NRP? I cannot say, but everyone in the neighborhood, including Joan, blames the money.

> It was all about control of the NRP money, if we didn't have any money who would have cared? It was all about how it was going to get spent, was it going to get spent to build 500 more co-ops in the neighborhood, or spent to balance the neighborhood.

However, the Alliance actually had a large amount of money to work with before the NRP. Remember, the Alliance had eleven staff members, and was still drawing from the original one million dollar Dayton-Hudson grant. So money could not be the only factor.

But twenty million was much more than one million, and the one million had been secured long ago, before the development of subsidized co-ops, and before crime had reached its peak. At the genesis of the Alliance these camps did not even amorphously exist. Instead people were organized by type, not ideology; there were business associations, homeowner groups, co-op coalitions, tenant advocacy groups, and so on. But by the time of the NRP, there were people who were very much for more subsidized housing, and had found each other, and people against it, who also coalesced into informal, like-minded clusters. This enabled them to later become quickly energized and mobilized for a fight.

Two years before the "Homeowner Revolution" many activists against more subsidized housing had already formed The Whittier Homeowners Association. This coalition "was a key force in the campaign" (Leyden 1992c), and after its adherents gained a majority on the 1992 Alliance board, it simply moved itself into the Alliance. The Homeowners Association had made itself defunct because while it had scant money and legitimacy, the organization it took over had reams of cash and was certified by city hall as the official representative of the neighborhood. I will show the intricacies of how these "homeowners" moved from being an outsider, resistance group, to the insiders controlling the purse strings, and how they maintained this elite status, and how this status affected them.

3: The Development of Divisive Ideologies Between Staff and Board – attempting to imbed the revolution in the bureaucracy

Looking forward to better times? or just demanding everyone ignore past problems and abide by your agenda?

During and since the election there had been some harsh words said between staff members and new board members. At the first board meeting after the revolution the board elected a new chair who was a strong advocate of "homeowner interests," and who told the board that now he wanted the Alliance "to look forward not back." A motion was proposed – "It is resolved by the WA board of directors that all employees of the WA maintain professional standards and not cause … any form of slander, libel, character

defamation, or malign any member of the WA corporation." Anyone who does must accept "all legal and monetary ramifications of said action." And any staff who knows about other staff slandering members of the organization shall "advise the board of directors in written form." But instead of dampening conflict, it flamed it.

In order to explain the perspective of the Friends of Whittier and also explain how polarization happened in Whittier politics, I will tell the story of the repeated conflicts between this new "homeowner" dominated board and the long-standing staff. My analysis of these relations is a case study of one non-profit organization and its relationships. I will engage not so much with social science theory, as provide practical inquiry into pertinent issues such as staff relations, mission statements, organizational structure, methods of community activism, and types of housing developments.

The new chair, Dave Hoban, came in with big plans to fundamentally reformulate the organization's programs, and he wanted them implemented quickly. In his first full board meeting as chair, it was a marathon event lasting four and a half hours. In addition to a board member complaining that confidential memos were falling into the wrong hands, Dave called for a long-range planning meeting to talk about 1) the "strengths and weaknesses of the WA," the "opportunities and threats" to the Alliance from outside, and the visions of where we want the organization to be in the next five years. Dave and his allies had had a vision, and I suspect that they thought that if they could just get rid of the staff director and explain their theories to the rest of the staff, they could rebuild the staff mission to be in the image of their own.

However, after replacing all of the top three staffers, the problems between the staff and board continued for twelve more years until the board finally hired one of their own as the executive director. When the new board ousted the Alliance's longtime director in 1991, they had an interim director for six months, and then the new director after that was fired less than a year later (Goetz 1994a). With the hiring of the next director, in the space of twenty seven months there had been four directors. And by early 1995, only one of the five full-time employees had been on the job longer than fifteen months (and most of those elected to the board in the 1992 revolution were no longer on it) (Holt:6). After each new batch of idealistic community activists would come in,

friction would grow until they would become so frustrated and disillusioned that they would quit or be fired, over and over again. I find that it was naïve of the FOW faction to think that they would find people to work in low paying, non-profit, inner-city, community jobs, in a poor, racially diverse neighborhood, who were not "social justice" oriented, and who did not see the poor, the renters, and the minorities as underdogs deserving of extra help. Even hiring a community organizer and a director who were Republicans did not solve this problem, as both still found the board an elitist cabal that was impossible to get along with. The more the new regime looked forward, the more others looked back, until everyone, including the brand new board members and even newer staff that they hired, ended up caught up in a huge miasma of recriminations, gossip, and lawsuits.

Fight crime or fight structural inequality?

One Alliance project that the new regime found counter-productive was the Anti-Crime Program, and its scrapping is a great example of the way that differences and friction are created within an organization. In the 1980s the Alliances crime program had been nationally recognized as a model for how neighborhoods could fight crime (Leyden 1992c). It was held in such high esteem that when the city introduced a city-wide community-based policing program (CCP/SAFE), Whittier opted out of it in favor of spending their share of the new program's resources on their own program. But the FOW found it to be ineffective and ideologically suspect.

Crime was seen as getting worse and worse in the neighborhood and many were frustrated. While the program had had success in the mid-1980s with drastically reducing the number of prostitutes, the prostitution campaign had run out of steam, and there were now more prostitutes than ever on and around Nicollet Avenue.[lviii] Alliance staff told a local reporter that the volunteers fighting prostitution in the neighborhood had become burned out, and the prostitution task force of the Alliance had not met in two years (Furst 1991). The reporter wrote,

> By day, they stand at intersections in the Whittier neighborhood, waving down customers as if hailing a taxi in New York City. They work the street within half a block of a police station. By night, they even sit on the steps of a center for

> women in crisis, waiting for business. Men cruise the area in cars, looking for prostitutes, and young women who work or live in the area complain that they are propositioned regularly. Prostitution has returned in full force to Whittier, the south Minneapolis neighborhood that made headlines in the 1980s for its aggressive campaigns to stop it … Of the 80 to 100 prostitution arrests in the city each month, police say, more than half are in Whittier.

This newspaper article found that while the locals were weary of all the prostitutes, the local businesses were even wearier of all media attention on prostitution on Nicollet. The attention included anti-prostitution rallies, monthly meetings, and a regular segment in the Whittier Globe. From 1984 to 1989 the Globe was publishing the names of every person arrested for soliciting prostitution in the neighborhood, and for a while everyone (but the johns) cheered this; it seemed to keep the solicitors away. However, by 1991 the businesses " 'changed their tune,' said a police sergeant. 'They don't want the bad press' " (Furst).

While the FOW felt the program was spending too much energy on social programs for the prostitutes, others felt it was not going far enough to address their problems. According to the employee running the program, "no one is addressing the underlying issues that cause prostitution, which is poverty, substance abuse, exploitation of women, violence against women." The volunteers however were mostly homeowners with a "homeowner" perspective; they were concerned with their "quality of life" and the values of their homes. And the business owners obviously were concerned with keeping customers coming through their doors. But the Alliance's more progressive executive director had her own take – "the Alliance board was taken over by leaders who said homeowners 'have different interests than renters. They felt that the only thing the Whittier Alliance should do is serve the interests of homeowners and businesses' " (Leyden 1992c).[lix]

I find this explanation to be overly simplistic in one way, but quite accurate in another. It is inaccurate because almost no activist in Whittier would be against programs that help prostitutes, and I did not hear activists complaining about their tax dollars going to social service programs. What the FOW complained about was that there are simply too many of these kinds of social service programs in *their* neighborhood, and that these programs, while helping out the in need, also pull them into Whittier. They ask, why not

quarter programs for prostitutes and drug addicts in outlying neighborhoods that have little of these kinds of facilities? In fact, all the Alliance activists and employees see a multipronged strategy in Whittier as the way to go, one that involves the prostitutes themselves, their customers, neighborhood volunteers, paid staff, social services, police, courts, landlords, community crime specialists, and foundations. In 1991 a local women's assistance center had to (Furst 1991)

> Cut back trees at its side doors because prostitutes sat in the shadows, waiting for customers. The center's executive director acknowledges the irony. "We wish they'd come in here rather than be out on the street," she said. "I hope there would be more emphasis on apprehending johns and pimps. It seems like it's the women who end up paying the price.

This director's philosophy clearly focused on helping the long term fortunes of the less fortunate, instead of improving the quality of life of the more fortunate. The difference in perspectives has to do with how much resources should be allocated to each of these kinds of interventions *in Whittier*, the extent to which they would be housed *in Whittier*, and whether the focus is on solving long-term, underlying causes or solving the immediate problem of prostitutes near their homes.

In another sense though, the simplistic critique of the director was not far from how I think many from the FOW would actually characterize themselves. They are primarily focused on the interests of homeowners and businesses, not out of pure selfishness, but because they believed that, as the fortunes of homeowners and businesses owners went, so went the fortunes of the neighborhood. They were the backbone; as the contributors to the neighborhood, the stability of Whittier rose and fell with them. As the neighborhood had seen more and more renters, they saw Whittier as going downhill, and the only thing saving it from total destruction were the brave, few homeowners remaining.

At another marathon Alliance board meeting, a board member who had spent years volunteering to get prostitutes out of the neighborhood moved that a task force be set up to study the effectiveness of the Alliance's anti-crime program, with an eye to shutting it down. At the board meeting two months later, the task force reported back that their investigation had found the program unsuccessful, and the staff implementing it

incompetent. They recommended that the program be terminated and that Whittier join the city's Community Crime Prevention program housed with the police precincts (Leyden 1992c). The board member heading the task force told a reporter, "I felt the old board of directors and the Alliance staff were very stationary … Nobody was doing anything" (Leyden 1992c). However, at least one other board member was concerned about the integrity of the review process itself. And two staff members wrote a memo to the board declaring they did not support the staff cuts in the safety program, since the evaluation on the program was "flawed," "biased," and not open, and was misused to sway board members who did not know much about the program.

The task force had infuriated the staff, creating bitter resentment towards the new board members. The task force head was a woman who while a gutsy activist, was shy and had never given a public speech before the board election three months prior, and had never given a report. When she gathered her papers to begin speaking, at least two staff members pulled out tape recorders and plunked them down on the table in front of her, making her quite nervous.[lx]

If You Can't Beat Them, Fire Them (repeat) – attempting control in a contentious environment

As the minutes of the next board meeting in June show, relations between the staff and board continued to devolve.

> The executive director introduced a man as attorney for staff who were disturbed by an anonymous letter circulated to Alliance board members. Citing an unwritten rule that staff members do not attend board meetings, unless invited, and pointing out that this was not on the agenda, [the board] chair asked staff and attorney to leave the meeting; they did not leave.

Instead, the attorney told the board that "the organization is in danger of either self-destructing or becoming irrelevant." There was talk afterwards about having a meeting where board and staff could mend relations. But this would be the cycle for years to come, recriminations and threats between staff members and the board (and between board members), and then calls for reconciliation, then recriminations, on and on. Soon

after the meeting one of the new board members reported to a staff member that he felt threatened by the staff's lawyer, and he also wanted legal protection.

At the next board meeting in July, the minutes document that it was now the director's turn to be on the hot seat. A motion was made "that the board reprimand the director for not making arrangements to have the city's Community Crime Prevention program installed at the Alliance immediately after the May board meeting motion to do so." Members of the board felt that they had given the director specific goals and he had not followed them. Another board member moved a friendly amendment – that the board further reprimand the director for not having done evaluations in 1991 of all the staff members. The director fought back, he "commented that the 'board is not comprised of princes and princesses making decisions for all Whittier residents' and left the meeting."

At the board meeting two months later the board passed a motion that the director's name be taken off the Alliance bank accounts; I learned why while talking to a board member fourteen years later. In conversation I had mentioned to her the name of that ex-director, and saw a bemused, scornful look come over her face. She was not involved with the Alliance back then, but told me how she had heard from others that he had illegally taken money from the Alliance. "If I had only heard this from one person I might not believe it, but I'd heard it from like three people." [lxi] If the director was ruining the neighborhood by increasing affordable housing, then it is only a short step to he was ruining the organization by stealing its money. The factions within Whittier had already become so insulated, that except for quarrelsome statements made to each other during board meetings, the members of these camps did not speak to each other. Instead they held their own private summits to discuss politics and gossip.[lxii] It is in this atmosphere that knowledge about the other was disseminated and codified.

The director resigned soon after his name was removed from the checking account, and an Alliance memo on his exit interview documents how he felt that the board was no longer an inclusive place, but instead "was racists and classist." [lxiii] He also felt that low income black families were not considered by board processes, and the Alliance no longer had a clear direction. Soon after that the Star Tribune reported the feelings of a fellow staff member (Leyden 1992c),

> "This is a coup by people who are frightened by changes in the neighborhood for the last 15 years," said the housing development director, who resigned after more than eight years. "This 'home owning' is a code meaning white people." She said the struggle really is about race and class. The homeowners are mostly middle-class whites, and the "renters" have become equated with racial minorities and low-income people, she said.

I suspect that by this time staff and board were not speaking to each other. Instead, frenzied memos were sent to the board, and conciliatory, but condescending, memos were returned. One of these memos was a counter-response to the chair, where it detailed that in the staff's first memo, a staffer had voiced her concerns to the board about its lack of diversity, and that Dave Hoban wrote back, "well diversity is a two-way street, there is crime and low income people moving in and, you know, the downtrodden." I believe that what he meant by this was that you can make a call to add more diversity all you want, but if those diverse people are bringing crime, poverty and desperation to the neighborhood, then diversity does you no good. It is not just a matter of white people changing their ways, minorities also need to change theirs. If whites have a responsibility to let minorities in, minorities have a responsibility to stop causing problems; a two-way street. Apparently his response had also included an example of prejudice he himself had experienced as a gay man. In their counter response, the staff wrote that the chair was using his victimization as a way to avoid the accusations against the board of discrimination.[lxiv]

One critic of the Alliance told me that "they went through many directors, and every single one of them couldn't work with the board, sometimes it was because the board was micro-managing things." This reminded me of when one of the Alliance employees in the mid-2000s, who did not know the contentious history of the 1990s, told me how the board was going to have to learn the hard way from its mistakes in managing its employees. The two statements were made ten years apart; had the board learned nothing? Perhaps, but this staffer's analysis was wrong in two ways. She assumed that the board needed to learn something, and assumed they eventually would, but in one sense the board knew exactly what it was doing and had nothing to learn. They were in control, were going to pursue their homeowner policy no matter what, and any staff who did not comply would be not welcome. However, in a second sense, the board had no idea what

it was doing, in that it keep imagining their next hire would want exactly what it wanted, and want to do it exactly like it wanted things done.

The First Organizational Assessment - If They Say There's Something Amiss, Fire Them

By July the board recognized that there was an organizational problem (or at least recognized that it was in their political best interest to acknowledge a problem), so they asked a graduate student to volunteer to do a short organizational assessment of the Alliance. However, by October Dave Hoban was expressing his concern with the consultant. It appeared that when he had admitted a problem, he meant with the staff had a problem, and he did not appreciate it when the consultant began suggesting that perhaps the board also could use some improvement. The chair saw disorder and low morale among the staff, and so wanted a consultant to work with the staff to increase their effectiveness and morale. It perhaps did not occur to him that the low morale was caused by the deleterious things he was saying about the employees and their work, and the disorder was a symptom of the new board attempting to quickly and drastically change the mission and methods of the organization, in a direction the staff felt was racist and harmful to the well-being of the neighborhood. This was to be the first of two evaluations the Alliance would endure in only two years, and I will explore these assessments in order to do a sort of (meta-)analysis of organizational assessments of one community-based non-profit.

When I interviewed the consultant fourteen years later, Sandy told me,

> The guy [I knew at the Alliance] who got me to go, told me we were going to do a little team building, and he didn't tell me what was really up. The staff seemed fine, I didn't know why they wanted me, then I realized that the problem was the board, but then I realized it was really the chair. They didn't know what their mission was, and didn't know what they were not.

The impression Sandy had of the staff was that they were "dedicated people … trying to do something." The problem was that they felt that everything they tried to do was impeded by Dave Hoban, who was "micro-managing" everything. Sandy saw the staff as frightened and timid, as a result of being intimidated by the chair. When Sandy began

interviewing staff members about the organization, at first they would not divulge their opinions and impressions. “There was a lot of fear on the staff, so it took some digging to get to it. I felt like we were doing these secret FBI meetings. But once the flood gates opened and they felt they could trust me, it was different.” It was then that she discerned a real “sense of helplessness, they didn’t feel that anything could be fixed.” They were walking on eggshells, and would tell Sandy, “what could we possibly do?”

However, Sandy was not just at the Alliance to assess them, she was also working with the staff as a volunteer to help facilitate their projects. Over time she began to feel allied with the staff, and admitted to me that she absolutely lost her neutrality as an outside expert. Her perspective became one of a staff person who “was looking at the dysfunction of the person at the top. The chair felt like it was his organization and he would make the decisions.” After Sandy had written up some preliminary assessments and given them to the board, the chair called her into his office in his house,

> and shut the door, and starting screaming at me, and said, this is evidence that you get what you pay for, and you are through, and you will never work in the field of non-profit again. I walked back to Alliance office, and told them I was fired.

When Sandy next talked to the couple that had introduced her to the Alliance, she discovered that they were told that she had quit.

As no official report from her work was issued, Sandy’s informal assessment to me was that the Alliance had,

> people with great passion, but with not a clue how to run it people-wise, how to set up work assignments, meetings … There was one women on the board who seemed deeply committed to social justice and the staff, but the board wasn’t clear on how it should function. Forget about a long term plan, they had no short term goals. Board members just had preferred [short-term] projects.

When I asked Sandy what she would do differently if she was to repeat the assessment today, she said she would be much more tactical about how she went about the project, and bolder in the role she would play. Instead of pussyfooting around tough issues and strained relationships, she would not let herself get caught up into playing the roles individuals wanted her to, and buying into the parameters that different interests set up for her. “Today I would be more strategic, get everyone on the same page, because

people are singing their own little song with their own piece of music, some of it was lovely, but …"

Also, "I would be more public about my observations and intentions. I fell into thinking I needed to go to the board chair and he would disseminate everything, but he was a gatekeeper." Instead, today she would not allow herself to accept that she had to report to just one person, and that she was responsible for that person's reputation.

> Today I'm in a much healthier position, I have more gumption; I would talk back to him … He was a master at knowing how to play into people's weaknesses, it was creepy; he knew what to say to destroy me … I would say to the chair, you've got some issues here, and you're not putting this on me. I would not be concerned about protecting him.

As at became clear to Sandy that her facilitations were not germinating any fruitful results, "I felt like the Whittier work was slipping out of my hands, I felt like it was my fault, I took it too personally." Today "I would have more emotional distance. But I probably wouldn't; I want to level the playing field for the underdog." Sandy's comment points to a possibly unsolvable problem for researchers/consultants who are passionate about social justice – maintaining neutrality towards those who are also passionate about social justice. The air at many nonprofits is already heavily charged with political zeal and a discourse of right vs. wrong. For a researcher who sees themselves as a force for justice, to enter this atmosphere is to become charged with the electricity of the politics around them. Having feelings about issues is not a problem, everyone has them, but Sandy found herself placing herself within the existing topography of conflicts and factions she was supposed to be analytically examining.

It is obvious to me that staff had hunkered way down into a "bunker" mentality. They felt like they were shelled constantly, whether it was accusatory letters, nit-picking critiques, ultimatums, personal attacks, or getting screamed at face to face. They were afraid for their jobs, mad at being treated poorly, and sanctimonious about being at battle with what they saw as unethical, malevolent tyrants. Meanwhile the new board members felt misunderstood, mutinied against, very defensive about constantly being called racist and classist, and sanctimonious in their mission against unethical nincompoops. They were so concerned about the loyalty of the staff, that one of the FOW board members

went to the office one day, and left with all the personnel files. Some new board members believed that they needed to protect this information from tampering or disappearance. There were so many staff quitting, being fired, threatening lawsuits, and being threatened with suits, that the board felt it would need these documents unaltered in case they had to use them in court. It appears that the job Sandy was charged to do was not doable, given the intensity of negative feelings and the polarity of positions within the Alliance. Also, if an organization lacks a working mission and working structure, then all an assessment can do is state the obvious.

4: Constructing the Other (renters in their walkups and co-opers in their money-pits) – establishing the enemies of the revolution

Learning to Hate the 2 ½ Story Walkup

The most despised things among Alliance regulars are the "two and a half story walkup" apartments built in the 1960s and 1970s. They are called this because as you enter the buildings' front doors you can either walk down a half a story to the basement units (or "garden" level), or walk up a half a flight to the first story, or one and a half flights to the second story. They were all built this height because, beginning at three stories, building codes require all manner of expensive additions designed to make the buildings safer in case of fire. At 2 ½ stories developers can put up an all "stick" (wood), building with no elevators, no underground parking, or other frills, but still profit from three whole levels to rent out.

No one in the neighborhood loves the 2 ½'s, so couldn't this be common ground between those who hated each other? No, because while no one appreciates them architecturally, they are appreciated by some as providing a less expensive alternative to renters who cannot afford the houses, townhomes, condos, luxury apartments, duplexes, brownstone apartments, or even the conventional, 1970s era, three story apartment blocks. Even for Terrence, an affordable housing advocate, the 2 ½'s are "not good buildings. But I like the people that are in them. The buildings were built to last [only] thirty years." Terrence's implication is that the critics of the 2 ½'s do not like the lower income people inhabiting them. Terrence, in effect, is othering the FOW as people who

are othering the poor. This interplay between people and architecture has produced an enduring political environment. The strength of the critique against the 2 ½'s by the FOW, and the perception by others that this critique is vitriolic and unkind to those who live in them, has nurtured the bitterness in the neighborhood. To the FOW in particular, the 2 ½'s are a symbol of not simply what is wrong physically with the neighborhood, but what is wrong with those people who do not insist they be destroyed – anyone who wants to make upgrades to them is forestalling their eventual death, and therefore is seen as not having the interests of the neighborhood in mind. Starting with the very first meeting I ever went to in Whittier, I witnessed this attitude often in the form of contempt towards those who owned rental buildings that were deemed not architecturally valuable.

The FOW would like to see these buildings torn down, and ideally, replaced with the low density, single family, owner-occupied houses that were demolished to erect these "monstrosities." However, the current real estate economics and politics make this impossible. Economically, much more money can be made per square foot of land by building apartments (or condos in the early 2000s before that market collapsed in the great recession). When I asked Terrance what he thought should become of them, he took a long pause before admitting, "I don't know, replace them? But I think the idea that you are going to replace them with Victorian cottages is sort of silly. The Alliance homeowners wanted Victorian cottages." While Terrence likes "pretty little villages in France" (and who doesn't!), he feels that this look is just not for Whittier. Politically, constructing single-family houses also runs counter to city hall's agenda of increasing the city's population and decreasing rents. Today most of the activists at the Alliance view these 2 ½'s as a main reason for (what most see as) the decline of the neighborhood between the 1960s and mid-1990s. The problem for these activists is the *relationship* between these buildings, the people who eventually came to live in them, and the slum-lords (or non-profits) that came to own them.

The symbolic value of the 2 ½ is so central to politics in Whittier, that way back in 1985 the Alliance compiled the 48 page "History of 2 ½ Story Walk-up Apartments in Whittier." In it we learn that the 119 walk-ups represent only 9% of the buildings, and 80% of them were built only within the 13 years starting in 1960 (Alliance 1985:1). This

was exactly the time during which Minneapolis was losing its middle-age residents to white flight, but gaining population as the baby boomers had kids. This left Whittier with "concentrated populations of the young and old" (2), the exact people who need cheaper housing. However, how had Whittier become such a magnet for the construction of high density, cheap housing? After all, Whittier had been a mansion district, and was later filled in almost entirely with modest, two-story, single family homes, with a few brick apartment buildings in between, and businesses along the commercial byways.

A resident once commented to me that Whittier was like a "museum of development" where one could see many different styles over time. I am not particularly interested in architectural styles, but I interpret this "museum" as a window into the history of local shifting *ideologies of density*. These are ideologies that while advanced at different stages in the development of Minneapolis, are alive today as entwining strains of ideologies currently circulating in Whittier, which both point to and create divisions in the neighborhood. "The population in Minneapolis had soared from 200,000 in 1900 to 300,000 by 1910, and apartment housing was desperately needed for young professionals who worked in the city and wanted the advantages of living close to downtown" (Steven's Community). Whittier was re-envisioned as a place where single downtown office workers should be housed. In the 1910s, 20s and 30s, sturdy, brick apartment buildings were built on empty lots. This type of housing was seen as suitable for the likes of unmarried secretaries who needed nice but small, inexpensive homes. Today activists and renters see these buildings as quite desirable; they were built attractively with brick and built to last, most still retaining their original hard wood floors and wood molding. However, when the upper and then the middle-class, middle-aged whites began moving out to the suburbs in the first half of the 20th century, by the late 1950s the city's population was shrinking for the first time ever. City hall became concerned and looked for ways to engender housing cheap enough to attract residents. Terrence told me that during this era the city intentionally zoned Whittier to be a regular, middle-class, family kind of scene, a nice sort of place where neighborhood kids would walk to the school at its center.

However, white flight was accelerating, the property values in the neighborhood were sinking, and the neighborhood was being eyed as housing for not just single, white collar workers, but also lower class whites and then even minorities. Whittier had once again been re-imagined in order to accommodate the needs of the city as a whole. Within this demographic, political and economic framework, starting in 1959 developers exploited the zoning codes to demolish houses, and in their place throw up inexpensive apartment buildings that could reap large rental profits. These 2 ½ story walkups were mostly built with a minimum of windows, and while letting in little sunlight, did let in large amount of cold air in winter. "Interior doors were … often constructed of cardboard composites with a paper wood veneer glued to the door panel … Closet doors and hardware (tracks and rollers) were very poorly constructed and have rarely survived normal wear and usage (4).[lxv] Even one the neighborhood's most ardent defenders of renters had little love for the walkups; "they needed housing, now we are stuck with 2 ½ story walkups … The construction of the buildings, they weren't built well, slapped together with a 20 year shelf life, but were still paying for it."

By 1973 the apartment boom was over, and even though it had not restructured the neighborhood too much physically, it had substantially altered it demographically, aesthetically, and eventually, ideologically. By 1985 the average neighborhood household size was 1.69, while the city's average was 2.19. "Most of the 2,326 apartment units constructed from 1960 to 1973 were composed of efficiencies and one bedroom apartments" (Alliance 1985). The Alliance however had not come around until six years after the boom ended, too late do anything about it, but by the time of this 1985 report the Alliance had taken notice of the impact, and had already made it a "major goal" to replace smaller units with larger ones. According to Terrence, "the big buzz word in the 80s was less density." Because of the all the different construction and zoning patterns applied to this area over the years, there were many half-sized, vacant lots left over that were too skinny to build much one, so the city said that for a buck the neighbors on either side would get to split the vacant lot, adding it to their own. One sarcastic comment I heard on this was, "now we ask $50,000 a lot. Density was BAD, we didn't like apartments, or being too close to one another. It was the times (laugh)."

But if the Alliance was already working on this issue seven years prior to the homeowner revolution, then why the revolution? The key is in the kind of housing, because while the pre-revolution Alliance was focused on developing *subsidized* housing (controlled *co-operatively)*, the revolutionaries demanded *market-rate* housing (controlled *individually*). And for the revolutionaries, the meaningful difference between these two types of housing was the type of people it attracted, hence the quality of neighbor they would have for years to come. On a block around the corner from where I lived that has a mix of renovated mansions, single-family bungalows, un-renovated supportive housing buildings, and various apartment buildings, some of the homeowners refer to their renter neighbors as the "apartment people."

Walkups have not been built since the 1970s, and today only more expensive structures are being designed for Whittier, and all have elevators. So while no one can accuse a developer of trying to foist a walkup on the neighborhood, the worst charge that can be leveled upon any plan today is that it "looks suburban." Many in the Alliance fight against any design that is "underwhelming," cookie-cutter, mall-ish, or cheap. They have a vision for Whittier that is distinctive, artistic, and "urban." This aesthetic, combined with such amenities as larger units and ample underground parking, is theorized to attract and keep the kind of person who would help the neighborhood prosper and stabilize. This brings us back to the charges of classism by the Whittier Neighbors against the FOW who control the Alliance. The Neighbors saw the FOW as actively obstructing those with less money from coming into the neighborhood, because the kind of housing that the FOW are supporting and allowing (I will discuss later the mechanisms residents have for influencing what gets built and what does not) is only affordable to people much wealthier than the average, current resident.

Learning to Hate the Co-ops

During the era of my research, some of the biggest battles were over supportive housing services which were built and managed by community development corporations, and while they were definitely flash points during the era of the homeowner revolution, the bigger issue at this earlier time was housing *co-ops*. In order to understand

the class relations and theories of neighborhood development in Whittier, one needs to understand the symbolic and material effects of co-ops in Whittier. And to understand these effects one needs to understand the mundane but confusing financial particulars of what co-ops are and how they work. While there are many kinds of co-ops, the ones at issue were subsidized *lease* co-ops; in Whittier this meant that a non-profit corporation, such as the Alliance, would buy an inexpensive apartment building, rehab it, form the tenants into an democratic association, then lease the building (and the land upon which it sat) back to this association as a whole. In the US "more than 1.2 million families of all income levels live in homes owned and operated through cooperative associations" (NAHC).

However, the nature of these co-ops varies according to how they are set up, and as we will see, this variation is quite significant to Whittier politics. In a *market rate* co-op the shareholders can buy and sell their share of the corporation at the rate that the market bears. It is about supply and demand, and while there are rules as to how this can be done, it is free market. But what if a non-profit or government organization, out of a sense of social good, desires providing housing to the lower income, that costs less than what the for-profit market bears? One way to do this is through a *limited equity* co-op, where the buyer can sell their shares in the co-op, but part of the equity that was built up in those shares may be funneled back into the co-op corporation itself. This means that if the shares have gone up in value (which they almost always did, or were always assumed to, before the real estate bubble burst 2008), the seller cannot cash in on the full value of that profit, but instead must pass some of that onto the next low-income buyer in the form of a below market price. The home is kept affordable to each and every new buyer through time, and all buyers must make below a certain amount of money. This then brings us back to Whittier's leasing co-ops, where the residents singly or together do not own any property, cannot buy or sell anything, and so build no equity. What they can do however, is take advantage of government subsidies for renovating non-profit co-ops, and control how the building is run (including deciding whose turn it is each winter to shovel the sidewalk).

But by the time I began research in 2003, almost all the co-ops in Whittier were gone, dying, or simply invisible. This was when the real estate prices were at an all-time high, and condos instead of co-ops were all the rage. At this point few realized that they were sitting on a bubble that in a few years would burst. The difference between condos and co-ops is that while in co-ops you own a share in the total corporation with exclusive rights to the unit you live in, in a condo you own your actual unit with rights to the common areas.[lxvi] And for the FOW, what you actually *own* means everything.

It is interesting that for these early years CDCs were seen a way for neighborhoods to protect themselves against outside forces (Goetz 1994b:320).

> Non-profit community development corporations (CDCs) first emerged in the 1960s as urban communities attempted to increase control over their neighborhoods' economic assets … They focus their activities on preserving the affordable housing stock and creating jobs and economic opportunities for community residents.

The neighborhoods "assets" included housing that *was* affordable, and these assets needed to be kept for the residents of the neighborhood, and not let loose in the free market to be exploited by others at the expense of the residents. However, as the shortcomings and challenges of these affordable projects began to show and be talked about, property owners afraid for their safety and the value of their property began to see affordable housing as a thing ruining their neighborhood, and see the CDCs as the foreign invaders exploiting it.

In this inside/outside dynamic, CDCs are moving back and forth, in and out, depending on how their detractors are casting them, and how they are responding to these detractors. CDCs are a moving target, and always caught between wanting to be professional, growing, and regional, to wanting to be grassroots, intimately engaged with all their clients, and neighborhood based. "Neighborhood-based," like "working class," is seen as the regular people, in touch with what is really going on with the average American, and protectors of what is good and basic in life; while "outside the neighborhood," like "upper class," is portrayed as greedy, out of touch, destroyers of tradition and community, and only looking out for a subset of the population (like Mitt Romney was successfully portrayed as by Democratic strategists in the 2012 presidential

election). What is funny is that in the decades before the 1990s, CDCs had been trying to become sophisticated, metro-wide players, but then had to recast themselves back into being seen as neighborhood-based things.

I will continue to take the reader through some of the developments and ideologies in this trend, to show how co-ops went from being understood as the answer, to the problem. In particular, I will show how this issue went from being something various people and various groups deliberated about, to being an issue that split people down the middle into two, and only two, concretized factions.

"During most of the 1980s, the Alliances' housing strategy was based on the development of leasehold co-ops … [While] a smaller program rehabilitated single-family homes, selling them at market value" (Goetz 1994a). Co-ops were so popular because they melded the ideas of helping the poor with giving people control over their homes. What could be more American than charity combined with homesteading? Progressives were happy because the poor were getting a place to call home that was affordable and out of the clutches of exploitive slumlords. And their middle-class neighbors should be happy because instead of living next to short-term renters who "don't care" about the building or the neighborhood, their neighbors would feel invested in the quality of their building because they were the ones in control of it. "Co-op housing also offers security. Co-ops are controlled by their members who have a vote in decisions about their housing. There is no outside landlord. In essence each member is a land lord and housing manager" (Inukshuk). They are still a sort of renter, but *empowered* renters.

Traditional rentals on the other hand are by their very nature based on class hierarchy; a property owner agrees to allow someone else to live on a part of their property, collects money from them, while drawing out a portion as a profit for themselves. Meanwhile the purchaser of the home actually owns nothing, just dolling out money every month.[lxvii] And while a co-op that leases its property from a CDC is sending its rent to the CDC, the CDC is non-profit and is theoretically putting all that rent back into the building and the quality of life of its inhabitants. No capital is being put into the exclusive hands of entrepreneurial capitalists (landlords); any surplus is reinvested into

the co-op. Compare this to market-rate owner occupied housing, whether a co-op, condo, or house (or house-boat like my mother lives on). In an academic report on the co-ops in a nearby neighborhood, a strong advocate of communitarian approaches lays out his impression of what happened when the co-op philosophy petered out (Stoecker 2005). [lxviii]

> The leasehold co-op model, which gives residents decision-making control but not equity, eliminates the market-induced value of maintenance (if you fix the roof you can sell the house for more later). For leasehold co-op members who see themselves only as renters, the market-based decision is to ignore the roof, pay lower rent and move out when the leaking begins.

The market rate co-op then, while it can be highly communitarian where everyone pitches in equally to do chores and based on a particular alternative, shared lifestyle (say, Wicca, Vegan, or the over-throw of the gun-hating US government), is also capitalistic. And having a monetary "stake" in one's home, is seen in America as the surest pathway to being a responsible neighbor.

"The ideology of property essentially suggests that neighborhood revitalization and low income rental housing are incompatible" (Goetz 1994b:322). Goetz details how at around this time, local media stories and local government policies were trending heavily toward presenting both urban concentrations of poverty and urban lack of homeownership as stressors of the problems in the inner-cities. Both of these "problems" were shown in light of how the suburbs had much less poverty and higher homeownership (Goetz 1994b:323). And in 1992 the Democratic controlled Minnesota House and Senate even passed a bill that required affordable housing to be more equitably spread through the Twin Cities metro (it was vetoed by the moderate Republican governor). Using Goetz's research with what I know from mine, it appears to me that the homeowner ideology in Whittier was an exaggerated and simplified reflection of the complex, metro-wide natures of the reports coming out of newspapers, foundations, and municipalities at the time.

What is so interesting about the FOW policies in Whittier is how they take statistics, perspectives, and policies that were shaped in the context of whole cities or

metros, and apply them to such small geographical areas (including not just the one square mile of Whittier, but also inside the neighborhood to the north which is one third Whittier's area). A metro-wide policy seems to have been taken by some Whittier activists, and assumed to work on a much smaller scale, and in a much more intense way. Unlike the metro plans, Whittier activists had no policy for how affordable housing would be implemented and used in the context of de-concentrating poverty; their policy simply was – get rid of any form of subsidized housing that they could and prevent any and all new subsidized housing, period. This made sense to them because their neighborhood was the one that was driving the over-concentration, being near one edge of the poverty continuum; to them they were actually *living* over-concentration.[lxix] For one of these people,

> The question was why would you use your resources, which are scant, to raise the levels of subsidy, which are already anomalously high, to raise them even higher. At that time it wasn't even supportive housing being discussed, just deeply subsidized stuff. It revolved around … lease hold coops. It's rental housing, of course there were serious questions if those were financially viable and sound. If they were well run buildings, helping residents, it was pretty crummy housing, it was cheap, but some of the folks were not safe there … A serious matter.

Also, as representatives and advocates for Whittier, it was not their responsibility to add affordable housing in other places. If their obligation was to Whittier, and Whittier had a much higher ratio of subsidized housing to non-subsidized housing than almost anywhere else, then in their eyes their only method of fixing the problem was to lower *their* ratio. It was up to others to raise theirs. So according to one affordable advocate, after the 1992 revolution, Alliance money "never went to affordable housing ever, I don't think there was a single project."

5: Disciplining members (Joan), making a deal with the devil (a slumlord), and fashioning ideologies (populism) – the Revolutionary Regime Adapts

Ousting and Co-opting – policing and expanding the borders of an organization

One board member at the time characterized the situation this way, "They were shouting in the hallways and profanity, at the board meetings they were slug-a-sessions, almost to the point of fist-a-cuffs." In 1993, a school that teaches blind people skills for

independent living was considering buying the Charles S. Pillsbury mansion on 24th St. The architecture is English Gothic, built of gray Bedford limestone, and constructed in 1913 by one of the sons of the flour milling magnet, Charles A. Pillsbury (of the Pillsbury food company). 1993 was not a good time for a non-profit to be coming into the neighborhood. When the proposal for the school came before the Alliance board, Joan, who had a rabid distrust for social service organizations in the neighborhood, and I have witnessed go for the throat of affordable housing developers, voted for it. Most of the other FOW however voted against it, and she told me that "Dave stood up at this meeting and said, I don't even understand why they would want to buy that building, because it is so beautiful, and they wouldn't be able to see it anyway."

For Joan however,

> I thought it was a good use. I just didn't think it was going to be an issue … When the Pillsbury mansion was converted from a residence to the school, oh my god people flipped out. And you know, the Dave Hoban's of the world, which I'm sure you know, went nuts, that's how I lost my board position because I voted for Blind Inc. Lucy and I got rode out of town on a rail honey. They had a whole slate of candidate against us … I wasn't on the Friends of Whittier, not initially. I was just Joan. I was doing what I do down here [in the SW quadrant instead of the historic NW where most activists lived] … After the Blind Inc. vote Dave called me and wanted me to come out into the street so we could wrestle in the street. That same night the husband of another board member who voted for it got punched in the jaw outside the Black Forest and we're convinced that Dave arranged for that.

All this was a very surprising piece of history to me, I had assumed that Joan was and had always been solidly part of the FOW faction. However, it turned out that she had never been a part of their inner circle, and in fact had once run grossly afoul of them. Joan however was living, breathing proof of the cracks that emerge in even the most popular of movements. Curious, I asked what Joan thought of the Whittier Neighbors (the FOW's arch enemies), and was surprised to hear – "I think they're fine, they do what they do."

> I have tremendous respect for Garret … I've been friends with Terrance. I was never the type in this whole warring factions to alienate other people from the other side just because they choose differently. I'm the kind of person who says, ok, we're going to have to decide to agree to disagree, and move onto the next issue, I'm not gonna' hold a grudge on you and hate you for the next 16 fuckin' years because you voted no on, I don't know what, I don't know what. But the Dave Hoban's of the world held those grudges. And that's quite frankly what

> dissolved the Philips [neighborhood organization] … Those people were airing dirty laundry from 16 years ago they couldn't get beyond. And I thought, oh my god, until these people can get beyond their past there isn't a future.

If the worst thing one can call a building in Whittier is "suburban," one of the worst things to call a person is an "absentee landlord." This is a regular character in neighborhood dramas, they are portrayed as renting to anyone, never visit their building to maintain or police it, and of course, live in the suburbs. I was told by activists how unfair it was to residents that some landlords treat their properties poorly, getting to live in Edina, while "we deal" with the problems here. In the high stress and high drama time after the revolution, the meanings of many things were being formed, and the roles of many characters re-written. The meaning of "landlord" was getting a complex make over. While absentee and non-profit landlords were being vilified, other landlords were being treated to an opposite effect. Many of the revolutionaries and FOW were landlords themselves who did not live in the neighborhood, however, they were active in the maintenance of their buildings and their neighborhood. More landlords were getting involved in neighborhood politics, and they teamed up with the "homeowners" to recast some of the 2 ½ story walk up owners as activist heroes instead of slumlord villains.

As the influence of non-profit housing corporations began to wane in Whittier, the influence of for-profit landlords grew. Starting at the 1992 Alliance annual meeting and culminating in 1996 when the Non-Profit Committee was eliminated, non-profits in the neighborhood were finding themselves continually under attack. While there were many flash points in this conflict, nothing more starkly shows this transition than the strange case of one landlord, Harold. While in 1991 the Alliance was organizing demonstrations against this neighborhood "slumlord," two years later he found himself the chair of an Alliance committee. One of the apartment complexes Harold owned was at 2731 and 2741 Pillsbury Ave, which the Alliance staff had pinpointed as a stronghold of drug dealing. The staff had been organizing demonstrations in front of these buildings and others like it, with neighbors making a large, public display against dealing and poorly managed apartments. One day the staff had even driven a busload of residents to Harold's

secluded suburban home to picket right in front of his house (Goetz 1994b:330, Farley 1995:13), which sits on a peninsula in the prestigious Lake Minnetonka, on a large wooded lot fronting the lake.

Harold fought back by getting in the political game himself. Practicing divide and conquer, he wrote many politicians and organizations in town, making accusations against the Alliance and others, in order to divert attention from the actual conditions of his buildings. And at the next Alliance Annual Harold ran for a board seat himself. And while many of the property owners were successful in getting on the board for the first time, Harold was not. In a letter to the mayor, the Alliance director wrote that he "and other NRP antagonists did not marshal enough votes to be elected to the Alliance Board." And that while it was a "rough and tumble election," all board members were mostly all right with the NRP plan, even though some felt threatened by parts of it.

A few months later, in the midst of the conflicts between the staff and new board, the director had been prepared to draft an official letter to Harold telling him that he was not welcome at the meetings of the Housing Committee. It seems that Harold and a non-profit leader in the neighborhood had gotten into a squabble at the previous meeting, and the Alliance employee present had asked Harold to leave. The encounter had been so unresolvable that the entire meeting had to be canceled. While the director had reprimanded the non-profit leader, the board blocked the director from taking action against Harold, by drafting their own motion that he specifically not send Harold this letter. Soon afterward though, the director was forced out. Less than a year later however (April 22 1993), Harold helped form the Rental Property Owners Committee of the Alliance (RPO), of which he is elected chair by his fellow landlords, a seat which automatically also gave him a seat on the board. To Goetz, Harold had "forged an unlikely coalition with the homeowners' group against staff and the previous board" (Goetz 1994b:330). A Whittier Neighbors activist characterized this pact a bit more harshly as "a deal with the devil." Harold had been the subject of so much talk, that two years after he first got onto the board a local newspaper wrote an article about him entitled "The Cockroach King" (Farley 1995:12).

> According to Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) investigators, many of [this block's] new neighbors are illegal aliens, forced to live in sorely neglected

> apartments and hesitant to complain for fear of eviction and deportation. In south Minneapolis, which has become home to Minnesota's second-largest Hispanic population … some neighborhood activists quietly suggest that one slumlord is keenly aware of his tenants' vulnerable situation. Critics say he has tapped into a lucrative subculture, where he extracts rent from illegal immigrants who have no rental history and can't afford to be picky when it comes to housing. The profit grows, they say, as he cuts corners on repairs, knowing his tenants are too afraid to grouse and that city housing inspectors, who only respond to complaints, are always 10 steps behind the game … The matching three-story apartment buildings … at 2731 and 2741 Pillsbury Ave. S., have had 267 citations issued in 1994 and 1995 alone. After a January inspection at 2741 Pillsbury, inspectors ordered him to repair floors, ceilings, walls, smoke detectors and appliances, and to hire mouse and roach exterminators.

Previously there had been for-profit landlords active in the organization, but they were never recognized as a core part of the community; “the people” were the ones who lived in Whittier, not nearly as differentiated between owner or renter as they would be later. Don’t get me wrong, the activists had always been mostly coming from the owner minority, but they did not see themselves as strong representatives of owners. Likewise, some landlords had even been on the board previously, but did not make a push to be seen as representatives of “landlord interests;” there were just community members.

A FOW member told me that while allying with Harold may have been a deal with the devil, this committee was created to get the slumlords involved in making their properties better; Harold was brought in to be chair because he said that he knew the other walkup landlords, and could work with them. Whether devil or community organizer, Harold was a polarizing figure. For the Whittier Neighbors, Harold’s elevation to the board was proof of the evil in the FOW. However, for the FOW, while Harold’s cooperation with the Alliance may be a bit quixotic, it showed their pragmatic strategy to work directly with “slumlords” in order to make the neighborhood better for everyone. Regardless of whether or not this cooptation of landlords produced positive results for the neighborhood, it definitely made it even harder for those who disliked the FOW to work with them.

The Creation of a Populist

One of those volunteers who had been accused of colluding with slumlords was Jackson, who a few years later would be accused of ramping up the divisive rhetoric against the Lydia Apartments for the homeless. But in the decade following the revolution he worked on many different issues, including task forces working to transform Nicollet Avenue into a more profitable, more occupied, law-abiding, and aesthetically pleasing business corridor. He was proud to have worked to line the street with more trees, lighting, flowers and wrought iron fencing. "Nicollet used to be REALLY dark and REALLY bare," but we made it look better and function better." He was an articulate man who had never been involved in neighborhood activism before the 1992 revolution. Like many of the board members who have served faithfully on the board since the time of the revolution, he owned property in Whittier but did not reside in it. He could never however be accused of being an "absentee landlord."

> This was my first neighborhood involvement. I didn't come in with an agenda or point of view. But I was persuaded by the argument that given the high rental numbers, the high supportive housing numbers, that were in place, that it was a questionable strategy to raise those higher. I don't think homeownership was even discussed then. There were no problems for homeownership, no one was doing condo conversions. People looked at the level of shelters, supportive housing, and saw that compared to other neighborhoods it was anomalous. And asked the question, why would it be smart to raise it even higher?

Jackson's take on the pre-1992 era of affordable housing development, was that "the neighborhood as a whole was more passive, and more just overwhelmed by the problems, and less likely to do something. And I think over time that has had an impact, lots of little acts over time." While the *Alliance* was doing a great deal during that time, he was implying that the long-term *residents* and business owners were doing very little, overcome by the crime, middle-class flight, and drop in property values that they were victims of.

> Well, part of it was NRP brought people together, people met each other more, got to know each other more, had some funds to work with, but also had some funds to fight over, so that there were substantive discussions over what's the way to go. People got to know each other more. That made a big difference. For a period in the 90s, we got some leadership, some people that stayed there for a long time.

I feel that Jackson's interpretation of history was driven by the talk among the FOW that the Alliance had been imperiously controlled by an arrogant and ideologically driven staff, which imposed their will a populace that was paralyzed by predicaments, and was lacking in strong leaders to organize them, reveal/coalesce their interests, and enunciate those interests. When I asked him about the effect that the police had had on the neighborhood, he felt that police efforts waxed and waned over time; "that has an impact too, but nothing has had as sustained an impact as all stakeholders, residents, business owners."

Jackson is a populist; he believes in the power and will of the people to overcome the outside and corrupting influence of big business and big government; the people just have to stick up for themselves. The interesting thing about populism though, is that it is a matter of what "people" you are talking talk. To Jackson the "people" are the stakeholders, and stakeholders are residents, property owners, and business owners, they are not necessarily employees of local businesses, employees of the Alliance, clients of service providers, government agencies, or housing developers. This can be seen when Jackson explains who in Whittier are the burden upon it. "I saw Whittier doing the heavy lifting for Minneapolis; no matter how much we did we were asked to do just a little bit more, and a little more. The civic responsibility for people with disabilities was getting higher, and it was already high, over 20-30" supportive housing programs.

For Emma, one of the many staff during this turbulent time, she and not him, was the protector of "the people."

> I said to Jackson, I said I'm here to represent and help the community, he said 'no you're not, you work for the board.' Fascinating! Since you're just a volunteer board member and you get elected by a handful of people, and you're only existence is to spend NRP money, and since I work for a community organization, I kind of think I'm right and I kind think you're wrong. We butted heads on many occasions Jackson and I, and since he lived in a very exclusive area west of here, I really had no patience for him … I represented the neighborhood and the people who lived in it, and since 90% of them were renters I represented them.

In order to represent what she considered the average joe in Whittier, she hired a Latino and an Asian organizer who went out and talked to the neighborhood's immigrant business owners, in order to let them know about the Alliance, and the Alliance know

about them. The Alliance had previously put together a business directory for the neighborhood, but Emma said that immigrant owned businesses had not been in it.

From the perspective of many board members like Jackson however, the staff were simply employee of theirs; Emma neither lived nor owned in the neighborhood, and so was not seen as personally affected by its fate. She had even less stake than those he saw as the enemies of a stable Whittier, the non-profit social service providers officed in Whittier. While they may be stakeholders, the problem I think Jackson has with the non-profits is that the people they serve do not live in the neighborhood, or only live very temporarily. So the non-profit's obligation is to women living temporarily in battered women shelters, the hungry who arrive at soup kitchens in Whittier from other neighborhoods, mentally ill being temporarily houses in treatment centers, the developmentally delayed who come to find jobs, the blind who come to learn home to negotiate city streets, or to the homeless (think about how "investment" and "stake" apply to people who do not have homes). These people have pressing and narrowly defined troubles, and their primary interest is in solving these serious personal problems now, not in solving the problems of the whole neighborhood for generations to come.

Renters are definitely stakeholders to the FOW, but their stake is of a kind that is temporary, and non-asset or income based.

> I believe it really takes sustained effort, it's sort of a weak spot in high rental neighborhoods. The major rental population is churning, people are coming and going … So that folks will, they will get involved, if they get involved at all, will get involved for a while, but then a job change or this or that changes, and they move. It's not a sin but it's a fact. That's a challenge of any high rental neighborhood.

Since renters expect to live in the neighborhood much less time than homeowners, they by nature care less about what the long-term future of the neighborhood is. The more homeowners the more

> The likelihood of individuals in any particular group, to feel personally attached to geography - of place. People make the joke, no one ever washed a rental car, or painted a hotel room. And that's human behavior, it's not because they're bad people, it because, that's the way it is, if you are renting something and you're likely to not be there a while, your stewardship of that place is likely to be low. That's why high rental places are always short on high intervention stewardship.

In other words, renters are not nearly as motivated as property owners to participate in neighborhood politics, and there interests do not match up nearly as well as homeowners with the long-term health of the neighborhood.

Upon encountering the rhetoric in this polarized housing battle, a Whittier-ite attending a few meetings might think there is no limit to how *little* subsidized housing the FOW want in the neighborhood, and no limit to how *much* is envisioned by the supporters of subsidized housing; similar to how an American scanning the national news may come away with the impression that there is no limit to how much liberals would like taxes to rise, and no limit to how much conservatives would like taxes to drop. Jackson however was not against subsidized housing in general, and felt that every large housing building should have inclusionary, affordable, housing. He quoted the author David Rusk to me, on how affordable housing does not have to have a negative impact on a neighborhood, but concentrated poverty always will. Jackson felt that society has a choice, we can put people in need into stable communities, where "people can say welcome to our community," or we can put shove more in-need in unstable neighborhoods where we say to them, "your kids will be exposed to crime every day … Rusk says, be careful how you do good things."

A large part of Jackson's discourse on neighborhood revitalization included strong references to doing everything possible to make neighborhoods more and more stable. However, upon digging a bit deeper into his notions on stability, he told me that "some neighborhoods are way too stable, like a gated community on a golf course." He found this too insular, too hard to get into, and get accepted into; they intentionally set up barriers to keep out anyone without the economic means they approve of, or emotional difficulties, or physical difficulties. I asked, "so you don't want a gated community" – "No, no, no. Some communities accept no civic responsibilities for people with disabilities." While Jackson did live in a much more affluent area than Whittier, he also had a developed philosophy of responsibility for those less fortunate than him, and acted on it.

A trope that heavily structured Jackson's theories on neighborhood revitalization and structured his message he broadcasted was that of "tipping points." "If you drop a

homeless shelter into the middle of Edina it will probably have almost no impact. But you drop five homeless shelters into any neighborhood it's gonna' have an impact. I'm sure somebody can do the math on that." The idea is that all the activity and people in neighborhood can buffer a certain amount of "negative" influence, such as drug dealing or homeless shelters, with minimal impact, but once a geographic area holds "more" than it can absorb, there will be a dramatic effect on its overall health. It is a catastrophic theory, which is easily expressed in a short, comprehensible phrase. And like successful end of the world movies, it tells a story that can resonate well with people who make a connection between horror stories they have heard about particular neighborhoods or cities, such as Harlem, Detroit, South Central LA, or Minneapolis' own "Over North," and the disease, chaos, or "things getting worse" that they perceive in their own neighborhood.

> There are tipping points, there are neighborhoods that are completely overwhelmed. Many folks felt that in the early 90s Whittier and Steven's Square was reaching a tipping point, where basic civic engagement was unlikely to have any impact. You can see the struggles in the north side of Minneapolis, people worked their asses off up there, but the chaos has gotten to a level where no one knows what to do. It's been going on for years and years and seems to be getting worse … the elements that, the chaotic elements, the criminal elements, reached a tipping point where they concentrate resources up there and it's just not enough … In the early 90s, people thought, we better get involved. Because there are tipping points.

But like negative influences can suddenly overwhelm a place, positive stimuli can "tip" a neighborhood in the right direction. Jackson posits that there is a "stewardship quotient" in neighborhoods, it is the ratio of people who feel invested enough in an area to want to try to take care of it. This is related to the "intervention quotient," or the ratio of people who actually will step up to the plate and do something when they see something wrong, whether it be an old woman getting mugged or a whole neighborhood being mugged by non-profit developers. Once the ratio of people who feel stewardship over a place and will intervene on its behalf, falls below some particular numerical ratio, then the neighborhood will suffer.

> The neighborhood needs a sufficient level of folks who are willing to intervene and engage, and provide the stability and safety. So, [the number of non-contributors is] already annoyingly high, people in subsidized housing are already

> struggling by definition. They are highly unlikely to go to community meetings once or twice a week for two or three years. [lxx]

Someone from the Alliance once told me that when it came to keeping out more supportive housing projects, "Jackson was the big guy, this was his thing, this was where he was going to draw a line in the sand." And this is why I find it interesting that for a different activist, who had worked directly on bringing a supportive housing program to the neighborhood told me that,

> But I totally understand why this looked like this was going to be the tipping point and we'll never come back. And I think that got framed early on. And I don't know by who, it's never one person who has that much power. I don't think there's any Karl Rove (laughter), who's got the gift of framing every issue, so I think it was a collective response.

6: Creating Official Factions and Stylized Strategies – the messy professionalization of Whittier politics

The 1995 Annual Meeting – formalizing political parties

Once the term "homeowner interests" was out there as a salient and powerful category, it began to help define those people who were not of this perspective. Factions and positions do not exist on their own; by defining one faction it instantaneously creates the other, and off we go. After the 1992 revolution, board elections became very competitive, and not just in the sense that more people were running for limited seats, but the campaigning and strategizing became exponentially more intense. This lead to slates of candidates being constructed, and slates immediately became formal parties. The core of those who saw themselves as defending homeowner interests gave their slate the nebulously affirmative name, The Friends of Whittier (FOW); while their main rivals christened themselves more explicitly as Diversity & Democracy (D&D). A D&D leader, Terrence, described it this way,

> there were two groups, one was Diversity and Democracy, … and the other was something like the People For Whittier or something [FOW]. And, oh my, if you were painted as on one side, the other side hated you … They were political parties … within the Alliance … It got to the point where people would have these alliances, four years in a row they had a name and brochures and a list of

> candidates and you had to apply to get on the slate, it was very, you had to get endorsed.

The D&D name was not simply something that comprehensively signified the basic essence of these progressives, remember, their agenda was to adequately maintain and add to the stock of affordable housing. But naming themselves "Diversity" was a jab at the FOW, who were seen as hostile to ethnic minorities and the lower classes. And "Democracy" was a way to show how they were opposed to what many considered the decidedly undemocratic methods of the FOW activists – their privileging of homeowner participation, and their "dirty tricks." Underneath the support of affordable housing was a whole other set of very meaningful agendas, which included working to get renters, the poor, and ethnic minorities involved in the Alliance, get the electoral procedures more transparent and accessible, and get more minorities on the board. In a neighborhood where half the residents were ethnic minorities and 89% rented, no one failed to notice that the board had never represented the neighborhood as a whole (descriptive representation).

With the advent of parties within the Alliance, the professionalization of Alliance politics lead to concerted and carefully deployed political strategies for power. As Terrence told me, by the 1995 annual meeting there

> was astute maneuvering, it was really good on both sides. The D&D folks … came up with a great slate of candidates, and really brought out a lot of people … and we won. We had like, like out of the 15 board members we had like 9, you know, it was a good margin, but not commanding. But! The other guys were better at reading the bylaws [two of their main leaders were lawyers]. And there was this thing where committees, um, could elect a chair, and the chair on each committee had a position on the board. Which was not, didn't have to be approved by the membership …. They'd take thirty five [people] to a committee, and they would just pick [the chair of it]. Ok, Joan you be on this committee, Dave you be on this committee, so they just picked who would run each committee … So there was six committees at the time and they overloaded the place, so they took over the other six positions for themselves … It got to the point where it was pretty much even up [between FOW and D&D on the board] … And then a new amazing technique came out, which was to just badger people until they quit, so you would be at a board meeting, and people would literally tell you that you were in the pockets of the poverty industry. Or what you were asking for was self-serving. They would say nasty things to people, this one guy … one

> day, he made a motion that the Whittier Alliance was NOT blaming poor people for the neighborhood' problems. It failed.

While two different groups stepped up their game, one proved better at it, and they transformed their more comprehensive strategy into taking control. From what I can gather from the written record and their opponents, the FOW appeared to have a three pronged strategy – mobilize the base to come out to vote for your slate at the annual meeting, manipulate the bylaws to get other FOW members on the board after the election, then harass the rivals that did get elected to the board until they quit (in the concluding chapter on democracy, I detail the strategies that the FOW descendants in the next decade used to get their candidates onto the board). Joan, who you remember was an ally of the FOW had a different perspective than Terrence. "In 1995 the FOW got their asses kicked, but" the candidates that D&D recruited and got elected to the board "were not long term stable people here and they didn't show up to board meetings." If a board member misses three board meetings in a row, the board can vote to remove them. Apparently this happened to a few D&D board members, diluting their majority, "but then one quit," leaving FOW in control.

Like the D&D activists I spoke to, Joan was also disgusted with the level of vitriol and division at the time, but did not see it through the lens of horrific injustice and subversion of democracy that they did;

> The Whittier Alliance used to be organized where we elected our whole freakin' board every year; election year was a feeding frenzy … there was a lot of meeting stacking going on … We had slates of candidates, we had wars for a board seat … I don't know why, the Alliance [has no real power and can] only make recommendations, it's not like we had any true power … There was a huge paradigm shift in the neighborhood between those who wanted to FILL THIS AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR MILES TO COME, and those who said that enough was enough. We need to create an economic balance here or we are going to be a ghetto forever. That paradigm existed here and everything else that went with it … And with that also went the race issue, our board was pretty equally mixed with black people from the co-ops and people who owned the houses in the [wealthier] "Diamond Cluster" up there in northern Whittier [Joan lived in the poorer southern part], what did we use to call that, we had a name for that, I'll remember that … There'd be raucous arguments at the board meetings, I can't even tell you if they were over substantive issues or not, and people get pissed, and someone would say something fucked up and the other person would get mad, and they'd threaten to punch somebody. We had crazy shit, one woman got

> a forgivable loan [for her house from the Alliance] but you have to stay five years [for it to be forgiven], and she sold after two years and they voted to not forgive her loan … She laid on the floor and FLIPPED OUT in the middle of the board meeting.

Joan echoed Garret's lament about the wild contestation of committee chairs for those who did not get elected to the board at the annual meeting; chairs "became hugely contested because if you didn't get elected you would chase a committee chair," and this high-pitched competition was "disintegrating" the committees.

Incarnation House Controversy – codifying the agenda

"All agree it helps fill a huge need. And yet … there's an ugly cloud over its future … It can be awfully complicated to do good." So reads a 1995 newspaper story about a proposal to move a women's shelter into Whittier.[lxxi] When it came before a special meeting of the Alliance's Safety Committee, they unanimously voted to recommend that the city deny the shelter permission to alter a building on Clinton Ave for their purposes. Fifteen residents of a nearby retirement home had signed a petition against the shelter, and when it went before the board, only two members voted not to oppose the shelter. However, the shelter did go in, and according to Lauren (who led the effort against old Alliance crime program),

> The neighborhood got screwed over on that. Because of Incarnation House we decided enough is enough … The way that that played out, is that the shelter was supposed to wait and not do anything until Monday, til the city council could go over everything, but they moved in [to the building] on Saturday … So we got tromped on by that, and so since they moved in, the city council said too bad [for us, too late]. So that's how the quarter mile spacing came about.

This was the city law that forbade any housing program that had on-site services helping the residents, from opening within a quarter of a mile from any other exiting supportive housing program. While this issue precipitated greater polarity that lead to a minor splintering of the FOW and a major splintering of the Alliance itself, it also set the mission, resolve, tactics, and solidarity of a core group of volunteers that was to lead the organization from then on.

Incarnation House was a defining moment for the FOW; it proved to them that city hall cares not for neighborhoods or democracy. It also impressed on them that they needed to be much better prepared the next time a homeless shelter wanted to invade their home,. When a few years later Lydia House was proposed, the FOW and the Alliance board were ready with pickets, city council testimonies, law suits, and everything they could throw at it. And while the FOW were again hugely disappointed by the end result of this battle, they made such a fuss that no one has since attempted a similar program in the area.

Newspaper stories about homeless shelters always start with a tale of one person or whole family, who tragically found themselves homeless and in need of help (these tales are usually provided verbatim by a public policy group in a press release). In the case of Incarnation House, the newspaper tells of a nine-month pregnant woman who risked being put out on the street because the building that the shelter currently occupied was being shut down, and the shelter's efforts to find a new home in Whittier were being fought by some residents (Grow 1995).

> 'We don't have a problem with their program,' said the associate director of Whittier Alliance. 'It's the fact that it is a program that's the problem. We're going to be seen as the bad guys, we know. But we don't want another program in the neighborhood.'

It is as if "programs" in and of themselves degrade neighborhoods. The sister dirty word to "program" is "project." Perhaps no other word in the contemporary housing lexicon strikes more fear into people than "housing projects." Bad press about affordable housing blocks has constructed this meaning in such a profound way, that the simple mention of "project" makes Americans cringe, whether they are the poor who fear having to live in one, neighbors who fear living by one, or suburbanites who have simply heard so many stories about this modern-day boogeyman that this abstraction (most people have never seen a project let alone experienced them) can be used effectively whenever one wants to despoil that which is urban, African-American, government planned, government subsidized, or all of the above (even mentioning the word "Cabrini-Green alone can be a powerful indictment of government administering anything)

While many activists in Whittier cringe at non-profit ventures and government subsidization, these same activists have no illusions about the injury that for profit businesses can cause. While their most vocal fights are against subsidized housing projects, they at least accept the place that these projects have in society. The presence of the soup kitchen irritates them to no end, but their pure hatred is reserved for the cheaply built walkup apartments that were built solely by private developers and were a unique creation of private enterprise. It was the relaxing of government regulations that activists blame for these "noxious" buildings that sprang up like weeds all around their quaint, single family houses. Activists might complain of the over-concentration of supportive housing programs, but in sheer number they are dwarfed by the 2 ½ story walkups.

If some had their way they would rezone the neighborhood to put strict density limits on the all the non-commercial streets, making single-family homes the only type of structures allowable on many blocks (or at least large unit condos), and they would welcome any barriers that could be put up against any more rental housing. It means little to some if putting a fifty-unit apartment building on the same footprint as 2 houses is much, much more profitable, an some in the FOW are committed to waiting as long as it takes for the condo market to rebound. They are perfectly comfortable with letting a plot of land lie vacant or boarded up rather than allowing a new but not handsome enough building, to permanently occupy that piece of the land. The FOW have a deep faith in the "progress" of the neighborhood; they foresee that in the end, their hard work will translate into the steady improvement of the neighborhood. And this improvement will result in an ever more attractive place to live, where home-buyers will be clambering to live in "Whittier," a brand name they have helped develop. The FOW's faith in progress is only matched by their patience. The drops in crime, increases in property value, and influxes of businesses that they have witnessed in Whittier over the past two decades are all they need to prove the inevitability of the rise of Whittier. For them the hardest work is over, Whittier has already made it over the hump, and now those gains need to be maintained by dedicated homeowners who will keep a sharp eye on those developers and non-profits that want to make a quick profit.

7: Dealing With Outside Challenges to the Revolution – consultants, lawyers, academics, and a rival take their shot

Holt Organizational Assessment – if you can't fire them, disregard them

By the mid-1990s the Alliance was being talked gossiped about in various circles around town, and word had gotten back to the Alliance's normally silent, major funders, including the original funder, the Dayton-Hudson Foundation, whose one million dollar commitment to Whittier had begun the Alliance. In June of 1995 the Alliance director's report stated that,

> We have received $40,000 from Dayton-Hudson which will probably mark the end of this long funding relationship based on history. With both the Alliance and Dayton-Hudson undertaking new directions, we will no longer be included in their 'special category' of automatic renewal beginning in 1996.

This did not mean that its interest in the Alliance was totally finished though, and along with another funder and the NRP office downtown, they insisted that if they were to continue giving to the Alliance, the Alliance was going to go through a thorough, independent organizational assessment. It was hoped that this evaluation would bring more harmony and more structure to an organization where relations among board members, between the board and the staff, and among Whittier organizations, was usually unhappy and vicious. The funders procured a grant to fund the assessment, and hired a professional consulting firm out of Connecticut. While the recommendations [lxxii] themselves in the 52 page report are not particularly relevant to my research, what it is interesting is the context within which this assessment traveled. And while almost all of the recommendations withered on the vine, what did have a significant effect were – the feelings that welled up in response to it, the talk it generated, and the power relations that it both was buffeted by and altered.

The evaluation tried to maintain a rosy outlook for the Alliance by reporting that in general relations and reputations were better at that time than in the last three years, but the report was riddled with findings about vagueness, confusion, over-complexity, disconnection with the community and base, loss or reputation, and general lack of focus, direction, training and oversight. The consultants found that "a unique confluence of events caused deep rifts within the Alliance that have persisted in full force for more than

three years, and which have created an extremely negative outside image of the Alliance." The first was the $29 million NRP money, and "Whittier insiders blame part of the Alliance's turmoil during the time the NRP plan was being developed on the city's lack of preparation and support for implementing such a major program" (it found that the NRP had learned hard lessons on the back of the Alliance) (Holt:4). The second reason for rifts was a decline in citizen participation as the Alliance became more and more staff driven, and while the staff did reconnect to some degree with the community while getting its input for the NRP proposal, participation again fell off afterward. The last reason in the report was the 1992 coup, where organizational disconnect made some sort of rebellion inevitable, and where the Alliance's poor structure made a take-over by a small organized group possible. "But instead of debating substantive issues, the Alliance nearly imploded from disputes among a few board members and deep disagreements with the staff (Holt:5)."

According to a vocal critic of the pro-homeowner agenda, the Holt assessment "was when the organization took itself to the shrink to figure out why it was such a mess." From his perspective the Alliance was a mess, as the board was controlled by people whose policies and behavior he found to be incredibly nasty. However, from the perspective of the FOW board members, the problem was that the staff would not do what they board directed to, and that there were pro-social service people all around them who were only interested in filing complaints, conspiring to make the board look bad, and preventing the democratically elected board from doing the job of improving the neighborhood.[lxxiii] From the perspective of the staff, the board was giving them mixed messages, often directing them to enact policies that they found morally wrong, and cruelly attacking them.

One person critical of the board at the time told me that the board only agreed to the assessment because the choice was either that or no more funding. However, "you can't make people do what they don't want to do … And this is why they lost a lot of funding … They were told over and over again, if you don't let people different from you participate, you will lose the funding." Apparently some critical of the FOW mission had taken some executives from major funding organizations "on a tour" of the Alliance and

were told "all the wicked things happening. We got put onto their do not fund list." "I don't think that anyone paid much attention to the report;" the Alliance minutes from this time make no mention of the assessment or any of its recommendation.

The consultants felt a number of factors contributed to a more promising future for the Alliance, the first being that the $29 million promised by the city's neighborhood program turned out to be actually only $7-8 million. "Thus, the rewards of control had diminished" (Holt:5). Another reason for hope was that since the co-ops were no longer owned by the Alliance, one of the most contentious of issues was no longer nearly as relevant. Also, the current director had seemed to be having more success in not just staying on board, but diminishing the outrageously ill-mannered behavior of some by laying down the law with the board. And lastly, "the extremists who lobbied intensively for home ownership alienated many of their early allies, thus creating a moderate majority within the board." However, while this alienation and moderate majority may have appeared to the consultants as a promising development, I will argue that in the end these anti-extremism forces would actually increase the control of this "small but feisty" faction.

While the feistiest of them may not have outnumbered the not as aggressive, this did not mean that they did not control to agenda. And while the more agreeable discourse may have given the appearance that many voices were being heard, and varied policies given a chance, it did not change the agenda of the FOW or their control over the Alliance. Over the next nineteen years, while this agenda was challenged every few years from different rival interests, and they would lose some battles, in the end their agenda was never seriously at risk. Through all the in-fighting and upheaval, the Alliance could be said to have been the most stable of organizations, because its most core policies never wavered.

1996 Annual election redo

The organizational assessment of the Alliance had been completed soon before the 1996 annual meeting, and had recommended that the non-profit committee be re-established. The committee had been taken away by the FOW voters because they felt that non-profits serving the needy in Whittier had unfairly exercised too much control

over Alliance activities and monies; however, since the consultants felt the interests of the non-profits was being subsumed by business interests, the board had added it back onto the slate of committees up for approval (each year the whole slate of non-standing committees are re-established by an up or down vote by the entire membership). While the annual meeting is always held in the evening, this year the Alliance had tried to make voting more accessible by allowing early voting by drop box from seven to nine in the morning and eleven to one at midday. But even with the early voting, at the actual meeting "the multimedia room at the park … was clearly not going to hold everyone, they were expecting 100 and got 400, so they moved it into the gym. It was crazy, it was crazy." Joan laid out the scene for me,

> That was the big huge election of 96, there were 400 people at the annual meeting. Because that's the year we switched from electing the whole board in one year to electing people to the three year terms. And whoever got control of the board in that election was going to be the one figuring out what the power structure would be for a very long time. That's when the FOW made its largest effort … They would go and knock on all the doors of the rich people up here and anger them and they'd all come out. AND they had the businesses out, they'd have every single employee from that business and vote.

At the evening meeting itself Joan offered an amendment from the floor to drop the non-profit committee and instead add it to the Family and Children committee, and by a show of hands from those present, it passed, but many cried foul, including a lawyer consulted by the organization's director.

> Simply put, those who voted in the morning or afternoon sessions were deprived the opportunity to have their voices heard on issues raised for the first time in the evening. Based on what you have told me, it is unlikely that a majority of the votes of the evening session constituted a majority of the votes of all three sessions combined. If this is correct, the slate of Standing Board Committees was not passed.

The chair however did not appreciate the director getting an outside opinion, and expressed it in a letter to another FOW member.

> Looks like we should have seen this sooner. What do you think? Why would the director take it upon himself to get a reading like this and then not share it with the board members? Note that the date is the same day as his [complaint] letter to the head of the NRP. Most interesting. Just another ploy to make it look like the board was entirely incompetent and ineffective?

Within this atmosphere, the actions of opponents were seen as being motivated by sheer malevolence, not values or even ideology. The chair saw a potentially serious voting infraction not as a moral or institutional problem, but only as a trivial thing that her opponents could use against her. The lawyers clearly point to a very serious blunder that needed rectification, but to the chair the lawyer's letter was something personal against her and her movement, it was crassly political, and she could not see the elements of justice involved. Meanwhile, the director and the D&D faction saw the vote from the floor as nothing but vulgar politics in the service of the selfish gain of a few, nothing but a power ploy.

Rivalry was created between activists that had different theories of how to improve the neighborhood, this lead to the creation of factions, and factions lead to strategic maneuvering. Once the focus is on winning, tactics become of prime importance. And once your opponents begin to see you as essentially a tactical species, and no longer a holder of principles, then in their eyes you are one-dimensional and lacking humanity.

Even though the FOW had heavy recruited for the 1996 Annual, still the D&D "types had won more seats. But after three months, they lost control of the Whittier Alliance, after a guy resigned because he couldn't take the fighting. He was a moderate, and after that, it all fell apart." The way D&D lost power was not by losing the election but by incrementally losing board seats, until they found themselves out-voted on the board. This process of attrition began with the D&D leader who had been the chair of this non-profit committee; when the committee was no more, no more was her board seat. The chair elected after the election had been a moderate, but he soon resigned. Then, at a board meeting that summer, when at least one of the remaining D&D members could not attend, the board assigned three empty seats, each to a FOW ally, including Harold "The Cockroach King." One of these newly empty seats filled by FOW was actually Dave Hoban's, one of the leaders of FOW. At the beginning of the meeting he had resigned this at-large board seat because he also had a board seat as the chair of the Arts and Education committee, thus keeping him on the board but opening his at-large slot for an ally. At

around this time a pastor of a local progressive protestant church, who was aligned with D&D, resigned out of disgust, and his seat ended up going to Jackson (who had lost the actual board election). The pastor had been the chair of the Grievance Committee, and the new chair was a different FOW ally, thus giving FOW yet another board seat.

D&D could also be savvy; for two years in a row they had managed to out recruit their opponents at the annual meeting. They however were slower to adopt more subtle and pervasive strategies, such as filling vacancies with their own, and getting those same supporters to come to the annual *committee* meetings where the chair was elected. While D&D lost their non-profit committee when in the end it was swallowed up by the Business Association Committee, the bylaws demand that the non-profits and the businesses each get two representatives on the board; that means that with the committee chair added in, this one committee now sent five representatives to the board. And this year D&D did succeed in out-numbering the FOW at the Business committee meeting by electing their allies to the chair and representative positions. They elected two of their own from neighborhood non-profits; one was a different progressive minister, and another from the school for the blind. One of the D&D leaders ran a small business out of his neighborhood home, and having out recruited the FOW, he was elected as one of these for-profit representatives, and this resulted in D&D having four of the five board seats reserved from this committee.

This coup was short lived, and this four to one configuration would soon be flipped for years to come. The D&D business owner soon quit the Alliance all together, and one of the non-profit seats would be informally reserved for the massive Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA), a much more conservative organization by nature than the many, small social service providers that surround it. The MIA is a world-class (and free) art museum built in 1915, thanks to the donation of land by the children of Dorilus Morrison, owner of the Minneapolis Lumber Company (while today Minneapolis is known by its moniker, The City of Lakes, around the turn of the 20th century it was The Mill City and a mile from the MIA had been the world's largest flour mill). The MIA's interests are diverse, but its donors are largely corporations, foundations, government, and wealthy patrons from outer neighborhoods and suburbs; this why some in the neighborhood

accuse the MIA of being beholden to those who care nothing about the neighborhood or its people, and only care about cleansing the blocks around the museum of anything that would scare the nice suburban patrons driving into Whittier on a weekend to contemplate art.

Professor Goetz's 1996 Article – academic evidence adds fodder but changes little materially

A month after a botched 1996 annual Alliance election, professor Ed Goetz weighed in on politics in Whittier with a second article. The talk nationally and locally about how subsidized housing hurts neighborhoods, had motivated him do a study of the actual effects of 23 subsidized housing projects in urban neighborhoods near downtown Minneapolis (the study even included three co-ops in Whittier). Instead of the usual academic style of entering into debate with other piece of academic literature, I will explain how Goetz's article is a voice more in dialogue with Whittier politics than in dialogue with my own study. Like Joan, Jackson, or Emma, Goetz (and me for that matter) is another actor in the Whittier drama.

Goetz interjected into this drama by finding that (Goetz 1996:2),

> proximity to *nonprofit*-developed subsidized housing actually enhances property values at a rate of $0.86 per foot … proximity to *privately-owned*, publically subsidized housing reduces property values by $0.82 per foot … [and] *public* [government owned] housing deflates property values by $0.46 per foot.

This is not a whole lot of money either way, however, every *abandoned* building on average drops $860 off each nearby property. "Taken together, these factors indicate that the maintenance and condition of the private housing stock in a neighborhood is more significant in determining property values than is the presence of publically subsidized housing" (3). Also, after being rehabbed with public money, the B-Flats co-op and Double Flats co-op in Whittier, both saw substantial declines in their number of police calls. "In all, there is virtually no supporting evidence for the fears that these CDC-developed subsidized housing projects increase crime" (3).[lxxiv]

While this report validated and emboldened the supporters of subsidized housing in Whittier, it did little toward their success. The FOW did not admit that impartial

academic research had irrefutably proved them wrong. Given their arguments against subsidized housing in the years to come, I suspect that they actually used some of Goetz's findings to support their cause. As the FOW became a bit more pragmatic in their stances and rhetoric, they stopped calling for the demolition of walkups and shelters, and spent their efforts on pushing for substantial upkeep of them instead. Goetz's findings had stressed that maintenance of affordable housing is impactful on nearby property values, and FOW did and still very much does hold subsidized housing buildings' feet to the fire on this issues.

A further charge had been that subsidized units were unfairly competing with the private sector, driving down market rate rents because there were so many empty subsidized ones, that people were simply moving into them instead of the market rate ones. Goetz found that there were many renters that paid over half their income in rent, and argued that this meant that there was a huge need for much more affordable housing, not less. Also, since 74% of the subsidized tenants made less than half the neighborhood median income (less than $18,252), "we must conclude that the majority of these subsidized units are targeting a population for whom there is an extreme shortage of affordable housing" (5), and not attracting people who can afford market rate apartments. "Extreme shortage of affordable housing" was not a phrase that would gain much traction however among the FOW. They definitively "know" this not to be the case, since anyone can see that there are so many shoddy units in so many shoddy apartment buildings in Whittier.

Goetz's summary of his findings, while seemingly detrimental to the policies and ideologies of the FOW, turn out to be surprisingly useful to their call to de-concentrate poverty (6).

> The prevailing notion about subsidized housing - that it is detrimental to the neighborhoods in which it is located - has led some policymakers and neighborhood activists to advocate for the dispersion of subsidized housing. Our findings suggest that the underlying premise of this argument is wrong, and that the dispersal of subsidized housing is not necessary for the sake of inner-city neighborhoods. There are, however, other compelling reasons to disperse subsidized housing; to provide lower-income residents with easier access to areas of job growth, for example, and to provide lower-income children with better educational opportunities. These and other justifications for the dispersal of

> affordable subsidized housing still exist and they remain compelling. The issue of the dispersal of affordable housing, therefore, needs to be reframed; it should not be undertaken to relieve the burden of central city neighborhoods, it should be undertaken to enhance the educational and employment opportunities available to lower-income people and to provide families with a wider range of communities to choose from when they make their housing decisions. Our findings should serve to reassure the residents of more affluent central city neighborhoods and to reassure suburban residents that these policy objectives can be accomplished without subjecting their communities to higher crime or lower property values.

Years later during the fight over opening of Lydia Apartments for the homeless, we will again and again here the opponents arguing that more of the in-need should not be housed in the neighborhood, because they *deserve* to be dispersed to outlying areas, just as Goetz argued above.

Whittier Neighbors

Through interviews, Goetz (1994b:322) found that directors of neighborhood organizations in Minneapolis,

> equate neighborhood interests with the interests of property owners. The constituent parts of this ideology can be summarized as follows: Too great a concentration of rental housing contributes to neighborhood decline. Renters are transient and have little stake in the neighborhood. The pursuit of affordable housing for renters benefits only the tenants assisted, while the neighborhood suffers from greater concentration of poverty. Property owners (including homeowners, landlords, and business owners), because of their financial investment and because they are less transient than renters, have a greater stake in the viability of a neighborhood. Therefore, the pursuit of benefits for property owners helps the entire neighborhood by halting middle class flight and attracting new investment and new stakeholders into the neighborhood.

I could not have said it better myself, and my research corroborates this ideology.[lxxv] However, this does not explain why so many property owners in Whittier do not align their interests with that of *being* property owners, but instead advocate for the interests of the least among us. The D&D advocates share with their FOW rivals their race, class, ethnicity, homeowner status, educational level, and neighborhood; what I found is that what makes them different is – their theories about how to improve the quality of life of people, and theories on what constitutes democracy.

After four years of battling the FOW for control of the Alliance and somehow always ending up with the short end of the stick, D&D decided to try another tact. They would start fresh by leaving the Alliance, and founding a new organization called "The Whittier Neighbors." This was not a capitulation to the FOW, quite the opposite, for their plan was to usurp the Alliance's designation as the city's officially recognized citizen participation organization. The significance of this mantle is that it comes along with the NRP's millions. The D&D activists, many of whom were regulars of the old Alliance Non-Profit Committee, set out to craft a set of by-laws that would be so undeniably founded in democratic principles, that every un-addled mind would know that the Neighbors *were* Whittier, and that they, and only they, could responsibly plan its future. They believed this goal would be easy, since the reputation of the Alliance had been besmirched in recent years by the narrow agenda and offensive behavior of its board.

These activists set out to craft a set of bylaws so steeped in egalitarian mechanisms that the Neighbors could not but be the truest reflection of the will of all Whittier-ites. Central to their plan was to avoid the Alliances perennial problem of always being overrepresented by people from the Northeast mansion district. Instead, most of the board seats would be tied to each of the four quadrants of Whittier (in the geographical eyes of the residents, the neighborhood naturally cleaves into four squares split by Nicollet Avenue going North/South, and the three lane, one-way thoroughfare of 26th Street going West. NE is the historic district, NW is the more crime-free "diamond" district, SE is the "ghetto" zone, and SW is the "troubled but resource-full" region). Another crucial improvement was voting by mail; never again would Whittier-ites be disenfranchised by not being able to make a two-hour window one time each year.

The Neighbors were excited, they not only felt themselves to be in the process of creating the impeccable democracy, but they were going to take control of the neighborhood because of it, and create robust programs that benefitted everyone. One of these founders had seen the FOW's attempt to eliminate the non-profit committee as one those eminently "evil deeds," which has no purpose but to kill something (good) to enrich their own power. By labeling a deed evil, and for purely political purposes, these words deny the purpose and complaints of those who sincerely saw non-profits as ruining their

neighborhood. If they are diabolical instead of savers of the community (freedom fighters or terrorists?), then people can feel free to dismiss outright their theories of community development. The Neighbors told me that the non-profit committee had been a "vibrant committee that had the best attendance of all the committees of all time … And they eliminated this hotbed of social activism." The idea was that the FOW did it to prevent *grassroots* activism by the *people* because it interfered with their profits and power. However, this hotbed did not go cool, but instead was transmitted into the form of a wholly new organization.

Joan had a different view of the genesis of the Neighbors,

> And the people who didn't win in the election, went off with some others who hadn't even been in the Whittier Alliance, like Gary, I don't know what his deal was, and formed the Whittier Neighbors. And they tried to take the Whittier Alliance out … The comments I got from downtown [city hall] was that the only thing they could ever glean from the Whittier Neighbors was their dramatic hatred of the Alliance. That they seemed to exist to hate us, and it wasn't clear there was another mission for them other than that they hated us.

Joan had entirely discounted almost all of the ethos and mission of the Neighbors. By presenting them as nothing but a fanatical reaction against something else, and a reaction that was pure hatred at that, Joan discounts the Neighbors and all their theories of inclusion along with it. But to the Neighbors, they had specific tasks planned, and grand philosophical paradigms underpinning those tasks.

Another reason the Neighbors wanted to supplant the Alliance was because it had "lost its funding, no one would give money to them." With no private contributions and a terrible reputation, the Neighbors felt the Alliance had reached a dead end. In this sense, creating the Neighbors was a pragmatic move instead of just an emotional or philosophical one. While the Alliance had been a model organization at one time, once it had been taken over by anti-democratic forces that could not be removed, it needed to die. "We wanted to provide things that the Alliance was incapable of."

Because of these pragmatic and democratic reasons, the Neighbors were shocked when the NRP denied their application to become the official neighborhood organization. Terrence chocked it up to the "heavy handedness at the city, we were never really considered." In his eyes, the Neighbors were so obviously more superior, that the only

way the NRP could deny them was to not even look at their bylaws, instead just making a capricious, bureaucratic, status quo decision. Joan, again, saw it differently; they were denied exactly because their bylaws were flawed; they did not have open elections, or citizen participation, so they didn't qualify, and they did not try again because they simply did not bother changing their bylaws to make their organization based on citizen participation. The Neighbors were seen by many as a sort of private club, run entirely by one tightly knit group of residents.

In the face of their rejection however, the Neighbors not only did not die but prospered. Terrence bragged to me that the Neighbors were the first in Whittier to ever host a forum for the city council candidates. The Neighbors also had created a video in Somali about the ins and outs of renting an apartment, and they founded the annual World of Whittier fair." Through it all, the board met every month, various committees came and went, they annually elected board members, organized a fundraiser each year (which did not always net money), and every fall held their organization-wide potluck.

8: The Stability in Failure, Aversion, and Schism

An "All-Volunteer" Organization

The stability of the FOW hold on power after 1992 is thrown into relief by the incredible instability of the staff; even when the employee roster ground down to zero, the FOW/Alliance board soldiered on. They did so not only without a cooperative staff (or any staff at all), but in the face of repeated lawsuits brought by employees against the Alliance and a few individual board members. The incredible thing is, that in the face of continual, robust revolts from many sides against this small faction, they never lost power for long. There was little modification of their agenda, little cooptation of moderates at all to strengthen their position, and almost no compromises with the funders and municipal officials. The only change I can see was that their *language* became more muted and conciliatory.

In 1995 the Alliance director who had brought some decorum back to the organization left, and the board hired a new director internally, and while she had much more of a pro-business perspective than the social justice directors of the past, she quit in

a tumult less than a year later (the Alliance Executive Committee suggested to her that she should either resign or be given a probationary period, but later the whole board criticized the committee for taking this action). Soon after her departure she hired a lawyer to sue a FOW board member for comments he made about her personal life. The board chair wrote her to chastise her "bad mouthing" of the Alliance, and offered that she instead should "look within" herself to find the source of the current problems in her life. The chair felt that the ex-director was trying to kill the organization by complaining about it directly to its major funders, and in addition he said that when she quit she left the office in a total mess.

Grievances were filed all around, with FOW board members making accusations against other board members and staff. Then a black employee filed a discrimination complaint against the organization, after he claimed that someone on the safety committee said that he must be a drug dealer. The board responded in writing that "the Alliance serves a multi-racial, multi-cultural neighborhood. Its board members are black, white, Hispanic and Eurasian." The Alliance found a solution to these problems – a Grievance Committee. The committee, made up of board members, asked five former employees to meet with them. However, the employees declined because they felt that the committee contained some people who were openly hostile to them, so instead they went to the Minneapolis Mediation Program. When the committee received a letter inviting them to participate in a mediation with neutral mediators, the committee ignored the mediators. Instead they wrote the five to say that since they had refused to meet with the committee, they had wasted the time and energy of the committee members who had acted in good faith, and were not amused. "On analysis, it appears that the only possible motivation is to create disruption and aggravation for the Whittier Alliance Board. This is a frivolous waste of everyone's time and energy and should be ceased immediately."

The language of the Alliance board had shifted from its combative tone after first gaining control, to irritated conciliation in an effort to keep control. In a letter to one D&D member, the chair lectured that everyone needs to now come together after all the fighting between factions; "no one person or group is entirely right or wrong," and

continual criticism is not what is needed now. However, their discourse was not of appeasement but pacification, not apology but condescension.

It was not only a combative time, but a confusing time for everyone. When the black employee was no longer at work, it was unclear even to people in the organization at the time if he was fired or quit. The board had been so unsuccessful at managing, maintaining, and working with their employees, that by mid-1996 there was no staff left standing. The other two employees in early 1996 had exited because of a combination of bad blood and lack of money to pay them. In the face of this calamity, the board simply declared the Alliance to be an "all-volunteer" organization. Left only with themselves, they made lemonade, spinning their failure as an opportunity to shed bureaucracy and expenditures. The Alliance was now a pure grassroots organization, fed solely by the people who would be most affected by the organization's work, those who lived and/or owned property in the neighborhood.

Othering the Alliance

Sophia was a long-time member of the Whittier Neighbors, and on top of working for women's rights and the Democratic Party, she helped to perpetuate the divide between the Neighbors and the Alliance more than any other activist I knew. Many times I would overhear Sophia trying to precisely delineate the difference between the Alliance and Neighbors. At one board meeting she posited that "the Alliance is about economic issues, while the Neighbors is about social ones … Which is a nice way of saying that we care about people and they care about money." To which another board member replied, "you're being too charitable to the Alliance." Another time Sophia essentialized the two organizations this way, "And I think we're the bleeding hearts," while the Alliance believes that "what's good for businesses is what's good for the neighborhood." By defining the gulf between the major actors in Whittier politics, she was concretizing it.

With her long history in city politics and in residing in the neighborhood, I was shocked when half an hour into our two hour interview she admitted that she had never once been to an Alliance meeting; not on any issue, whether it be on muggings, voting rights, Lydia, getting Somalis more involved, light rail lines, housing co-ops, or any of a

hundred other issues. In spite of this, or perhaps because of it, time and time again she was the biggest voice I personally heard promoting negative representations of the Alliance. Sophia never missed a chance to comment on how many Alliance board members do not live in the neighborhood. “They’re more concerned about the economics of the community than the quality of life of the neighborhood, because most of them leave the community before it gets dark” (which is ironic because “quality of life issues” is a buzzword among those very people she dislikes). Another very active Neighbors member told me that he had tried going to a few Alliance meetings, but the things people said there had just made him mad. Sophia however could not even say that the meetings bothered her, or that any individuals bothered her, she had never met them or heard directly what any had said. What bothered her were many of the public positions taken by the Alliance board, and what she had heard second hand about the Alliance from its detractors.

I do not want to belittle Sophia’s commitment to the neighborhood; not seeing the Alliance for herself does not make her activism with the Neighbors any less meaningful. What I want to do is show the negative correlation between harsh discourse and first-hand familiarity. In my experience, even the most polarized activists always had at least something nice to say about their particular opponents, IF they knew them personally. Longtime opponents of Dave Hoban who knew him, admitted he was a great organizer; opponents of Terrence knew him to be a passionate advocate for the homeless; critics of Joan conceded that she was selfless; and those who detested Ruben’s defense of affordable housing still found him to be a really nice guy.

The most off the cuff, broad, or categorical comments about ones rivals were usually made about those who one had never actually had to deal with face to face. Being the outsiders, the Whittier Neighbors were always much more forthcoming with invectives about the Alliance than the other way around, but the old-timer D&D members who had fought those early 1990s battles with the FOW, did not like to spend much time reliving the harsh words directed at them, and especially coming from them. Likewise, the old-time FOW activists were pretty reticent to spill too much dirt to me on the D&D

crowd (perhaps because they did not want to stir up the dirt about themselves during those years).

The Neighbors never really dealt directly with issues of crime or danger, and while Sophia was not particularly scared of crime, it was an important consideration in her life. Before moving to Whittier she had only had on-street parking, and "twice someone walked by and smashed all the windows out of our car. So we wanted a place with underground parking." It surprised me that she had never been interested in the crime reports and police updates that local police lieutenants regularly gave at the beginning of Alliance Community Issues meetings. But then again, it is not surprising – while her safety was crucial to her personally, as a policy issue it did not rate. She had personally seen to her own safety; she specifically chose to live above the ground floor of a modern, apartment building (she would rather live in an apartment than a house, because commercially secured buildings are less vulnerable than some old house with all their first floor windows). For the Neighbors (like for progressives nationally), when people are heard railing about crime and safety, it is often seen as just a way to brand certain minority groups as essentially criminal in nature, and a way to distract from the underlying (structural) issues of inequality, and of the injustice historically perpetrated against those groups that are more often accused of crimes. While Sophia shared concerns about safety in common with the Alliance board members, she proved to have distinctly different theories on the causes of the crime.

For example, when I asked Sophia what she thought about stability in neighborhoods, the question quickly prompted a tirade directly against the wealthy in Whittier, who she felt did not appreciate their lower class neighbors.

> And what are you [FOW], doing in Whittier? You know the neighborhood you are moving into [has crime], neighborhoods are what they are, to the core. But I would not presume I'd live in a mansion in Minnetonka [a stereotyped wealthy suburb], I wouldn't feel comfortable, it's not my values. It's conspicuous consumption. If I had the money, I do other things with it. If a millionaire wants to buy a house here [in Whittier], they need to blend into the lifestyle of the neighborhood. They need to be comfortable, they can't expect to come in and throw their weight around; they are buying into something. It's sort of like, do you marry someone you are compatible with, or do you marry someone who you

> want to become the spouse you want them to be, and I think we both know which person will be more happy.

What Sophia did not realize is that she shared the same disdain for the wealth and homogeneity of Minnetonka as her neighborhood enemies; they moved into Whittier for the same reason as she.

Diversity for Sophia meant pushing for low income housing units in each new condo project, as many FOW activists also support. She felt that the funds from the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) were supposed to be used to replace the federal funds that were drying up that had been for low-income housing. And, "that's how it used to be before the Republicans [FOW] took over … Those people who worship market driven economics." For Sophia the "Republicans" were using money that was supposed to go for the poor, in order to gentrify minorities right out of their homes (however, the NRP itself only specified that a majority of its funds be spent on "housing," not what kind).

This points to a serious difference in the way the term "minorities" is conceived, for there are minorities and there are *minorities*. The literal conception simply counts people numerically; whoever there are less of is the minority. In Whittier this means homeowners, as they make up only 11% of the households. However, in the world of social sciences and civil rights there is a more profound way to see the differences among people in a society; a minority is a group who holds less wealth and influence in a society, those who are not among the dominant, but instead have historically been oppressed. In Whittier this would include such groups as poor, renters, blacks, Latinos, disabled, homeless, and mentally ill. Depending on which definition of minority one subscribes to, housing funds for those in the "minority" would flow in substantially divergent directions.

This difference however is not a matter of simply defining something differently, but about the way one theorizes society to work. Sophia's position is based on the argument that a society that does not collectively intervene in the fortunes of its least fortunate, risks the whole society. And a vibrant society is one where all its members have the means to fully participate in the economy and politics. Hence, those who lack

money and access need help, not simply because they deserve it as humans, but because to neglect them is to risk living in a society that lacks quality for everyone. For the FOW, the policies they implemented at the Alliance are based on the theory that a community's health hinges most on those who have the money, time, resources and motivation to invest directly in the health of their community. The *fortunes* of society are best served by helping those who are in a position to contribute to the economic and political health of the neighborhood. Subsidizing low interest loans for buying or improving a home, helps those who are best positioned to help the neighborhood. It also helps those who will stay the longest in the neighborhood, hence stabilizing it. Goetz found that (1994b:325),

> Activists equate the interests of the homeowners and property owners with the interests of the whole neighborhood. The trick-down benefits produced by introduction or keeping middle class families in the neighborhood, they argue, justify strategies that enhance the exchange value of neighborhood land.

On the other hand, FOW see subsidizing the rent of those who contribute little to local businesses and organizations, is not only throwing government's money down the drain, but keeping it out of the hands of those who can best utilize it for the sake of all. Goetz also found that (1994b:332),

> Property owners … organized around the issue of particularized vs. universal benefits and successfully articulated the view that social services for the poor and the rehabilitation of low income rental housing harm the neighborhood, while the pursuit of development and homeownership is beneficial.

For those interested in growing the small numbers of homeowners in Whittier, the only realistic growth in homeownership was going to come in the form of condos, since almost no single family home had been built in Whittier in generations. And while Sophia had no love for these condos, she did appreciate that the brick facades of the condo's "they've built have at least fit into the neighborhood." However, not having been to Alliance meetings, what Sophia could not have known is that this brick (urban) aesthetic did not happen by chance, but was a direct result of the relentless pressure that the FOW in the Alliance at all times put on developers who came calling in the neighborhood.

In my interview her however, she spent much of our time making the case for national health care and talking about her support of women's rights. Growing up in

1940s small town Minnesota was not necessarily the most liberating for a woman, but the praise she had received from her father and the support of her mother gave her confidence. Now in her 60s, she still clearly relished telling me about how her father, a master craftsman, would brag to others about how his daughter was as a carpenter as anyone. Meanwhile her mother had pushed her to do well in school, which resulted in straight A's and even more self-confidence (but while she had thought of becoming a lawyer, she had not wanted to fight the battle of being a woman lawyer in 1960s Minnesota).

Conclusion

While doing pre-research in Whittier I had originally read Ed Goetz's article on the effects of subsidized housing on inner-city Minneapolis, but had forgotten its conclusions until rereading it many years later while writing the second draft this chapter. What I discovered was I had unwittingly redone part of his research and confirmed it.[lxxvi] Goetz found that neighborhood organizations in Minneapolis,

> Have little or no objection [in general] to subsidized housing as a social welfare policy … The opposition to subsidized housing, therefore, primarily rests upon its suitability as a community development policy. Is subsidized housing good for the neighborhoods in which it is placed?[lxxvii] (Goetz 1996:6).

What a wonderful way to put it – a debate over "community development policy," as opposed to a debate over who likes minorities more, who is more selfish, who is protecting the poor better, or who is or is not a NIMBY? While the debate in Whittier could not but be about race and class, pointing a lens on theories of neighborhood development shows the paradigms under which class conflict and racial inequality are understood and realized. Take for example one major paradigm in Whittier politics, that of neighborhood health and stability. In her ethnography of the highly polarized abortion clinic debate in Fargo, North Dakota, Faye Ginsburg (1989) argued that both the pro-choice and pro-life activists see their activism as "nurturing" woman and families. This paradigm of "nurturance" is what they share; it is in the details of exactly how to nurture that the two sides differ. Similarly, the FOW and D&D both saw their activism as

increasing the health and stability of Whittier; where they differ mainly is in their theories of how exactly an urban neighborhoods can reach health and stability.

However, simply adhering to different philosophies does not community polarization make; we all know that people can disagree fiercely but not relate fiercely. This chapter has shown how polarization was caused by the way that unique people, who held specific, divergent theories of neighborhood revitalization, and used particular strategies to attempt to achieve that vitality, actually did relate to each other. This will be developed further in the following chapters dealing with crime, diversity, privilege, and especially democracy.

But a social or ideological divide was not the only result acrimonious conflict. Since the conflicts were all about housing, and since those against more subsidized housing ultimately won the battle for control of the Whittier Alliance, this faction concretely altered the actual buildings in the neighborhood. This chapter also showed how this one faction totally changed: the neighborhood's anti-crime program, its paid staff many times over, the structure of most of Whittier's affordable housing programs, the ownership and success of all the lease hold co-ops, the role of the "slum-lord," and the meaning of "supportive" housing. These physical, metaphorical, political, and economic influences all affected the state of inequality in the neighborhood, as well as the relations between the marginalized and the mainstream.

Chapter 3 – "The Shooting Wasn't Random": Whittier is not Dangerous

1: Place is a Product of Talk, and is Productive of People's Lives

Living in the inner-city the mind grows hear but take little notice of the frequent sirens, however, the mind takes notice when the sirens stop right when they should be passing you by instead. One afternoon a flurry of squads descended in and around our building. A minute before this, undercover police had attempted to arrest a drug dealer at the local liquor store, but making it to his car he sped off, directly at the police officers. They got out of the way while firing a flurry of rounds, one of which struck him in the leg, and he made it as far as our alley when squads cornered him, officers repeatedly screaming – "GET THE FUCK OUT OF THE CAR, GET THE FUCK OUT OF THE CAR." He rolled out and onto the ground, lying against the tire of my parked Volkswagen. When my wife later told her suburban co-workers about the excitement, they told her that our family had to get out of this dangerous neighborhood before *we* got shot. My response to this was – "Who was the person who got shot – it was a drug dealer trying to run over cops. Do I or my kids deal drugs? Did I gun my car at the police? Was anyone shooting at me?"

My wife's co-workers were doing the work of constructing my neighborhood as not fit to be lived in, and the people who were living in it as either dangerous or the foolish victims of the dangerous. Hearing talk like this over the years irritated me, and made me want to prove that Whittier was not dangerous. After all, this was my neighborhood and my field of study, and I was not going to have, what my informants called "brain-dead suburbanites," telling me I had to live in the suburbs with them. My dissertation, which is my talk, would become the counter-weight to all their talk; the weight of my empirical findings would show them to be incorrect, and be a part of the larger intervention that shows two things – that poor, inner-city neighborhoods are perfectly livable places, and that we can be more mindful of the ways we socially construct these places.[lxxviii] I would attempt to un-produce their representation, by producing my own, more accurate and more responsible one.[lxxix]

An irony though, is that the Whittier activists who are the most prodigious cheerleaders for the neighborhood, professing their love of it, and organizing marketing campaigns to sell it to outsiders, at other times can be the worst offenders of essentializing Whittier as dangerous. In her study revolving around crime in neighborhoods of Sao Paulo, Brazil, Theresa Caldeira found that "the talk of crime feeds a circle in which fear is both dealt with and reproduced, and violence is both counteracted and magnified" (2000:19). By exaggerating crime, Whittier crime activists bring attention and resources to a problem they desperately want controlled, but their embellishment also risks reinforcing the popular image of Whittier as a place too dangerous to bother visiting, or too damaged to bother helping. At the same time, by linking theories of crime to theories about housing for the poor and disabled, they risk also saddling these groups, as well as the apartment buildings and group homes they live in, as too dangerous and damaged. Using Whittier activism, crime statistics, the experience of my informants, my personal experience, and background information about crimes, I will argue that despite all the talk about Whittier being crime-ridden, like almost any inner-city neighborhood, Whittier is actually quite safe almost everyone in it.

Up to this point in the dissertation I have more or less taken Whittier, as a place, for granted. I have carelessly thrown around the word "Whittier," as if it simply existed as an entity outside of history and talk (to know how diaphanous a thing Whittier is, simply ask a few people on the street what neighborhood they are in, and you will soon discover many are not even aware of its existence). "Whittier" is an abstraction, and as such means different things to different people, depending on what they are abstracting out of the world in order to arrive at their vision of Whittier. Whittier's borders and name were created long ago by the city, and while these simple aspects of its geography are fixed, everything else is up for grabs, including how dangerous people find it to be, and its actual brick and mortar, its demographics, its industry, and even its streets (while I lived there, 1st Ave was changed from one-way to two-way to calm traffic, and Cecil Newman Lane was wholly built anew ten years earlier). Anyone can easily observe the arbitrariness of how neighborhood borders (not to mention nations) are drawn, but what about the way in which the characteristics of a neighborhood are drawn out? Like talk

about ethnic groups cannot but produce stereotypes, talk about places also does. For better or worse, accurate or inaccurate, over the years Whittier has been painted as an interesting but somewhat dangerous place, with lots of tasty restaurants, spicy conflicts, two-story walk-up apartments, group homes, stone mansions, and crime. While I can personally attest that Whittier definitely does have many good restaurants, it does not deserve to be the butt of jokes about being hazardous.

It is through the lens of talk about crime that this chapter will examine how "Whittier" has been produced as a place, symbolically and materially. Talk about Whittier is so significant a thing, because talk of it does not simply represent (or misrepresent) it, talk of Whittier actually *creates* its conditions of living. "It is in such everyday exchanges that opinions are formed and perceptions shaped: that is, the talk of crime is not only expressive but productive" (Caldeira 2000:19). As we have seen in previous chapters, how people talk about supportive housing and the people who live in it, affects if, when and how supportive housing actually gets developed. Likewise, stories about drug dealers, prostitutes, "crack houses," and the dangers of Lake Street, have scared people away from Whittier for decades. Gossip about crime affects the crime in the neighborhood as well many other aspects of it. Take demography for example – over time rumors of crime will alter the composition of the neighborhood in terms of race, ethnicity, immigration status, class, and sexuality. Talk is cheap, but its effects profound. [lxxx]

That Whittier's dangerousness is exaggerated is not a particularly surprising finding, but begs the important question, why? This question posed a great challenge to me, because none of the obvious answers from either my informants or the literature rang true to me, but I could not identify a comprehensive alternate theory. The crime activists themselves would say that they talk so much about crime because there is so much of it and it poses a big risk for the overall health of the neighborhood, if not its individuals. Critics of the crime activists, affordable housing activists who see the crime activists as "get tough on crime" Republicans, accuse them of being racist and classists, who want to kick out of the neighborhood all the poor, in order to callously gentrify Whittier and increase their own property values (as we learned near the end of chapter one, the crime

activists would not disagree that they want gentrification, but instead want a gentrification that helps everyone).[lxxxi] My research could not corroborate either of these two theories, but I can say that the crime activists are sincere in their fear of crime hurting their bodies, investments, spirit, and community. Because of this I will not be making any definitive determinations about why people exaggerate crime and danger in Whittier; what I will do is give a highly contextualized, power-cognizant, class-infused examination of the ways that people do construct place, and the implications this holds for crime statistics, inequality, crime reduction, criminal prosecution, citizen patrols, property, and fear. I will focus less on the why (people exaggerate), and more on the, what happens when (they exaggerate).[lxxxii] Whittier crime fighters have an array of theories on crime and its effects, and regardless of the sophistication or validity of their theories, the activists are engaging in a "symbolic reordering" (Caldeira:34) of the space that is Whittier, of the people that inhabit it, and of society in general, and this chapter will show how the talk of crime is doing that work.

Anthropologist Arturo Escobar has been concerned that the issue of "place" in the social sciences has been marginalized, and he urges that place be made more central. Escobar and others (Dirlik 1998, 2000) find that social science's obsession with globalization has simplified local places as nothing but the quaint holders of tradition and "locals," while globalization is portrayed as the powerful, modern force where one finds today's capital, history, agency and space *becoming* (Escobar 2001:141). But I do not have to take my cue from Escobar, because the activists of Whittier spend so much time talking Whittier up as a trailblazing, distinctive, and central place. At one Alliance annual meeting the board chair made the claim that Whittier now "has become a destination." Their activism is itself nothing but a privileging of the importance of focusing on places. Unlike Escobar I am not especially interested in "place" as an area of theory exploration, but like him I am keen on representations of place that are anti-essentialist (but on this point I might be a bit at cross-purposes with many neighborhood activists whose goal is exactly to essentialize Whittier as the place, a place that is for great food and great community building). I am interested in neighborhood activism, and it so happens that

this occurs in places, and particularly colorfully in Whittier. As such, I hew more to anthropologist Clifford Geertz's assertion that anthropologists do not study villages, they study *in* villages. As such, my primary interest is not Whittier, but the relationship between neighborhood activism *in the name of* Whittier, and the reproduction of structures of inequality, through the process of multicultural community-building.[lxxxiii]

Another reason not to demote the idea of local places to a subordinate position, is because we are all placelings – "To live is to live locally, and to know is first of all to know the places one is in" (Casey 1996:18). I knew the neighborhood I was in, especially by walking it. My first daughter was a bit colicky, which means that she cried and fussed a great deal, and the best way to get her to stop crying was to take her for a walk, letting the motion calm her. When she was an infant I put on a lot of miles in the neighborhood with her strapped to my chest, facing inward to fall asleep, or outward to be captivated by the world. One day, while walking a sidewalk near a known drug corner, I passed a boarded up house just as a small group of tough-looking, black teens, all in identical long white t-shirts over jeans, came through the hole in the yard's fence, onto the sidewalk right next to me (this attire was at the time common for local gangs). Even though they were so close to me, they never in any way acknowledged my presence, nor I theirs; this was not only a matter of custom, etiquette if you may, but a matter of pride on their part. For while their futures may not be very bright, on that day they were important people with important things to do; they lived in another world than me. While we occupied the same sidewalk, they lived in a different universe than me and my baby (to them I was a ghost, and ghosts cannot be hurt). They were interested in customers, competitors, and cops. These gang members were the ones engaged in risky behavior, not me, as they had to be afraid of these three groups of people, any of which might cause them harm in various ways, but none of which had any reason to mess with me.

I knew the unique places I was in, and I knew it to be safe. This is unlike fearful suburbanites who did not know one block from the next in my area (nor I theirs); to them it was one undifferentiated slum. But my research was showing me how each of these distinctive places had come to be how it was – how Lydia Apartments had come to be, the political ideologies and strategies that produced the particular architectural designs of

the condominiums, the inequality that had produced the 2 and ½ story walkups and gothic mansions, and the drug dealing on particular corners. To ignore the significance of living in culturally unique places, no matter how seemingly inconsequential, is to risk misunderstanding everything (Yanagisako 2002).

Not ignoring the uniqueness of local places was doubly important for me, as I was researching among unique sets of people who spend so much time and energy on re-making their particularly unique little slice of world geography. To borrow from Orwell, we all equally live in a place, but some of us are more emplaced than others. Everyone of course is equally a part of the places they inhabit, but community activists are so much more *into* the neighborhood where they lay their head (or where they have invested in a business, property or something else of monetary value). For my purposes, it is the place-makers (emplacement-ers?) that I sought out. And I absolutely believe that the happiness of the activists I studied is much more greatly tied to how they feel about their neighborhood than it is to others. This is one reason they try so hard to rid their places of the crime they fear, and to re-make their communities in the image of their dream. Americans have recently been inundated with marketing ploys telling them that the best way to be is to live "hard" and "to the max," and neighborhood activists *live hard* within their neighborhood.

They feel neighborhood much more than most others. The Casey quote above about how living is to live locally, could just as easily be a mantra for neighborhood activists. Activists not only have much more knowledge about the place they live than the other 99% of their neighbors, but they experience their world intensely as a locality, to the extent that they are acting through and on it in such a way that it shapes them more than they shape it. Others may be much more concerned with their workplaces, bars, living rooms, online shopping sites, or favorite sitcoms sets, but those I studied spend their energies arranging not their living room or developing their gaming characters, but trying to arrange and develop their neighborhood.

This arranging of the physical and social relations of the neighborhood rubbed off on me. Eight years after starting my research, I was riding my bike home from the university one evening, after stopping to pick up some take out on Eat Street for my

family dinner. Riding along I noticed a guy peeing on the side of the house belonging to Dave Hoban. As I rode by I shouted out, "Please don't pee here." I was just going to keep on going, it being just a guy peeing, until he shouted back, "just keep riding bike-boy." I came to a halt right there on 25th street and called 911, giving them a description of him as he finished up. Continuing down the sidewalk but getting irritated by me on the phone, he came at me from between the parked cars. Feeling vulnerable holding a big bag of Middle Eastern food in one hand and a cell in the other while straddling my bike, I peddled off. Seeing my retreat he went back to the sidewalk, saying, "that's right, you run" (reflecting back on the incident the next day, I felt a bit cowardly, and thought to myself, maybe next time I will put my food down and get off the bike). I kept an eye on him though, and reported to 911 the apartment building he went into; the operator advised me to stay away from him (just as George Martin was wisely advised by the 911 operator to not engage Travon Martin). At the very next intersection I saw a squad car, and naively thinking they might have been called out on my case, I tried to wave her down. She waved back and kept on going. Immediately after however I successfully waved down another squad. "Are you here for the public urination call?" "No, for a building security alarm that was activated," and the officer advised me not to waste my time waiting for a squad to be dispatched for public urination.

I began to take a "stake" in the neighborhood, and had internalized my own ideas about how to stabilize it, and who was responsible for this stabilization. Reflecting in this chapter on my own motivations for intervening in crime, will help me theorize the meaning of property ownership, and the reproduction of class relationships. The chapter as a whole will show the construction of Whittier a dangerous place, using use my own experiences, talk of muggings by Whittier residents, the cliché of "Murderapolis" in the local news, the legal prosecution of "livability crimes" (such as public urination), the performance of the neighborhood citizen patrol, and the research on crime on television.

2: The Chances of Being Robbed in Whittier are Overblown

From talking to activists, attending Alliance meetings, going to block club meetings, and hearing what people across the metro say about Nicollet Avenue and Lake

Street, one would think that Whittier was a hotbed of death, debauchery, and robbery. Many Alliance committee meetings begin with a crime report, often from an officer of the 5th police precinct. They calmly give some dry, basic information on trends and a few specific crimes, but once the flood gates are opened by the officer, the gushing by the neighbors begins. Residents raise their hands and begin telling stories about crimes perpetrated upon them personally, or their neighbors, or people they have heard about. The only way to describe the tone is alarmist. To be fair, their alarmism is not simply a product of panic or irrationality, but is a story-telling tactic. Like anyone, they want to tell an exciting tale, they want to personally be listened to, taken seriously, and remembered. Also, they want action to be taken by others; I suspect that they figure that the gorier and more perilous their story the more likely the police will do something to stop more crimes in the future. Everyone wants law enforcement resources spent on them.

In casual conversations many people also tell anecdotes that impress upon others the gravity of the situation facing the people of Whittier. The anecdotes offered are only about a particular crime or two, but the nature of their appeal ultimately argues that these one or two crimes are part of a larger *trend* that has some despicable, single cause (a crime spree, if you will). 'Something must be done!' While out with the Whittier Walkers one night, one walker remarked how the area had gotten a lot worse lately; "make me want to move out of Minneapolis." I found this odd, as I lived a few blocks away there did not seem to be hardly any crime to me. I thought to myself, she does not need to move out of the city, but just over to my block. However, I doubted there was much more crime where she lived, and I also knew that crime had uniformly gone down for many years in the neighborhood.

The only crimes I have ever been the victim of in Whittier were when a few items were taken from my parked car. I sometimes forget to lock my car, and three times someone entered my car in the middle of the night, in all taking a watch, a twenty dollar bill I always keep in the glove box, a GPS, and an old half-working camera. Each time it was a bit annoying, more because I kicked myself for being so absent minded than the actual things lost, but it did not make me feel violated or unsafe. People were testing the door to my car, not the door to my home, and they only did it when no one was in the car,

or anywhere nearby (despite the media frenzy of "carjacking" articles in the early 1990s, an extremely low ratio of car thefts are attempted while someone is in the car).

So how dangerous is the neighborhood? Whittier has about 13,689 people[lxxxiv] and 186 people were robbed (mugged) in 2006; this is one robbery for every 74 residents (however, this does account for underreporting of crimes, as when someone gets robbed but does not report it to police). This implies that there is a 1.4% chance of any resident being robbed in 2006. However, this number fails to take into account many factors that significantly bring down the odds for the vast majority of Whittier-ites. The most obvious factor is that many, if not most, of the people robbed in Whittier do not live in Whittier. Also, most of the robberies are very late at night when most of the residents are almost always at home. Other factors that rule out most Whittier-ites are: the concentration of muggings around certain bars (or Lake Street itself), being drunk, or engaging in other behavior that many call "risky." As I will show throughout this chapter, the vast majority of Whittier residents had a much, much lower chance of being robbed in 2006 than 1.4%. While I will discuss many kinds of violent crimes, robbery will be my main focus since it seems to be the event that is most talked about by Whittier activists, and generally most feared by people walking down inner-city American streets. Also, for a few important reasons, police and criminologists often speak of robbery as a bellwether for general neighborhood safety. [lxxxv]

Robbery is also significant in that, unlike most crimes, victims come face to face with their offender, and an offender that they do not know. When mugged you face a complete stranger who may point a knife or gun directly at you, and while it is incredibly rare to be killed while robbed (nationally 6.6% of murders, 10,812 in 2000-2010 not including Florida, occur during robbery, so the percentage of robberies resulting in murder would be a tiny fraction of his ratio), victims do often get hit or pushed down. This means that not only is anyone on the street potentially at risk, but at risk for a very scary thing. If you have the misfortune of being faced with a gun or knife, your death is implied. However, while getting mugged is incredibly frightening, and while only once in one's life may be way too many for a lot of people, I will argue that Whittier is a very safe place overall.[lxxxvi]

In fact, anywhere in America is safe, even late at night on a New York City subway car. The is the very same subway system whose mention brings terror to the minds of Americans, complete with images of stabbings, gang graffiti, and roving gangs of urban youth out "wilding." In the 1980s "The subway became a symbol of New York City's inability to control crime … The MTA Chairman … [said] that he would not let his teenage sons ride the subway at night, and that even he was nervous riding the trains" (Feinman). Because New York City crime is such a powerful symbol in America, I will it to understand the ways that fear and place get conflated.

In 1961 there was one (reported) robbery for every 1,301 New York City residents, but the rate was rising quickly, and 1981 saw a robbery for every 66 residents (but by 2002 it had subsided to one in 297).[lxxxvii] One product of the talk/fear of New York City crime was the Guardian Angels, a high-octane, volunteer crime patrol dedicated to making the streets and subways of New York City safe "again." Fantastic claims by the media of rampant danger on the subways, and bold claims by the Guardian Angels on how they could arrest it, inspired criminologist Dennis Kenney to put these assertions to the test. His 1986 study found that despite the founder of the Angels terming the subways a "Muggers Express," there was only one robbery for every 213,000 subway trips, and a New Yorker would have to ride the subway 42 million times before he or she would have an even chance of being murdered. In fact, only one in 50,000 rides experienced any sort of victimization at all. And not only was subway crime not much of a danger back in the 1980s, in the years afterward incidents of violent crime fell from 17,947 in 1990 to only 2,707 in 2006, its lowest rate in 37 years (MTA.info 2013). If the subways are basically safe, then how dangerous could Whittier be, or any place not in a war zone?[lxxxviii]

3: Most victims are those taking risks

Raw Statistics overstate chances by Decontextualizing the crime

While the subway crime statistics are detailed enough to give us a good idea of one's chances of being a victim in the subway in 1986, most crime statistics are so general as to be almost meaningless to any individual concerned about their safety. Crime

statistics can be very good at tracking overall crime trends, and helping law enforcement do their job, but do little for the family wondering where to move. The following wisdom comes from a Minneapolis police department website:

> When choosing a new place to live, people are often concerned about safety. They will often want to know if a certain address is in a "safe" neighborhood and a "good place to live," based upon the level of crime in the neighborhood. There are problems with using crime data alone to judge if a certain address is a good place to live.

On the other hand, looking at performance averages for local public schools, can be very helpful for families picking their school zone, and can often judge both the quality of a school and the lifetime success of its students. The difference between crime and school numbers is that (as long as child is not going to go to a private school) there is a 100% chance that a child living in a poorly performing school district will be a long-term, day to day victim of that school, while there is very, very little chance of the child ever being a victim of even the slightest crime in the neighborhood (unless that child falls into a high risk category because of profound family difficulties, such as parental neglect or drug abuse). School happens five days a week, each day at the same time, crime happens to almost all of of us rarely. And while growing up in a high crime neighborhood can very much have a debilitating effect on many whose families lack the resources to overcome that menace, a child's school has a much more direct and pervasive impact. For example, the crime in Whittier will have almost no impact on my children, because their home, family, race, pre-school, medical care, social networks, and socio-economic class will insulate them from any nearby criminal aspect. Meanwhile, some kids living directly across the street from us in subsidized housing will have an opposite experience.[lxxxix]

This is one example of the way that most neighborhood crime statistics decontextualize all crimes, stripping them of background information vital to understanding the issue of danger. The problem with the basic statistic of 186 robberies for 13,689 residents is that it belies that most of these muggings happen to a narrow range of the population in a narrow range of situations. Most robberies occur after most people are in for the night, and disproportionately to people who are out very late and drunk, looking for drugs or prostitutes, or engaging in other illegal or risky activities (or all of

the above). Looking at the raw statistics of the frequency of crime shows that crime is very rare, but by looking further into the who, what, why, when and where of the actual crimes, will show that for my informants and me, crime is even much rarer than even these numbers imply.

Most victims are among the minority of people that are out late

Stories told and retold about crime in the neighborhood can make anyone feel unsafe, as if death is lurking around the corner for us all, but there are many large barriers between most of us and victimization. One is the division between day and night. For example, in 2011 in the downtown area of Washington DC, "nearly 60 percent of robberies occurred between midnight and 4 a.m." (Star Tribune 1/1/2012). As one activist told me, "I've always felt pretty safe in this neighborhood. But I don't do much walking around after dark (laughs)." I found that in Whittier the rates spike between 9pm and 3am. I would guess that most Whittier-ites spend little time outside their homes between the hours of 7pm and 6am, yet beyond this 11 hour window, only 55 of the 186 victims were robbed. So while for all times of the day, in 2006 there was one robbery for every 74 residents, between the hours of 6am and 7pm there was only one robbery for every 281 residents.

Table 2: 2006 Whittier Robberies

HOUR	CRIMES	VICTIMS
0:00	15	20
1:00	10	14
2:00	13	16
3:00	6	8
4:00	3	4
5:00	6	6
6:00	5	5
7:00	2	2
8:00	2	2
9:00	3	3
10:00	4	4
11:00	2	2
12:00	3	3
13:00	2	2
14:00	1	1
15:00	7	7
16:00	5	5
17:00	7	8
18:00	11	11
19:00	10	10
20:00	11	11
21:00	17	17
22:00	10	10
23:00	14	15
TOTAL	169	186

While time is a significant risk factor in neighborhood robberies, the age of victims does not seem to be a relevant factor. Looking at a list of all the robbery victims in 2006, there are more 24 year olds than any other age, and then the number of victims gradually goes down as age goes up.[xc] The percentage of robbery victims in each age group corresponds pretty well to the percentage of Whittier residents in each age group,[xci] however, this is partially just coincidence, since my brief investigation of some of the robbery police reports appear to show that only about half the victims even live in the

neighborhood. Also, if those looking to rob do not discriminate on the basis of age, then this age curve simply reflects the age of people walking on Whittier streets. [xcii]

Table 3: Age of Robbery Victims in Whittier in 2006 (using 2010 Census populations)

AGE GROUP	#	% OF VICTIMS	% OF WHITTIER RESIDENTS	% OF MPLS RESIDENTS
0-14	0	0	13.9	17.4
15-17	3	1.6129032	1.6	2.9
17-24	54	29.032258	19.2	15.2
25-34	68	36.55914	33.2	21
35-44	30	16.129032	13.7	13.7
45-54	21	11.290323	9.5	12.2
55-64	7	3.7634409	5.7	9.7
65-74	1	0.5376344	2.2	4.3
75-84	1	0.5376344	0.7	2.4
85 up	1	0.5376344	0.2	1.3
TOTAL	186	100	99.9	100.1

For someone shopping for a place to live, the Minneapolis Police website cautions – "comparing raw numbers of crimes in two areas to decide which is more safe is difficult. The same number of incidents can mean different things in different areas. Some neighborhoods, such as those near downtown, have a lot of people moving through them every day." For example, the number of people who venture into a city's downtown each day is much, much greater than the number of residents. If a resident of the central business district Minneapolis deduced their own probability of being a victim by simply looking at the basic neighborhood crime statistics, they would come away with an incredibly warped impression of what their future holds.

While the most common business type in the neighborhood is Asian restaurants and markets, only 3.9% of the residents of Whittier are Asian. But in spite of all the Asians coming to eat at Quang Restaurant or shop at Shuang Hur grocery, in 2006 only four Asians were mugged (2.2% of the total muggings). I suspect this is so low because many Asians visit Whittier largely during the day, for lunch especially, and park right in the lot of the business they are visiting (I have heard that in some Asian communities in

the metro there a fear of Whittier at night). Despite these low numbers for Asians, race appears to be even less of a victimization factor in robbery than age.[xciii]

Table 4: Race of 2006 Robbery Victims in Whittier (using 2010 Census)

RACE	VICTIMS	%	% OF WHITTIER POP	% OF MPLS POP
White	91	48.9	51.3	60.3
Black	44	23.7	19.8	18.3
Other (Latino)	42	22.6		
Latino			20	10.5
Asian	4	2.15	3.9	5.6
Indian	3	1.61	1.8	1.7
Unknown	2	1.08		
Other			0.2	0.3
2 or More			3	3.4
TOTAL	186	100	100	100.1

For me personally, it took a decade of living in Whittier before I experienced any antagonistic behavior on the streets (besides one minor incident while on a neighborhood walking patrol that I will relate later). One was the incident I related earlier about the man peeing on the side of a home. But only a few months earlier, I was walking home from a bar around ten at night when three black teens passed by me, and one made a very short lunge at me with an "UNN" sound (ironically, for a few years I worked a swing shift once or twice a week nearby, and often walked home at midnight, and never had any problems). The interaction lasted only a second, and was only meant to mess with me, and did make me jump, and then a little mad (mad because he tried to scare me, or mad because he did?).

Most victims are those involved in crime

Not only are crimes far and few in-between on the subway, Whittier or just about anywhere, but large numbers of victims are often concentrated within a small group of people who are involved in crime. The following kind of representation by police is common – "Detectives said that the shooting was not random and that police suspect it to

be drug-related" (Star Tribune, 8/4/2007). If the idea of urban gangs induces fear in you, think about whom gang members are killing; it is members of other gangs. They have no interest in the ninety five percent of the population that have no impact on their profit margins, why would they?

In his well-known ethnography among crack-dealers in Spanish Harlem, anthropologist Phillipe Bourgois pointed out that "most murders and beatings in any given inner-city neighborhood remain confined to a small subgroup of individuals who are directly involved in substance abuse and the underground economy" (1995:34). Relative to other American neighborhoods, 1980s Spanish Harlem was extremely violent (Bourgois heard gun shots so often he did not even notice them until transcribing his taped interviews), but this violence almost always was visited upon a narrow segment of people. Bourgois himself never felt unsafe during the many years he lived in Spanish Harlem, because even though he routinely hung out late at night with non-drug dealers, since he was not one himself he knew that no one had any reason to target him. The irony is that he was an upper-class, white man walking every day in a very poor black/Latino neighborhood long known for crime; American common sense would say that he would be targeted for muggings or beatings every day. But during the many years Bourgois lived in El Barrio, he was only a victim of a crime once, and only then because he happened to be in a convenience store at the time it was being held up.

When Minneapolis experienced a shocking 51 murders in just the first six months of 1995, the city was dubbed "Murderapolis." However, of those 51 murders, "drugs were a motive in nine of the cases; gang affiliations or rivalries were a factor in 13 (some cases overlapped)" (von Sternberg 1995). However, these numbers do not even come close to showing the reality of the intimate relationship between criminal behavior and getting murdered. A study of murders by the Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission in higher crime sectors in the mid-2000s,

> revealed that homicides … were: largely clustered in very specific places, such as in and around taverns, largely clustered around active offenders who were very well known to the criminal justice system, and often the outcome of an ongoing dispute between individuals and/or groups and involved respect, status, and retribution as motives.

And in Baltimore, Johnson (2007a) reports that,

> about 91% of murder victims this year [2007] had criminal records, up from 74% a decade ago, police reported. In many cases, says … Baltimore's interim police commissioner, victims' rap sheets provide critical links to potential suspects in botched drug deals or violent territorial disputes … Philadelphia also has seen the number of victims with criminal pasts inch up — to 75% this year from 71% in 2005 … 77% of homicide victims in the past two years had an average of nearly 12 arrests … In Newark, roughly 85% of victims killed in the first six months of this year had criminal records, on par with the percentage in 2005 but up from 81% last year … A professor at New York's John Jay College of Criminal Justice, says the rise in criminals killing criminals has escaped policymakers' attention. "The notion that these (murders) are random bolts of lightning, which is the commonly held image, is not the reality" … "It happens, but it doesn't happen often." The slaying of truly innocent victims is so unusual in Baltimore that the chief prosecutor says the city has become dangerously numb to the carnage. "If we don't put human faces on the victims, we will become desensitized," [the] State Attorney says.

A decade after Murderapolis, in the summer of 2005 after "a rash" (Chanen 2005) of highly publicized shooting deaths in Minneapolis, the mayor felt he needed to declare that "Minneapolis is a safe city for those not involved in high-risk lifestyles." [xciv] He was attempting to convince his electorate that he was keeping them safe, and trying to convince suburbanites to continue spending their money in Minneapolis' bars, but he received a rash of criticism for this statement. A regular columnist for the Minneapolis Star Tribune retold the horror stories of Minneapolis residents who had recently been shot at while minding their own business. In one story,

> Darius Housch is going into eighth grade. He volunteers for a children's program called Kaleidoscope, works for a community garden project in the Phillips neighborhood, mulching, watering and selling produce. He even testified at the Legislature last spring to help win funding for inner-city kids. Last Tuesday night, he and his little brother, Jermaine, watched a TV show on the Disney Channel … and then fell asleep in the living room of their home on the 2700 block of 14th Avenue S. … Sometime after 3 a.m., a gun battle occurred a block from where Darius and Jermaine were sleeping. Two bullets hit the house, one lodging above a door, the other hitting Darius, shattering his collar bone. Two inches to the left and his name would be mentioned with Tyesha Edwards', whose high-risk behavior when she was murdered in 2002 was doing her homework … In a city where you are safe unless you engage in high-risk activity, Darius Housch is afraid to sleep in his home.

The columnist (Coleman 2005) continued with stories about residents getting shot at while they were taking a walk, mowing the lawn, watching television, and driving; then mocked how incredibly “high risk” these activities are. The columnist retold these horror stories in the interest of lobbying the mayor to hire more police. However, his argument suffers from an error in logic.

He assumes anecdotal evidence is primary, as if a handful of examples of people getting shot at who were not engaged in criminal activity, suffices to prove that the mayor is not doing nearly enough to fight crime. But even if the city doubled its police force, would that make a difference? In the New York City subways, Kenney argued that since crime occurs so rarely and is so spaced out over large areas, that no matter how many Guardian Angels patrolled the subways, none would ever actually be present in a train car where a crime would have occurred (but 66% of those surveyed on the subways thought the Angels could reduce crime). In a study of Guardian Angels in San Diego, while the Angels saw themselves as crime fighters, in fact they performed “a helping role more often than they intervene in crime incidents. Of 672 patrol logs examined, only 6% indicated that Angels assisted citizens in a crime incident” (Pennell 1986:109). How many subway cars and avenues could Angels actually be on in order to inhibit more than a smattering of crimes, how many Minneapolis street corners could police waste time and resources standing around on, irrationally hoping that they would either prevent a robbery or be in a position to arrest an offender?

Crime seems so prevalent not because we encounter it walking down the street, but because we encounter it in all the talk we hear about it. If no one ever talked about crime, I would not know that it exists or be the least concerned about it. It would not be a reality for me, day to day or once a year. But the few instances of crime, from far and wide, get funneled down to our ears. For example, the Star Tribune (6/24/2001) reported that, “Crime was the major concern for David Boulware, a 27-year-old internal medicine and pediatrics doctor living in Whittier. “I'm not personally fearful, but with my work I see a lot of the end result of it," he said, referring to victims he deals with at work.” In David’s case, the results of crimes from across the metro area get funneled down to his hospital, making it seem to him like crime is rampant. But if David stood on the sidewalk

in front of his Whittier home every day for an hour before going to work, he would see no results of crime, and feel no fear of it. Likewise, Minneapolis could increase ten-fold the police and it would have little direct effect on crimes committed (but as I have mentioned, other policing strategies can and do have significant *indirect* effects). However, those who wish to exaggerate crime for the purposes of media entertainment or political attack will always be able to find some story about some innocent victim of crime that readers could identify with.

The Mayor was also criticized by some activists in the largely poor, black area of Northwest Minneapolis, where violence is many, many times higher than in the wealthy southwest neighborhood where the mayor lives. However, occasionally bystanders in North Minneapolis do get in the middle of criminal violence, and some wondered if the Mayor's words had the effect of saying that being black, or not being able to afford the Mayor's neighborhood, was a "high-risk behavior." While this critique certainly is valid on some levels, the mayor was accurate. Even residents of the highest crime neighborhood in Minneapolis stand an astronomical chance of being shot. This does not necessarily make the death of by-standers (or drug dealers) any less tragic, but it does help show where the true risk lies. [xcv]

The kinds of statistics about these neighborhoods that are important are not the ones showing the danger of being shot, but the everyday dangers that inequality provides. Deficiencies in adequate housing, employment, health, and education, are just a few of the conditions in neighborhoods branded as "ghettos," conditions that do much, much greater damage than actual bullets. And more media attention on statistics of inequality would hopefully lead to structural changes in the way that specific communities and geographies are treated, instead of leading to simple fear, blame, and inaction. It is the ubiquitous inequalities between peoples and places that should guide progressive policies, not rare stories about children getting killed. So if you are reading this and you are dealing drugs on the street and making threats against your competitors, then YOU are in a high risk category. However, one reason you entered this set is because, along with millions of others and through no fault of your own, you were born into a racialized, socio-economic category that was at high risk for such things as exposure to violence,

poor education, limited job opportunities, addiction, and generally being marginalized by society.

And while community activists bring to light the violence plaguing poor, black neighborhoods in the hope that it will spark the larger society to do something about it, they risk further stereotyping blacks as criminal, risk re-enforcing their neighborhood as truly a place to avoid, and risk hijacking the dialogue away from both the roots of the problem and the adverse effects on those families in that neighborhood. USA Today (Johnson 2007b) reported that,

> Baltimore's chief local prosecutor, doesn't want to create the false impression that violence affects only certain segments of the population and city. "If we only focus on one bad boy killing another bad boy, we never address the root causes of crime," … referring to rampant drug addiction and high school graduation rates that have hovered near 40%. A professor at New York's John Jay College of Criminal Justice, says, "*This* kind of violence just tears communities apart. The ripple effect is horrendous even for people not involved (in criminal activity)."

4: Victims usually know their victimizers (murder)

In 2012 a woman was sexually assaulted while walking through a park a few blocks from my home, and a police Sgt. in the news wanted the populace to know that "stranger assaults of this nature are rare." While it is uncommon for robbery victims to know the offender, the opposite is true for all other violent crimes, especially murder, and especially for women. "You are much more likely to be murdered by a partner, family member, friend or acquaintance. In 2004-5 [in the U.S.] only 2 percent of female and 25 percent of male victims were killed by a stranger. These percentages do not change very much over time" (Malini's Data Tracking Website).[xcvi] In my reading of news stories and police reports on murders in Whittier in the 21st century, the common thread that jumped out at me was people being stabbed in their home by people they knew well. There were three instances alone of someone stabbing to death their romantic partner, and in the apartment building directly across the alley from me, a man and a woman stabbed to death another man. The other domestic murder was a roommate affair in a house around the corner. A man renting a room in the tiny house had lent the owner seventy dollars for groceries, and getting mad about not being paid back promptly, had shot his landlord in a drunken rage.[xcvii] From 2002 through 2012 fifteen murders occurred on Whittier soil. Out

of the thirteen cases I was able to get information on (two case files had been completely restricted to anyone outside of Homicide), only one victim was killed by someone he or she had never met before, and this victim was a convicted cocaine dealer who tried to stop a man from stealing his car by jumping onto the hood and getting thrown off a block later.

To be fair, the victim's cocaine conviction in 1991 had no connection to the auto theft, anyone could have their car stolen. Given this, it might seem that I included that piece of information in order to paint the victim as a career criminal more deserved his car stolen or his life taken than one of my informants. When this victim was twenty one he worked as the "bodyguard" for his friend; the two of them were using a bogus non-profit as a front for cocaine sales. His friend had started a non-profit called Teens Against Drugs, to hire enterprising urban kids to sell cookies door-to-door, in order to keep them out of trouble. An undercover cop bought a box of one of their more expensive cookie varieties for $8,000. So while the car thief had no idea who the victim was (or did he?), the victim's experience as a bodyguard for a cocaine kingpin, and who knows what jobs after that, could not have not predisposed him to doing something as dangerous as jumping onto the hood of a stolen, moving vehicle. The victim had left his car running while he popped into Rudolph's BBQ (my favorite BBQ place, which I go to often with my kids), and a passerby had helped himself to his car (this happens often in the winter when people start their car in their driveway, then go back inside their house to let it warm up, but leaving a car running unattended in June on a major boulevard is unusual). The victim ended up holding onto the car as it pulled away and he was thrown off a block away. The car was found a mile further down Franklin, crashed, with the suspect "GOA" (gone on arrival). The point I want to make from all this is that not too many Whittier residents would make the choice to jump onto a moving car being driven by someone trying to get away quickly with it.

As in almost all murders, the vast majority of people would never find themselves in the situation that the murder victims did; most victims were engaging in aberrant, very risky behavior, often on a daily basis. And flat, un-contextualized statistics on murder do not reveal this. There was also a man shot dead late at night in what appeared to be the

result of a mugging, but it appears that this suspect (as well as the car thief) were never found, so both could possibly have been revenge or colleague crimes. In a 2005 double homicide from a botched robbery at a Whittier construction business, police described it as an inside job.

> “They just didn't walk into this business and decide to pull an armed robbery," Fossum said. "One of the four suspects knew about the cash, the large amount of cash. They didn't anticipate any resistance [from the victims]. If they did, they would've shot them from the start. Not many robbers do that. They just want to go in there, get the money and leave.

While the victim did not seem to be involved in any criminal activity, it was not the result the public’s greatest fear – a total stranger randomly picking your home or business to enter, rob you, and kill you, just for the sake of ending your life (in this case the police were able to locate the killers quickly because the get-away-driver had used his own car, which had a personalized license plate).

One evening I told my wife that while I was at a playground that day with the kids, we had watched some squad cars searching for someone among the crowds of teens leaving a high school. I thought it was just an interesting story, but my wife did not find it interesting at all, to her it was scary. “Why didn’t you leave the park when you saw the police,” she asked. “Because whoever they were searching for did not pose a threat to us,” I tried to explain. Police look for people every day all over the city, out of those many thousands of events, a shooting occurs almost never. The many kids leaving school were not concerned, why should I be? Both they and I judged the risk according to the context of the situation, the “feel” of it, as opposed to my wife who was not there to feel it. All she knew and needed to know was that there were police present. Deluded or not, I was confident about being safe because I felt like I know the context of danger, and this was not it (my argument did not convince her).

The fear of being killed in the inner-city can be understood by comparing it to the equally irrational paranoia over child kidnaping. Among other anti-kidnaping technologies there are GPS trackers that parents can place on their children (while my kids cannot be tracked by GPS, my cat and dog can, which makes sense because while I doubt anyone would kidnap my animals, they are much more likely to run off than my

kids, and much more likely to not get immediately returned). But the ones that will victimize your children will much, much likely be the ones they know, and in a home considered safe; children get victimized in homes by their care-givers, who are usually family members. The idea of child stealing even has a word, “kidnapping,” while the one thousand times more common “child abuse,” is just a descriptive term.

But as a kid I heard a rampant urban myth about razor blades, drugs and poisons being hidden in Halloween candy. The latter half of the 20th century America was littered with localized outbreaks of hysteria over tainted Halloween candy. In 1995 Ann Landers even warned readers, "In recent years, there have been reports of people with twisted minds putting razor blades and poison in taffy apples and Halloween candy. It is no longer safe to let your child eat treats that come from strangers". However, “ironically, in the only two known cases where children apparently did die from poisoned Halloween candy, the myth of the anonymous, sadistic stranger was used to cover up the real crime” (Glassner 1999:31). [xcviii] And verified cases of needles found in Halloween candy were mostly traced back to kids pranking their younger siblings or friends. In almost all cases – even the ones involving razor blades – almost no one was ever actually hurt (this however did not stop parents from chopping up any apples their kids brought home on Halloween night) (snopes.com).

The elderly are commonly thought to be easy victims of street thugs; “to hear the news media tell it, America’s youth make a sport of victimizing old folks” (Glassner 1999:46). In 1994 an elderly man in Baltimore shot and killed a thirteen year old boy who had vandalized his property; the man’s lawyer lamented that “Police don’t want to admit that elderly people in Baltimore can’t go out their door without fear” (47). Ironically, this is true, but only because the media and lawyers have scared the elderly with exaggerated reports of danger. Statistics however tell that the over sixty-five are sixteen times less likely to be crime victims than those under twenty-five (Glassner 1999:46). This only makes sense though, as the elderly typically spend much less time in riskier situations than the young – they stay in more, get in earlier, and I suspect, deal drugs less. The youths that the elderly should fear, are their children who sometimes bully them, or exploit them for their social security checks.[xcix]

A 2012 Star Tribune headline reads – "Stranger breaks into south Minneapolis home, sexually assaults woman." The gravity of this headline is that it explicitly invokes the specter of "the stranger." While at home you are at risk of domestic violence, or crimes such as date rape, but not stranger rape. And while this woman was tragically unlucky, the point is that the vast majority of Whittier residents do not ever find themselves in the contexts within which the vast majority of stranger crimes occur.

5: The Talk about Violence Induces a Culture of Terror

"Murderapolis" is The Culture of Terror, and Statistics Can Both Illuminate and Mislead

"Crime in Whittier" is a popular and powerful theme. Like the OJ Simpson news story, it has "legs," meaning it holds enough interest that it is able to stick around long enough to develop multiple storylines, each being honed and expanded by those who "speak" and hear them.[c] In Whittier, fear of crime is generated by talk of such things as "thugs," homeless shelters, soup kitchens, prostitutes, and supportive housing for the mentally ill and/or drug addicted. If the general statistics and particular details of crimes in Whittier that I provided earlier were about the immediate victims of crime, this section is about the indirect experience with crime that all Whittier-ites have. While the statistics show that each individual is very rarely, if ever, a victim (as defined by police reports), all of us live with a general fear of crime. In this sense, while crime itself is dispersed and infrequent, the effect of crime is ubiquitous and ambient. [ci]

While statistics can expose how non-dangerous ghettos actually are, they speak nothing about the huge toll that a few acts of violence can have on a whole community. People are heavily affected by the crime that may be occurring around them. After Bourgois explained that one's danger of crime in El Barrio is "objectively" low, he added however that "street culture's violence pervades daily life" (34). While happening infrequently on the street, crime and violence seemed to have a large effect upon how the rest of the residents acted. The "peaceful majority" of El Barrio silenced themselves and were scared into a sort of submission; most did little to stop the crime. Raw criminal statistics can both illuminate and neglect.

Bourgois theorizes that in ghettos such as El Barrio, there is so much *talk* about violence and crime, that this discourse creates the perception that violence is imminent for anyone daring to set foot within it (Bourgois 1995:34). This talk not only bullies the residents of ghettos such as El Barrio and victimizes them even more, but it leads those in the mainstream of society to perceive ghettos as nothing but very dangerous places. He refers to this fear and the debilitating effect it has on the community as a "culture of terror." [cii] To be clear, the culture of terror in El Barrio does not imply the neighborhood is dangerous, but simply that there is lots of talk about it being dangerous. Terror is not necessarily *physical* violence itself, but a feeling about violence. Discourse produces the terror that people feel. Whittier, New York City subways, and El Barrio are not dangerous, but constructing them as such has very real and negative implications for those populating those places.

In the middle of Minneapolis' worst ever year for murders, 1995, one reporter did try to contextualize what it meant to be in "Murderapolis" (von Sternberg, Star Tribune 1995).

> The city's 51 homicides in six months have been jarring and unprecedented … it would be a mistake to see them as a citywide epidemic. An analysis of the homicide statistics shows that the first half of 1995 was deadly in only a few of the city's neighborhoods and among only a few demographic slices of its population. The numbers show that most Minneapolis residents remain relatively safe from becoming homicide victims. "Random violence has a lot of people thinking that they're dead if they even go near the city," said … assistant director of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs. "Even though the random cases are a small part of things, that's what sticks in people's heads."

This section of this article provides a sober perspective.[ciii] However, like scary anecdotes, the micro-geographical perspective can also be used to erroneously paint a single street or a few block radius as unlivable.

> Plotting the homicides on a city map shows they were concentrated in a few neighborhoods on the north and south sides. "The reality is, if you don't drive West Broadway, Plymouth, Franklin or central Lake St. [Whittier], you're not going to see much that's all that terrifying," said the director of the Urban Studies Department at the University of Minnesota. "Those and a few other parts of the city are changing very dramatically. I had students walk every block of the city 15

> years ago for a historic-preservation project. I wouldn't do that now because some areas just aren't safe."

Actually, the reality is that you could spend a lifetime driving West Broadway and never see anything terrifying. I have been driving three of the boulevards mentioned above for over a decade and never, ever, seen anything scary on any of them. The worst thing I see are cars pulled over by squads (however, my wife was very spooked one day at Franklin and Nicollet near our home while driving with our kids, when she saw unmarked cop cars screech to a halt on the sidewalk, and plain-clothes cops jump out, guns drawn, in order to apprehend a fugitive). However, everyone who read the article above, or talked about it to their friends, might now be frightened of all those streets mentioned in the article.

Like me, the Star Tribune journalist calculated statistics on the chances of being a murder victim in Whittier, but unlike me, he did not seem aware that comparing the number of victims with neighborhood population is a meaningless statistic, since many if not most all the victims will be from outside the neighborhood (von Sternberg).

> No murders occurred in the first six months of 1995 in the census tracts where about three-quarters of Minneapolis residents live. In 28 tracts, where one homicide occurred, the likelihood of becoming a homicide victim was between 1 in 2,100 and 1 in 3,800 in the first six months. But in the 11 census tracts where more than one homicide occurred, the likelihood jumps to as much as 1 in 600. A 24-block swath of the Whittier neighborhood is one such area. Three of the city's homicides this year happened in the area bound by Nicollet and Aldrich Aves. S., and W. 25th and 28th St. The chance that one of the 3,900 residents living in that census tract would be killed during the first six months of the year was 1 in 700. That their neighborhood can be a lethal place comes as no surprise to residents. Some say it has worsened in recent years; others say that it hasn't and that it's a citywide affliction.[civ]

And while it seems that in Whittier most of the victims did in fact live here, in the most recent murder both the victim and suspect were from the northern suburbs, even though the man was shot a block from my home. He was killed because the man driving the car he was in, made the risky decision to step on the gas and flee when a man with a gun attempted to steal the car.

The Star Tribune reporter’s odds make little sense since most of the people murdered in America are either perpetrating a crime at the time of death, or making a

living off crime in general. The problem with “Murderapolis” is that it implies that anyone who lived in Minneapolis was at risk of being murdered, when actually the risk was mostly for those involved in violent crime in Minneapolis. Murderapolis did exist, but instead of it being a *geographic* community, it was an *occupational* one (but the highest risk category of all is being a television character; your chances of being murdered are about 1,000 times greater than in reality [Beckett 2003:82]).

Whittier murders actually were unusual in that most of them were not among career criminals, but domestic partners. But this risk factor has nothing to do with the neighborhood; you could be living in the smallest, richest, most peaceful, and most heavily gated community in the world, and still be stabbed to death with your own chef’s knife by your spouse. On the news one night my wife and I heard about a graduate student at the neighborhood’s prestigious art academy, who was found dead from “multiple causes” at her home a few blocks from us (her mother in-law had to unfortunately hear about the murder from a reporter calling her for a quote [Chanen 2007a]). At first there was little information given beyond a police captain telling the press that "at this point, it's an isolated incident. There is no reason that citizens in the area have cause for worry." Hearing this I knew the suspect must be her husband, but as time progressed and there were no arrests, and I kept discussing the many possible theories with others in the neighborhood, I found myself seduced into all kinds of conspiracies, forgetting about the husband. At the neighborhood’s Fair Oaks Park I attended a candle light memorial for her. I took no notes, but will never forget her husband standing up front and saying, “everyday it gets worse.” Our representative from the Minnesota House of Representatives also spoke, and I found it odd at the time that the only thing she said was that our community still had a lot of work to do to stop domestic violence.

Two months later when the husband was arrested, it came as a bit of a shock, but I was naïve to have considered anything else. The husband was a clean cut, white, advertising manager at Target corporate headquarters downtown, and when his wife was discovered dead he was in New York City on a business trip. It turns out that he had stabbed her fifteen times in the chest and neck, and then took a hammer to her head.

"According to the charges, during the attack, he chased her around their south Minneapolis apartment screaming, "Do you love me?"" (Chanen 2007b). While the husband told the police that he told her goodbye when he caught the cab for the airport, actually the police found microscopic amounts of her blood on his watch, clothes, and suitcase, all of which he had thoroughly scrubbed clean. And while he confessed days after being charged, he never gave a reason for the attack. After the death he even stayed at the home of his wife's best friend, who found it odd at the time that the wife's "grave was placed among … [her] family members, with no room to be joined later by her husband … And he didn't attend the ceremony" (Chanen 2007b). Her family and state congressperson must have been given a bit clearer message by the police than the rest of us, but if those of us in the neighborhood had played the odds instead of letting our imaginations and fears play with us, we should have also suspected the husband instead of drug addled buglers.

The Culture of Terror in Whittier leads to race and class segregation

"App That Would Guide Users Away From High-Crime Areas Proves Controversial," read a 2012 CBS news headline on a new phone app. One effect of the culture of terror is segregation, whether it is your phone or your friends warning you about a neighborhood. When Bourgois, an upper-class white man, told his friends and relatives that his family was moving to El Barrio, they reacted with horror, lecturing him that it is far too dangerous a place to live. As a child I grew up on a steady diet of talk about Harlem; it was the poster child for danger (as Cabrini Green became the poster child for the failure of public housing, and for social disorder in general). I remember hearing that if a white person tries to walk through Harlem they will surely be killed (years later I did walk through Harlem and survive to write this today. After reading Bourgois I also walked through Spanish Harlem, but got bored, and soon jumped back on the subway for a more exciting locale). It is talk like this that keeps whites and the middle class out of predominantly minority areas, helping to further concentrate minorities (Bourgois:33) within areas that suffer from problems such as a lack of supermarkets and home financing. In the Minneapolis pantheon of symbols of the danger, "Lake Street" sits

high (Whittier's southern border). When I teach anthropology classes I always do an exercise where I ask the students – 1) What is a bad area they have heard of, 2) what are the stories you've heard about it, and 3) what have you heard will happen if you go there? Without fail, some students will always pick my very own Lake Street, complete with its particular horrors. It was talk like this about the dangers of places that Bourgois felt "polices segregation" in America today. Discourses glorifying the danger of inner-city neighborhoods maintain the racial, ethnic, and class boundaries set up centuries ago, and modified according to the changing times. [cv]

White suburban friends routinely remark to my wife or I that it is not quite right for us to raise a family in Whittier (although it seems to be OK to live there while young and exploring the world). A faculty member in my own anthropology department even remarked once – "I don't know how you do it." However, in the seven years I lived there with a child, there have been no violent crimes against children in Whittier, outside of domestic incidents.[cvi] An avid member of the defunct Pillsbury Avenue citizen patrol once told me,

> You don't find upper income people in the neighborhood. Would you raise a kid on Pills Ave. I don't want my kids shot, and there was too much gun violence. If you were upper middle class would any parent choose to raise a kid in the neighborhood? I rented to people the neighborhood. Renters were twenty-five to thirty years old [without kids], they had jobs downtown, and that was my tenant base.

A related effect of the culture of terror is the ceding of public space to the violent minority; and this has implications way beyond residents being scared to be on the street. Most of the residents of El Barrio had nothing to do with drugs or any crimes, but they had in some respects lost control of the streets to the violent minority who set the tone for the whole neighborhood (Bourgois:10). Unfortunately, although this public space is what the rest of us see, hear about, and on which our impressions are formed. Not seen are the peaceful majority inside their homes, doing regular home stuff (who usually hide from and hate the criminals). They are forgotten, and the neighborhood becomes synonymous with the public criminals; it is reduced to that. If the only thing the mainstream society knows of a particular neighborhood is crime, because some have observed drug dealers,

and all have heard it talked about on the news, then it stands to reason that society will be less than enthusiastic about investing resources in that neighborhood and the people in it. If everyone in El Barrio, or everyone in the southeast quadrant of Whittier, is thought of as an ignorant nobody, a scumbag, a criminal or a welfare cheat, then why feel anyone feel sympathy towards them?

Bourgois felt that terror images are used to paint the residents of ghettos as unworthy of help, and to justify society's unwillingness to confront segregation and economic marginalization (34). Residents of ghettos suffer a double victimization, at the hands of a few people who at time terrorize them by enacting violence near their home (most of whom do not live in the neighborhood), and at the hands of the larger society that cuts them off from society's resources. The successful portrayal of a place as dangerous, can be more damaging to people than being physically assaulted, as it damages everyone in that neighborhood, and over the long term. Disinvestment in inner-cities by governments and corporations comes in the form of lack of: municipal utilities, grocery stores, decent housing, home loans, and living wage jobs. And this leads directly to such afflictions as poverty, poor-health, depression, crime, drug abuse, and eviction.

Whittier Crime Fighters Internalize Violence by Defining Themselves Against It

According to one Whittier activist,

> When you categorized people's fear, it was palpable, people didn't feel safe to walk at night, didn't feel safe shopping on Nicollet. There was no sense of community, no sense of community. It was a threatening place to be. I have my own biases; I have vivid memories of crawling across my floor while bullets flew overhead. It culminated in Lydia [House being opened for the disabled homeless].

When Bourgois tried to convince the drug dealers in El Barrio that their neighborhood was "objectively" not nearly as dangerous as outsiders made it out to be, one responded with a tirade about the ultra-violence happening every day on their streets (37). Bourgois theorized that the dealers had unfortunately "internalized the institutional violence" of El Barrio. By this he meant that they had accepted the violence as part and parcel of *themselves*, coming from their innately violent nature and innately violent neighborhood, instead of seeing it as a direct result of having been marginalized by the institutions of

mainstream society. Instead of blaming forces beyond their neighborhood, they blamed the violence on their nature, laziness, neighborhood, and Puerto-Rican-ness (like they blamed themselves wholly for their failures to succeed in school, the formal economy, or any of the institutions of mainstream society). Further internalizing violence, they self-destructively even used their own failure as a badge of pride, glorifying and playing the violence up rather than logically examining and working against it. Bourgois detailed how these failures and violence had been visited upon them as a result of such external factors as institutional racism, de-industrialization, educational negligence, political neglect, and national economic trends. And yet his informants failed to see how these structural forces impacted their lives (Bourgois 1995). However, I will show how my informants, by constructing themselves as crime *fighters* of crime as opposed to *doers*, exhibited the opposite of internalizing violence. But at the same time they also paid more attention to individualistic explanations of failure, to the poor themselves instead of structural forces that made the poor, and to types building instead of types of political-economies. In other words, they often ignored the more complex and larger-scale factors negatively impacting the neighborhood.

Unlike Bourgois' drug dealer informants, my crime-fighting informants defined themselves against the violence around them; they saw themselves as the main bulwark against the tide of drug dealing. It was those people that many of my informants called the "thugs" or "bad guys," that they viewed as creating violence, while these activists constructed themselves as the opposite. Interestingly though, like Bourgois' informants, many of mine also exaggerated the violence in their neighborhood, even glorifying it by luridly retelling crime stories. Impressing on me how much more crime he had lived through than I, one activists bragged, "You think there's crime now? Pffff." Crime activists prided themselves on having bravely chosen to live every day in a dangerous neighborhood, but it was they themselves that every day constructed it as dangerous. In a way, like Bourgois' drug dealers, the crime-fighters were also internalizing the violence around them, by using this violence to construct their own identity.

When Teresa Caldeira (2000) interviewed residents of the old neighborhoods of San Paulo, Brazil, they used stereotypes about the poor that lived in the rooming houses

around them and in the neighboring slums (favelas), in order to blame these "outsiders" for the decay of their neighborhood and city. "One of the main activities of this symbolic labor is to differentiate the image of the criminal as far as possible from oneself" (77). This labor was so pressing, because these criminal types were living so near to their homes, and "proximity leads to the refinement of separations in order to sustain a perception of difference" (74). But while the thrust of the differentiation that Caldeira's informants made was in the brutal way it defined these others, my informants' thrust was in defining themselves as righteously positive. The Sao Paulo residents used the hurt they had suffered from being powerless *victims* of inevitable crime, to paint the very poor as different from themselves, while Whittier activists are much more creative and empowered, creatively using their own heroic actions to paint themselves as the polar opposite of criminals or those dependent on government subsidy.

The mechanism through which they maintained their pride was their talk about their conscious *choice* to live in a dangerous neighborhood. Among the activists most concerned with crime, I sensed that they defined themselves as different from the poor, immigrant, disabled, or renters in Whittier, in that those groups ended up in Whittier simply because of they found convenient housing here. It was not that necessarily crime activists felt themselves vastly superior to them, but the difference was something much more meaningful; while the activists had chosen Whittier, the others had no choice but to live in the inner-city. Activists often implied that while they had the means to live almost anywhere in the Twin Cities, they had made the conscientious decision to join this "struggling" neighborhood. The implication is that the majority of residents lived in Whittier because this is where they simply ended up (they did not have the means, know-how, or connections to buy a home in the suburbs).[cvii] Perhaps they saw themselves as successful middle-class whites who normally would otherwise live in outlying areas (this is their station in life), but instead they choose to live in the inner-city among those who needed their help to stabilize a neighborhood on the brink. In this sense the activists are martyrs who sacrifice by coming to Whittier to be models for others, to work to turn the neighborhood around, and shore up the neighborhood economy.

They do not do this simply out of duty though; they truly enjoy living in an urban environment, and Whittier in particular, and define it against the "wasteland" of the suburbs. They would not have it any other way; they just wish the "thugs" would go away. Seeing themselves as having consciously made the gallant choice to live amongst the violence, some activists I interviewed also identify themselves against those who are "too afraid," too bland, or too unsophisticated to live in the city, people who have instead banished themselves to the cocoon of the suburbs. As a way to increase neighborhood solidarity and hope in the face of talk about crime, at a Whittier Alliance annual meeting the board chair told this story,

> When my husband and I moved here fifteen years ago, people said, you're moving *there*, in Whittier. One friend said that they wouldn't ever visit. Now they wonder how we can afford the [mansion] house we live in. I wish I had a tape of what they said before so I could play it back for them. The neighborhood is better because of what my husband and I did.

This discourse of choice of neighborhood, reminded me of Mary Waters' study of how white Americans go about choosing their ethnic identities, in which Waters highlights how in 20th century America, whites have been privileged to have a great amount of *choice* on the what, when, and where of ethnic identity.[cviii] Whereas ethnicity is flexible, voluntary and pleasurable for whites, for non-whites it is almost always fixed and undeniable, and can be hurtful (Waters 1990:156). This asymmetry however, is often not recognized by many whites who enjoy the privilege of being able to choose an ethnicity that lacks "costs" (Waters 1990:157, Gallagher 2003:154). One informant felt that identifying as a Pole was a tool against racial strife because it allowed him to be on the same footing as a black militant, he the two could identify with each other. What the Pole did not understand is that being black is not the flip side of being Polish; while Poles may have been discriminated against in the past, being light skinned has given them the ability to become white. Similarly, for or those who lack such things as a car, auto insurance, gas money, or the skin color that allows one to live among those with similar heritage no matter almost where you move to, there are barriers to living beyond the urban core (the irony is for the inner-city poor, they are paying a higher rent for a comparable home than they would if they did live in the suburbs, or more accurately, for

the same rent they would have a larger and nicer apartment in a better run building). Regardless of how much more opportunity and privilege the homeowners of Whittier have, they have selected to reside in a neighborhood that everyone tells them is dangerous, and many of them have made the decision to use this aura of danger to craft an aspect of their own identities.

By highlighting how much choice they have in the matter, they are actually going about the process of identifying themselves as privileged. Privilege is a funny thing, people both want and do not want to be marked with it. One does not want to bring attention to being privileged in the sense of having gotten what one has only because of one's parents, class, connections, or race; but one does want to be seen as special, having more options than others, and belonging to a certain class of people who are more moral. Many Whittier activists internalize the (talk of) violence in a way that glorifies them as being privileged. If they had no choice in where they lived, then living in Whittier would not be *special*, it would not be indicative of whom they are. As some wear Irish symbols to highlight their special Irish ancestry, and others get Dragon/phoenix/eagle/fairy/tiger/scorpion tattoos to broadcast their distinctiveness, some in Whittier wear their choice of neighborhood on their sleeve. It defines them against the violence of the thugs, the poverty/chaos of the majority of their neighbors, the lack of commitment to community of the renters, the inanity of suburbanites, and more recently, the trendiness of professional whites moving into lofts in the newly revitalized warehouse district.

Just as the cuisine, convenience and sophistication of the city are part of the activists, so too is the violence. They not only meditate and pontificate upon it frequently, it appears to be part of their reason for being (or at least reason for locating). Defining oneself negatively against something, like crime, does not mean one is totally empty of that something; one is filled with it, just in a different way. For what would the activists be without the violence? Just another white couple going out for Vietnamese pho soup? This would make them like the "braindead" suburbanites who drive long distances to experience Eat Street. Or would it make them just another wealthier than average professional enjoying the fruits of an agreeable neighborhood, like the Minneapolis

neighborhoods further southwest of them? To be fair, they would much rather have the crime gone, but that does not change that they exploit it while it is there. They gain a sense of being special. For example, when a man of means was running for the board of the Alliance, part of his argument for being qualified for the job, was because "my partner and I had a choice of where to live and we choose here."

All of us look for admired features that we can attach to ourselves, and within the crime and community obsessed era we are currently in, the feature of crime works well. Without a culture of terror, who could market themselves as brave? The suburbanites, urbanities, police, criminals, and politicians, all unconsciously collude to advance the representations of the inner-city as dangerous, each group using that discourse to define themselves in their own particularly positive way (suburbanites as law abiding enough to create peacefully communities and smart enough to choose them over the filth, bad schools, and dangerous streets of the city; police as dedicated enough to fight urban crime; activists as valiant and honorable enough to face it without getting paid; and politicians as upstanding enough to rail against it).

And by placing criminality purely within those individuals who did the crimes (and remember, crimes are socially defined), the crime-fighters also were not perceiving many forces beyond the neighborhood as helping to cause crime, such as economic downturns or institutional racism. They did blame one institution beyond the neighborhood though, city hall. They were bitter toward downtown for having long ago up-zoned Whittier into a high density neighborhood, for continually allowing the non-profits to "inundate" Whittier with the disabled and drug addicted, and for generally never having cared enough about Whittier. And they blamed the non-profit industry for exploiting a defense-less neighborhood.

While Caldeira's study of crime in San Paolo Brazil was somewhat similar to mine, when reading her book I could not help but make notations in the margins about how my finding were different from hers. Many of her informants would tell and repeat detailed stories of their own repeated and traumatizing victimization from home burglary, muggings, and general state of their neighborhood, at the hands of the poorer, more colored migrants from the north of Brazil (27). But crucially, while her informants

seemed miserably diminished by the attacks, the degradation of their beloved city, and the devastation of their assets by inflation and misguided government policies, my informants were empowered. They may be irritated to angry, or displeased to disgusted, but not disheartened or resigned; they had seen what they took to be the re-birth of their neighborhood, and at their own hands. They feared crime, but it did not stop them from walking around the neighborhood or gardening out front. My informants' stories of victimization were not born of trauma, but were brief and often funny, and overshadowed by how they had beaten back crime. This difference is both a function of place and people; Sao Paulo of the 1980s is not 21st century Whittier (unlike San Paulo, Minneapolis police do not routinely kill or torture suspects), and my informants were activists instead of simply residents. Caldeira (28) found that,

> Usually an experience of violent crime is followed by reactions like enclosing the home, moving, restricting children's activities, hiring private guards, not going out at night, and avoiding certain areas of town, all actions that reinforce a feeling of loss and restriction as well as the perception of a chaotic existence in a dangerous place.

These are exactly the reactions that Whittier activists are trying to thwart.

I began this section with a quote by a man talking about bullets flying over his head, and there being no sense of community. And yet, this man was part of a highly organized citizen patrol on his street. They had equipment, schedules, and a tight sense of mission among a group of people who lived very close to one another. This man was one of the most flagrant exaggerators of crime, fear and general crises in the neighborhood, and yet he himself was a walking example of community itself.

While Bourgois' ethnography of drug dealers in East Harlem specifically cautioned the reader that the vast majority of residents had nothing to do with crime, the book itself was a few hundred pages of stories of violence, crime, failure, and people in the neighborhood blaming themselves for being "fucked up." Somewhat irritated by this representation, anthropologist Arlene Davila did her own ethnography of East Harlem, but among the activists there instead. The impression a reader gets from this same place is fantastically different depending on which book is read. One wonders what my study

would read like if I had chosen to study the drug dealers or the treatment center residents or Whittier instead.

6: Class relations have shaped Westerners fear of crime

Creating the idea of the "The Dangerous Classes"

Like I had taken "Whittier" as a place for granted before this chapter, in this chapter so far I taken "crime" itself for granted. I have assumed that what is a crime, who is a perpetrator, who is a victim, and what their relationship is, is a cut and dried thing. It is easy to be caught in the trap of thinking one knows exactly what a mugging is, as if the people who do it have no side to themselves except their mugger-ness, and that "muggers" need to simply be stopped, period. However, even if I was so blind as not to see the problem with this overly simple view, my informants would have disabused me of it. They had a variety of views on what is criminal, and I will recount some of the times when they pointed out the ways that justice is manufactured in the interest of certain groups of people. In that spirit, I will use a few social science theories on the social construction of crime, in order to expand on my informants own theories. I have already problematized the notion that neighborhoods can be dangerous, and the notion that basic crime statistics can predict risk of being a victim of crime; now, by bringing into conversation my informants theories on crime, with academic theories on the social construction of crime, and also with my own interpretations on anti-crime activism in Whittier, I will problematize the notion of crime itself.[cix]

Since it is the criminologists that have been given the privilege to speak authoritatively on crimes, they have shaped not only how we see crime but what we even consider to be a crime. For example, take labor strikes. The upper-classes of 19th century France successfully redefined all strikes as criminal, and therefore deserving of punishment by the state. However, contrast this to contemporary France where the ruling socialist party had enacted laws that protect strikes; or compare it to various laws in post-Regan America that have brought limits on the right to strike. Like politicians can arbitrarily define something as criminal or not criminal, criminology can as well. So even though I drew a distinction between what is crime and what is criminology, the two

phenomena cannot be unlinked. Our current notions of crime have always, already been preconfigured by the field of criminology.

Take the positivist school of criminology, which used statistics about society in general, to try to explain individual crimes and criminals.[cx] Once criminal statistics were brought into conversation with the determining of punishments, statistics began to be done under the banner of trying to understand "the apparent failure to normalize the conduct of the "dangerous classes"" in early 19th century Paris, who were growing, becoming more disruptive, and more recidivistic (Beirne 1993:98).[cxi] Regardless of the motives of criminology, critical examinations have found that its various forms over the past few centuries have had the effect of criminalizing "the powerless groups, above all their "deviant" male youth" (Schneider & Schneider 2008: 352). This means that those who had been most marginalized in society, became *scientifically* conflated with crime itself (and by implication the privileged were defined as not-criminal). This seemed to be the trend until at least the anti-colonial and critical criminologies of the 1960s and 1970s, when researchers began to turn the tables. This new perspective studied how the wealthy, through their over-hyped fear of the lower-classes and colonial subjects, constructed these marginalized groups as the crucial holders of criminal intent (Schneider & Schneider 353). And one of the ways that certain activities have been defined as criminal, or at least highly noxious, is by designating them as deleterious to the quality of life of *the community*. These particular set of activities are known as "livability crimes;" they are seen as the bane of many a well-meaning community activist, but also have been criticized as bourgeois griping, and an oppressive apparatus with which to keep wealth and property within the custody of the wealthy and propertied. The implication is that Westerners' overblown fear of crime has been constructed over history by the upper-classes as a way to breed fear of the lower classes, for the purpose of maintaining their socio-economic superiority.

Using their understanding of crime, activists narrate the story of both individual lives and whole neighborhoods

In the section on the talk of violence, with the help of in-depth statistics and details from crime report, and also using robbery and murder, I put crimes into the context of different sorts of personal relationships that exist between victim and offender. In this section, with the help the criminological theories I have just analyzed, and now using public urination and panhandling as examples, I put crimes into the context of race and class relations. I have moved from the level of *individuals* (and pairs), to that of the larger *society*.

While such actions as staring, eating with your hands, not tipping, and cursing[cxii] are controlled informally by people anywhere, the set of actions called "livability crimes" are deemed so obnoxious as to be formally controlled by the state. In Minneapolis, "The City Attorney's Office is committed to aggressive prosecution of livability crime:

Aggressive Solicitation	Loiter with an Open Bottle
Consuming in Public	Lurking
Damage to Property by graffiti	Minor Consumption
Disorderly Conduct	Noise Violations
Drug Paraphernalia in a Public Place	Prostitution
Littering	Public Urination
Loitering	Trespass "

Most livability crimes such as these have no direct victims (beyond those who personally witness them *and* become offended by them), but they are considered to rise to the level of victimizing everyone in the community. This is because they are theorized as significantly decreasing the quality of the life of everyone in the area. It is the neighborhood that is the victim; they are crimes against geography, offending everything in and around the space of their enactment.

Restorative Justice Community Action is a crime prevention non-profit in Minneapolis that takes livability crimes out of the traditional court system, and places

offenders in face-to-face "community conferences" with residents of the neighborhood in which they offended. Among other things, this allows community members to intimately describe to offenders how they have been personally wounded. I attended one of these conferences at the Whittier School, involving a man who had gotten locked out of the apartment building at which he had been at a party, and had been caught urinating outside the building. He faced a trio of very serious, but nurturing, Whittier residents. These volunteers were not there to get revenge, they wanted rehabilitation, and they wanted it now. They acted out a paternalistic role towards the offender, and he obliged them by playing the penitent young learner. They told him that he had his whole life in front of him, and he did not have to waste it on stuff like this. An elderly lady took the lead, and informed him that "this incident is not going to ruin your life." "Never feel ashamed … be the man that you are, don't be afraid of other people." "You have so much you will do for the community." "The Indian community needs you, they need you." The volunteers were given the opportunity to feel superior, to feel respected, and feel like they were helping to make a difference in the life of one wayward, Indian youth. Meanwhile, the offender got to get out of his legal trouble by only having to listen to some lectures.

I do not know if this man "turned his life around," or how the volunteers felt later on about their intervention. What I do know is that in that school room, that night, the volunteers, Restorative Justice and the young man, narrated a life. Using only the tidbits of information he gave the room (he peed in public while drunk, was unemployed, wanted a profession, and appeared Native), they constructed a plot of his past, present and future. The woman hoped he would do something with his life, and asked him to "do good things … I want to see you … on the street … in three years and I can shake your hand and you can say I did it." I wondered, how does she know he has not already done good things, but later realized that it does not matter. For her story to work coherently and with most effect, he must be at the bottom at this moment. Then he can climb up from there, getting a job, perhaps going to college, and be a contributing member of his city and tribe. With help from mentors like this woman, he will become a useful citizen of the world, and it all started with a single act of urination. By creating a story of his life, the volunteers get to insert themselves into it as heroes. This one small story about him

becomes part of the larger story they are narrating of their own lives; a story of how as neighborhood activists they are improving the world.

Ultimately, this conversation that night was not about this young man and his fate, but the fate of the neighborhood.[cxiii] "It's not you [I don't like] it's the act of urination" one volunteer told the young man. It is the act, and not the urine itself, that is being theorized to have hurt Whittier. The next day none of the hundreds of people walking by that bush would know there was urine there, and if no one had seen him pee, as I suspect he would have preferred, then no one and nothing would have been hurt (except maybe the bush). However, to one of the volunteers, by publically disrespecting the neighborhood he lowered its reputation.

> People think that Minneapolis is a dangerous place, they visit but don't want to live here. But I wouldn't trade it for the world, I don't want to live where every face looks the same … People from outside Minneapolis see it and think that this is what Minneapolis is all about, just like on the news … There's so much crime around here … [But] there's been change, there's been wonderful change, our neighborhood is coming out of its darkness, it's all good for everyone.

By way of a single act of emptying a bladder, the story of Whittier is being narrated, and it is similar to the story told of the young man. Both have had problems, but also strengths, both lack employment, money and resources, but have a bright future ahead. Native Americans and Whittier belong to a stigmatized group that has been derided as dirty, poor, and dangerous. However, both reputations are seen by social justice activists today as unfounded. Whittier activists talk about the early 1990s as a dark time when crime was at its highest, but through their hard work, they see Whittier as having made great progress and having a great future.

One of the volunteers that night speculated that,

> If you're on 50th and France in Edina [a boutique shopping corner in a wealthy suburb] you wouldn't have done that … But I understand, my husband did it in college … [However], you can't help the economy grow and attract business [when you pee on the street]; if I saw you urinating I wouldn't want to stop and buy things there. It disrespects the neighborhood.

Livability crimes purport to define which activities are against the interest of a place; place in sense of a space that has been given meaning, status, and life by the people who inhabit it.

Land Use Rights: who owns the land and what they consider appropriate use of it is contingent on history and the type of economy

To state the obvious –what conditions one considers livable is relative, and while some are able to live with public urination, others are not. When talking about "livability crimes" it is always important to ask, whose livability? At around the same time as the restorative justice meeting, I was at a Whittier Neighbors meeting where someone had disdainfully remarked that Restorative Justice is "looking for injured parties for panhandling, and I'm not injured by that. They criminalize panhandlers and public urination" (it appears that the Whittier Neighbors and the Minneapolis police have at least one thing in common, they place little significance on public urination). This activist also found it ridiculous when the destitute ask for money, it has become a matter for the legal system. He had little problem living in a neighborhood where people occasionally urinated on the street or asked for money on it. I found his critique of the criminalization of livability crimes, to be reminiscent of an argument made by historian E.P. Thompson about the criminalization of hunting in eighteenth century England. Under the Black Act of 1723, armed peasants sneaking about at night in the king's forests, in order to hunt deer, take fish, maim cattle, or attack gamekeepers, would now be served with capital punishment (and without benefit of clergy before-hand) (Thompson 1977:271). Thompson theorized that the new severity of this punishment was because the expansion of capitalism was changing the ways that aristocrats were viewing their property (259).

As the propertied classes in England began to understand their land as a form of *capital* for the purpose of profit, instead of just for leisure, they wanted to make the resources of their land available only to them and not lower class scavengers (Thompson 1977). This led them to hew toward ideologies of the private-ness of property, and beliefs in the harsh punish-ability of intrusions of another's property. Previously however, aristocrats had viewed their forests as things for sport and beauty, not profit. And while the aristocrats had always openly hunted foxes for pleasure, the peasants historically had always (but not quite so openly) hunted deer for food and trade. As long as the peasants had not degraded a forest or its population of animals, this had not been a serious a matter

(Thompson 1977). Over two centuries later at the Whittier Neighbor meeting, another attendee had also agreed with the silliness of criminalizing urination – "I'm more interested in root problems than punishing persons. [They should] do restorative justice for real crimes like vandalism and thievery."[cxiv] These two activists felt like many property owners in Whittier had been making a big deal about livability crimes, as part of a larger project to increase their own property values. Like English peasants fishing in forest streams were seen as suppressing the profits that the "owners" could make from the same stream, public urinators were seen as suppressing the price of buildings.

Thompson however wondered if he was being trivial by studying "the rights and wrongs of law of a few men in 1723," instead of major historical events that involved "whole legions carried off by plague or death" (259).[cxv] Citing this passage by Thompson, fellow historian Colin Sumner wondered why criminologists have spent so much energy documenting the injustices perpetrated against citizens of Western nations, while largely ignoring the much more massive injustices by those Western powers against millions of colonial subjects (1982:9). Similarly, the Whittier Neighbor members that night were wondering why their city's justice system was spending resources on what they considered to be such trivial transgressions as public urination, when there were much more destructive crimes afoot.

Many of the members of the Neighbors that I spoke to theorized that the people who lobby for greater punishment for livability crimes, and who attend restorative justice conferences in order to lambast panhandlers and prostitutes, are primarily trying to increase the value of their homes and businesses. Expanding on the critique of the Whittier Neighbors members, I could not help but wonder if the restorative justice volunteers were disciplining the Native American man not because of some inherently immoral act he did, but because he was messing with the interests of the landed class. While the man's peeing was narrated that night as a purely destructive act, it could also be seen as a courageous act of resistance by a member of an oppressed ethnic group, against a society that was structured in such a way as to handicap his life, and a society that had lead him to his impoverished condition. Perhaps he was constructively resisting the inequalities of society. Using the perspective of Critical Criminology, I could argue

that this restorative justice meeting was simply society disciplining him in order to impede any future resistance on his part. What if the propertied lobby for more surveillance and management of certain obnoxious, public activities, not for the purpose of protecting everyone and for building community, but to protect their investments and build their businesses? And what if these three (home-owning) volunteers that night fell right in line with this bourgeois scheme, by exhorting him to stop partying late at night and instead get a job becoming an upstanding member of society?

But I find this explanation of their behavior to be overly simplistic. I found that the crime activists of the Alliance believe that the less these crimes against livability are controlled, the more they will multiply, leading to general disorder. Disorder opens the door for increasing crimes of all types, and to neglect of neighborhood by everyone, including landlords, the police precinct, and city hall. Disorder brings disaster, a "falling back" to not just the dark days of a decade ago, but potential total collapse of the neighborhood. With the resulting bad reputation Whittier would quickly garner, businesses would fail, home values plummet, and rents fall. While this would definitely negatively impact the home and business owners in the neighborhood, they truly believe it would hurt everyone in the neighborhood and beyond, including the destitute. So while I do not discount the theory that the Alliance activists are motivated mainly by profit, I my research cannot substantiate it.

Many of the most ardent activists in the neighborhood are people who plan on living the rest of their lives here regardless of crime levels and property values; they truly love this neighborhood. Any financial gain they may receive from the sale of their home would not be realized for a very long time. In the meantime however, they have to spend every day on Whittier's streets and in its businesses. This is their life, and they do not want to spend their life in fear of crime, walking past drug dealers and prostitutes, actually getting mugged, having their shopping boulevard be full of boarded up storefronts, picking up the garbage of others, getting yelled at by the mentally ill, and having their friends and family ask them why they live in such a dump.

And while some of the most prolific activists in Whittier only own property or business in the neighborhood and do not live there, the financial gain they may have

made by their activism cannot possibly explain the vast amount of time and energy they have spent on the neighborhood as a whole. While critics of the Alliance have made a lot of hay about the board having a great number of landlords who do not live in the neighborhood, only a tiny minority of landlords in Whittier are involved at all in any neighborhood projects. Aren't all of them concerned about the property values and rents? Profit alone cannot explain the activism of those few landlords. In my observation of and interviews with activists, I almost never heard anyone mention their fears for the values of their property.[cxvi]

My own home ownership and activism presses the point. While prostitutes now are far and few in between, they were still extent when my wife and I bought our condo on Blaisdell Ave in 2005. While taking the garbage out to the dumpster in the parking lot one night, I noticed an unfamiliar car next to the dumpster. The passenger seat was tilted all the way back and a man was rhythmically moving up and down on someone under him. Throwing my trash away, I called out, "Are you new to the building, I haven't seen your car here before." I have never seen anyone get their pants on so fast. He then jumped into the driver's seat, raced away, and I called 911. I told some neighbors about this, and they said that often after men pick up prostitutes, they then drive to some dark, quiet parking lot nearby. Perhaps this prostitute had been directing her customers to this lot regularly, since the building had been half empty for a year while the apartments were converted to classy condos (sometimes we found used condoms in the parking lot).

But why did I call them out on their actions, why did I care? At no point that evening did it ever occur to me that their intercourse was affecting the value of my condo. But yet I still felt protective of "my" land; I owned a one-twelfth share of that meager parking lot. I have to ask myself, if I was renting would I still have said that. I think I probably would have, because by then I had spent two years hanging out with neighborhood activists who preach being proactive about taking responsibility for the neighborhood; I had been activated as an activist. And I think responsibility is the key concept here, because while I may have mostly done it for "the neighborhood," it was also partly because I they were on "my property." It was not that I consciously thought about the value of my condo (which the Great Recession would shortly decimate

anyway), but that I had grown up in a society that placed a high value on taking responsibility for one's property. And it was this, combined with having internalized the value of protecting one's neighborhood, that drove me to impulsively call out to a couple of strangers who mainstream society considers to be volatile (who were engaged in doing something that normally we are taught never to draw attention to).

Ignoring the problem of the sexual exploitation of women, or that the act was illegal (assuming is was prostitution and not a loving, married couple overcome with passion for each other after a romantic dinner at Evergreen Chinese), for the few minutes they were *planning* to be there, were they inhibiting my livability? Were they doing something to my property that degraded it? And was I personally impelled by a good society to stop them? I am reminded of the saying – 'the problems you have are the problems you create.' I only did something about these two lovebirds because I was somehow offended by it. But if instead I had seen them as posing no wrong to me or my community, then it makes my life that much more livable. I can go about my evening at home and my domestic duties of taking out the garbage, free of any conflicts, or any anxieties about people doing something erotic next to my dumpster.

At the time of the Black Act, "every decade more intrusions upon property were defined as capital matters … Property and the privileged status of the propertied were assuming, every year, a greater weight in the scales of justice, until justice itself was seen as no more than the outworks and defenses of property."[cxvii] This ideology had grown to such an extent that if the poachers had not provided the propertied the excuse to pass the draconian Black Act, Thompson believes the upper classes would have used some other "emergency" in order to legitimize a Black Act-like legislation, in order to tighten their monopoly over land (197). And whichever logical sounding argument is put forward to legitimize these laws, is merely an ideological smokescreen. In 18th century Britain it was the divine right of aristocracy that allowed for a few to convince all others that huge swaths of land were under the authority of aristocrats, and it was the "theft" of it by "criminal gangs" that convinced society to kill those who trespassed. In contemporary Minneapolis, it is the individual right to own a particular *address*, along with talk of

about the "abuse" of private land by hooligans which convinces society to send to restorative justice those who pee or beg in public.[cxviii]

The Whigs however were not the royal family itself, they were outsiders in a way, and another project in their quest for capitalistic profit, was pushing for more parliamentary control over the crown, a move that would give them the power to change rules that at the time reserved certain types of business only for the monarchy itself. Successful, Whigs used their expanded powers to open up markets to the bourgeois, making markets "freer." The strategy of the "homeowners" in Whittier was to control the board of the Whittier Alliance, in order to influence the creation of more housing that was at the discretion of the market, and less housing dominated by non-profits and government pricing (such as Section 8). These activists are not Whigs, panhandlers are not peasant tree-fellers, and capitalism in 18th century England is not contemporary American capitalism; however, both Whigs and the homeowners are much wealthier than the average citizen of their community, both are trying to reduce the central government's use of land, and both are freeing up businesses to trade property at what the market would "naturally" bear. What does not change over time is that the relationship between property owners and non-property owners, structures the law (and vice-versa). For example, those who lack bathrooms end up relieving themselves on property owned by someone or some entity, as there is no such thing as un-owned land. Without a home, office, or table at a restaurant, one's options for going to the bathroom are limited, but never peeing is not an option.

This historical exploration of English use-rights shows us that because privilege and social hierarchy has (arbitrarily) bestowed "ownership" of a piece of land upon one person, this does not mean society cannot and does not bestow mixed rights to that land. Who has the right to do what on what land is just as socially constructed as our gender or race. There was a time in England when even the very oppressed peasants had limited rights to huge tracts of private forests and the bounty they held (in fact, under this semi-feudal system, these lower-classes had more rights to the land of the rich than in democratic America), because the legal system regulating the relationship between ownership and use, had not yet been made capitalistic. The members of the Whittier

Neighbors theorized that homeowners were turning panhandling and public urination into crimes for the purpose of increasing their property values, and Thompson found that "the rights and claims of the poor … very often were simply redefined as crimes: poaching, word-theft, trespass" (241). What peasants had historically understood as their right, was made into something corrupt and punishable. Under restorative justice, people who are seen to bring harm the community are brought before residents for scolding and rehabilitation.

In a mass email I received from our mayor, he made the very reasonable sounding assertion that

> This week the Police Chief and I launched the Safe City Initiative, a detailed, coordinated, city-wide strategy that targets repeat criminals, responds to juvenile offenders, and dramatically increases police presence and visibility. As a result of this Initiative, residents and visitors will see more police and talk to more police in Minneapolis. Our officers will be focused on reducing unacceptable and threatening street behavior because our streets belong to us, not criminals.

But if those called "criminals" are simply those who happen to make a living doing something that a simple majority of the thirteen city council members have defined as illegal, then the streets are being taken away from people who, without these particular laws, would not be criminals. If marijuana and meth amphetamine are de-criminalized, will the streets belong to drug dealers as well as "us" (and if public urination was not illegal, would people pee wherever they want?).

If I had never been to that restorative justice meeting, I might not have said anything to the man I saw peeing on the side of Dave Hoban's home. However, I now fashioned myself a community builder and crime fighter, and among many in my community at least, that means protecting everyone's property from disrespect. This begs the question, have I become an unwitting tool of the marginalization of those "dangerous classes" of people who lack enough "class" to know not to pee on the side of architecturally classic, stone townhomes? And what of the crime-fighters I had learned from, were they trying to profit at the expense of the unwashed? I did not find that maintaining inequality between the propertied and un-propertied was the project of those who had been accused of being gentrifiers, but this does not mean that their activism was not helping *a* project to maintain inequality. This is key; it may not have been their goal,

but it can still be a side-effect (or even a fortuitous consequence or subconscious aspiration). While they are not card carrying classists, their activism can still contain strains of classist ideology and of class-creating ventures. However, the crime activists' projects also contained many strains of anti-classist ideology and ventures, from their support for homeless shelters in wealthy neighborhoods, to their protest of the "warehousing" of the poor in theirs, to the advocacy in the name of a poor, inner-city neighborhood. In fact, their claim was that the non-profit builders and supporters of shelters in Whittier were the real perpetuators of inequality, by "over-concentrating" the poor amongst themselves and profiting off of them.

7: Citizen Patrol: since crime was so infrequent and dispersed, the Whittier Walkers could not directly affect it

Research on Citizen Crime Patrols is mostly poor, but suggest patrols have little effect on crime

The Kenney research I have already discussed on The Guardian Angels in the subways was one of the few studies on citizen patrols that had comprehensive, genuine, scientific data. In 1976, putting together a comprehensive and academically sound report for the Rand Corporation, R.K. Yin wrote, "There have been few evaluations of patrol activities, and those that exist are poorly designed" (113).[cxix] Sadly, this is still largely true forty seven years later; the most recent report I found on patrols, in 2010, came to the same conclusion as I, "An initial examination of these studies showed that no robust outcome evaluations have previously been carried out on the effectiveness of volunteer street patrols" (113). [cxx] In this section I will give a bit of an overview on citizen patrols in general, on relevant information on what the research says about patrols, and on the Whittier Walkers specifically; I will also analyze this information for its relevancy for patrols in Whittier and for community activism in Whittier.

Citizen patrols come in many forms. Most are small, temporary, semi-formal volunteer groups of residents who walk parts of their neighborhoods in small groups. However, there have been patrols for a variety of spaces, from apartment buildings, to parks, to shopping districts, to college campuses, to single blocks. And "in Chicago and

other cities, parents in inner-city neighborhoods have formed convoys to walk their children safely through the gauntlet of drug sellers who line the streets near schools" (Buerger 2011:102)/ Rosenbaum found that (1988:347).

> Strategies to "organize" the community and to provide a collective response to crime have become the cornerstone of community crime prevention activities in recent years. Neighborhood protection behaviors, as defined here, are collective attempts to prevent crime and disorder in a geographically defined residential area, such as a block or neighborhood

It is easy to get patrols mixed up with "neighborhood watch," which can be something as meager as a sign that claims that the people in this neighborhood call the police (a simple thing, but given the history in America between police and African-American neighborhoods, calling 911 can be a big step). Patrols may be one part of a larger Watch campaign, or may not. There was only one patrol during the many years I did research in the neighborhood, and it was an outgrowth of the Whittier Alliance, and organized solely but the Alliance's community organizer (the Whittier Neighbors were not focused on crime, being more tuned into social justice causes). And crucially, nationally most patrols carry no weapons and do not ever attempt to interact in any direct way with people they suspect are engaging in crime.

Figure 1: Examples of stock Neighborhood Watch Signs

Some patrols have actually been trained by police, given material resources like flashlights or even cars, and/or formally sanctioned by police, but most just have little more than the unceremonious appreciation of the local cops, or if they are unlucky, they may receive their unceremonious condescension. Even without official connections to law enforcement, often there are one or two local officers that patrollers happen to have a closer relationship with, and can call on for a bit of information or support. And if the

cops are unlucky, citizens patrol the cops themselves. “During the 1980s, the American Indian Movement used citizen patrols to shadow the police patrolling native American neighborhoods, with the intent to capture any police brutality on videotape” (Buerger 2011:102). Mostly however there is only one-way communication, with patrollers calling 911, sometimes giving local officers small reports, but with officers themselves divulging little information. Formal police involvement would put the police in an uncomfortable position of having to be responsible for and liable for whatever foolishness a bunch of over-eager crime-fighters might get themselves into (and generally cops do not like to get too chummy with civilians, it comes with too many annoyances and pitfalls). And while there are some more official patrols that have uniforms, drive squad-like cars, and are the “eyes and ears” of a police force, most, and the kinds I will analyze here, are much more basic and informal.

The great difficulty involved in actually nailing down the effects of citizen patrols has severely limited research on them. “Although there is some evidence that neighborhood patrols perform valuable services, the broad and ambiguously defined areas they protect make any assessment of their impact difficult” (Yin 1976:49). Pennell (1985) had suspected that citizen patrols were neither widespread nor taken seriously enough for academics to take much notice of – “The uniqueness of the citizen patrol group and its sometimes marginal status with respect to law enforcement are possibly the reason that it is not well represented in the academic literature.” Geography and status have conspired to leave research on citizen patrols in the “to do” box of science. Yin expressed the problem impeccably – “Any social program initiated under circumstances beyond the control of an evaluator is not amenable to evaluation using rigorous, controlled pre- and post-treatment evaluation designs. A feasible evaluation design would be a “matched” post treatment design.” This means that in order for science to legitimately be able to say how a patrol actually affected a neighborhood, researchers would have to be in control of the patrol in order to be able to collect comprehensive data before the patrol ever starts, and after. It also means that the results of this experiment would need to be compared with a control neighborhood (one that did not have a patrol) that had very similar characteristics. For example, if both the experimental neighborhood

and control one both experienced a 40% reduction in crime, it would indicate that the patrol actually had no effect, because the reduction in crime came from another factor effecting all neighborhoods of this sort (such as an economic boom, a major new police program, or dramatic drop in the quality or availability of meth).

And when motivated researchers have made serious attempts at evaluating the efficacy of citizen patrols, they still come away frustrated. In Kenney's subways study, he found that even though he did get accurate pre and post numbers, the low nature of these numbers conspired to make them meaningless (486).

> While this is certainly a pleasant finding for those who must use the subways, it posed great problems for the study. Because incidents of crime in the projects areas occurred so sporadically, the desired reduction which could be associated with intensive patrols could only be accomplished if the Angles virtually eliminated all crime from the experimental areas. Not only did this not occur, but only one area – a control group – achieved any reduction. Although it is clearly not an appositive finding for the Angels, I believe that the relative absence of crimes prevents us from reaching any definitive conclusions about the organization's impact. It does, however, suggest other complications for the organization.

In the late 1980s Pennell (1989) again took up the challenge, attempted an authentic pre and post study with the Angels in a number of cities, but admitted still not being able to control for significant outside factors.

> While a drop in the number of violent crimes reported was observed from pre- to post-introduction of the Guardian Angels patrols in an experimental area, an even greater drop was found in the control area where no Guardian Angels patrols occurred. Similarly, even though a significantly greater drop in the number of property crimes occurred in the experimental area than in the control area, the presence of other factors prevented any firm conclusions being drawn about the extent to which this could be attributed to the Guardian Angels patrols.

Given these almost insurmountable research problems, the findings out there can be a bit vague. I suspect that the few researchers tackling this topic would have liked to have seen positive results from these programs, and the literature generally does cleave this direction. Results generally sound good but not quite conclusive – "Although no statistics were given regarding the actual reduction of crime in Midwood, the authors contend the program was successful" (Pennell 1985:29). And in Columbus Ohio, "results led the researchers to believe this type of program did in fact reduce crime and increase

residential security" (Pennell 1985). Or – "In an evaluation of a well-organized paid citizen foot patrol in Columbus, Ohio, Edward Latessa and Harry Allen *reported* that the targeted areas experienced a reduction in crime" (Schuck:80). This is the old cause and effect problem, chicken or egg, because while crime may have decreased, what would constitute authentic evidence that it was because of the patrol? Also, common sense would dictate that any change in crime was because of a multiplicity of much more powerful factors like gentrification and global economic surges. [cxxi] Many of the evaluative statements to be found in the literature are not qualitative data from researchers, but are attributed to interested local parties – "After the first three years of activity, it was reported [by the county I assume] that problems were minimal and the posse [patrols] were an effective means of assistance to the Maricopa County Sheriff's Department" (Pennell 1985). And in a program in some New York City neighborhoods, "The district attorney has credited a 30% decrease in crime to these activities" (Pennell 1985). I feel that the self-reported statistics on this topic cannot be relied upon. [cxxii]

From what I can tell, all in all, the research gives very little support to the theory that citizen patrols reduce crime. For all we know, it could be a wash, but like previous researchers, I suspect that there are positive indirect effects, such as this – "Nonetheless, citizen patrols can be a positive force in the community. For those citizens who are invested in the neighborhood and care about maintaining its quality of life, patrols offer a vehicle for deterring crime and establishing social control over contested physical space" (Schuck 2006). [cxxiii] However, the challenge of "objective" research in this area leaves more room for us "subjective" kind of researchers. "Research that is nonevaluative and focuses on qualitative evidence would be likely to add more to an understanding of such patrols than could a formal national evaluation" (Yin:1977). What the literature does provide, is a decent amount of helpful findings and thoughtful analysis on the success of citizen patrols as *organizations*. It gives the "ins and outs" of why they last or do not, what motivates volunteers to patrol and do so sustainably, and the who, what, why, and where's of patrolling. Even without hard crime statistics pre, during, and post-Whittier Walkers, my long-term, wide-reaching, and intimate field-work does have something important to say about its success as a community crime-reducing strategy. And while I

cannot gauge the actual effectiveness of the Whittier Walkers on reducing crime, it does have a lot to say about their effectiveness as an organization, as a community building strategy, as a technology of the discursive construction of crime and neighborhood, and as a determinant of neighborhood inequality.

The Whittier Walkers did not see much crime

Walking the blocks of Whittier as a member of a neighborhood citizen crime patrol gave me a profound sense of the place in which I lived and studied. I enjoyed doing it more than any other fieldwork activity, so much so that I did it more than any other single activity, and did it more than anyone else in Whittier. Although, it could have been more exciting. I can never once remember even witnessing a crime, let alone seeing any kind of real action. For a while, sometimes we would see a drug dealer on the corner of 28th and Pillsbury, but then even they disappeared. Perhaps a few prostitutes were sighted, but the street prostitutes in the area are barely distinguishable from many other people. "Fighting crime" brings images of heroism if not superheroes (in fact today there are many citizen patrollers in various American cities who dress up like superheroes looking to prevent street crimes). But those who volunteered for the Walkers had no illusions about kicking ass and becoming heroes, but they very much did desire to affect crime and believed that they were. I have my doubts however; for all the activity of the Whittier Walkers, since there was little crime activity, little crime could have directly been affected.

I can only remember one time when we influenced a possible crime. One summer evening we observed a man hanging out on the corner of 28th and Pleasant, and there was little doubt in any of our minds that he was dealing. We immediately employed the primary patrol strategy that we had been taught – counter loitering. The three of us white adults in our purple walker uniforms (we used to give the community organizer a hard time for her choice of cheap purple pennies, when the neighborhood to our north had nice yellow vests), stood on the other side of 28th from him, and watched this black youth. Our intervention was more like passive glaring than watching though. If this man was going to loiter with criminal intent in our neighborhood, we were going to loiter with him.

When I started research in the neighborhood there were no patrols, but soon afterward in the Fall of 2003, the exceptionally experienced Steven's Square Block Patrol, the ones with the nice vests, invited Whittier-ites to come to one of their trainings in their office. "Managed entirely by volunteers, Block Patrol has been continuously active since 1991, and is the longest-running and most successful citizens' walking patrol in Minneapolis." I attended the first two, and only formal, trainings of the Whittier Walkers, each led by one of the two most experienced patrollers of Steven's Square. The first training was done by a long-time resident of Stevens Square who had been the strong and determined thread that had held together the Block Patrol. On a general website that documents quotes (thinkexist.com) she is quoted with

> Criminals usually don't want to be observed, so they leave when they spot us. We do what we call 'counter-loitering' — stationing ourselves at a corner where people are loitering. It doesn't take long until we need to find a more interesting place to be. Chronic offenders have come to realize that we know them, and that we're bad for their business.

Who would stop and buy drugs on a corner where a group of middle-aged people in purple pennies are watching them? She gave us a no nonsense outlook of the patrol, while it was not dangerous, neither was she trying to give a sales job on how great and safe it was; there is no point in heavily recruiting people who do not feel comfortable with the idea in the first place.

The strategy is brilliant in its simplicity. It does not even require talking to those engaging in any possible crime, let alone forcing them to stop. People who are the object of counter-loitering only move on because they choose to, and where they go once they leave the neighborhood, or what they do next, is not the concern. As the guidelines explain, "Walkers are the extra eyes and ears for the police, not law enforcement personnel. Patrols must observe and report illegal and suspicious activity and unsafe situations. Confrontation is strictly prohibited and intervention is discouraged." Counter-loitering is also designed to ensure the safety of patrollers; they keep a buffer distance between themselves and anyone thought to be engaging in crime (Whittier Walkers Guidelines, January 2005)..

> Patrols must observe activities from a safe distance, which is determined by all the members of a patrol team. If the team is approaching an unsafe or uncomfortable

> situation, in the opinion of any team member, this member must signal the others, in a quick and clear fashion, to stop. The other team members will respect the fellow team member's wishes.

This was called this the chicken rule – the first to chicken out of any situation obliges all to chicken out.[cxxiv] On the night that we counter-loitered the young drug dealer, it was just a few of us regular walkers, so no one felt uncomfortable with the situation. After the organizer called 911 to report the dealer, he became inpatient with our presence, and started walking west. Staying across the street, we followed. He seemed to be looking for a new corner to hang out, but wherever he went we leisurely pursued. After going to a corner store, he seemed to stop looking back over his shoulder to see if we were still there, and made off at a brisker pace for parts unknown. Our first trainer told us that "research shows that patrols are respected and don't get harassed because people recognize the patrols as belonging there instead of the police; patrols are seen as having more heart."[cxxv]

Starting a patrol however can be challenging. After the first training with Steven's Square, I was disheartened when no further progress was made towards a patrol in my neighborhood. However, soon the community organizer at the Alliance left and was replaced, and the new one started making noise about a patrol that would soon happen. I waited with little result. Soon, this organizer was replaced with another, and a training was announced for August 2005. The trainers were trying to get across two main goals when it came to volunteers: screen unproductive recruits out, and keep the rest coming back. No engaging drug dealers, no weapons, no flying off the handle; keep things calm and enjoyable. The organizers of the Steven's Square Block Patrol and Whittier Walkers did not want to be the Guardian Angels, and anyone who did want a more intimate or confrontational relationship with those doing crimes would not be welcome (and would only be frustrated by these patrols). For example, Robert owned a small house on a block where there used to be a regular drug dealing, and he had no qualms about making a lot of noise at meetings and on his block about not being afraid of the dealers. On patrol one evening we ran into him outside his home, and he told us a story about using a brick to chase a drug dealer off his block one day (Robert once came to a Whittier Alliance meeting with a bright Bush/Cheney sweatshirt; I cannot remember any other time that

someone indicated any support for Republicans at a neighborhood event, or for that matter remember any other time anyone, anywhere in the neighborhood ever publically supported Republicans). Whether one sees Robert as a hero or a vigilante, he was a rare bird. And I was continually surprised at how rare his more aggressive stance was; people in the neighborhood often appeared quite timid and skittish to me, almost always shying away from doing anything about crime or disorder. There were those in the neighborhood who would fume about crime, but they were not on the Whittier Walkers, and this was probably fortunate.

I cannot imagine any of the volunteers I walked with wanting to be Guardian Angels style crime fighters. These were pretty low key people who would have felt very uncomfortable with any real contact with drug dealers. Those who want to be on passive patrols like ours are almost as a rare breed as Robert, for they require a particular combination of qualities that include being upset about crime but not too upset, being a bit afraid of those committing crimes but not nearly as afraid as most, and being proactive about crime but not too proactive. “When volunteers don’t feel safe they don’t return,” cautioned a trainer. I can remember a number of people who only came out for one patrol, and seemed uncomfortable. One woman in particular had been interested enough to come to the training, but told the group that she would not wear a uniform. It was not that she was afraid of being too much a part of crime fighting, it was because she had been so active with anti-crime measures in the past that she was afraid of being recognized and personally targeted by dealers and prostitutes. At the time her response had seemed paranoid and arrogant to me, why couldn’t she just go along with the program and not make a fuss about being different? Another part of me of course thinks that since she has walked the walk (no pun intended), no one can fault her for being less than “all in” on the new patrol. And if her past experience has made her not comfortable patrolling, then she is exactly the one you do not want walking. Patrolling is about being confident and friendly, putting yourself out there enough to talk to the residents, shop keepers, and restaurant goers (but not putting yourself out there in a way that you upset people or interfere with their experience with the neighborhood or interfere with their livelihood).

But patrolling responsibly for the trainers was much more than just doing it safely, it was doing it in a *socially* responsible manner, combined with realistic expectations. “We don’t modify people’s behavior, we don’t judge lifestyles, and it’s not our right to confront people.” Asked by one fellow trainee if this meant that they were just NIMBY’s simply pushing the dealers and prostitutes into adjacent neighborhoods instead of actually solving the problem, one trainer answered, “we prevent people from digging into a place for a long time. We don’t necessarily just push them into a different neighborhood, just dissipate hot spots.” The trainer was trying to communicate that, going into patrolling with the expectation that one is going to block someone from selling drugs or cause them to question the morality of their actions, would be naïve and reckless. However, the flip side of this is the danger of patrollers feeling like they are not changing anything. “You lose volunteers when you are perceived not to be effective, and when people show up for a patrol and it’s cancelled because others didn’t show up.”

Two weeks after the Whittier Walker orientation, the neighborhood patrol began, and if we were fortunate enough to have six or more walkers on an evening, we would split into two groups of at least three. [cxxvi] Fortune however only smiled on us during those first few months, and for the next three years we had to make do with a small core group, and I often walked only with two others. Everything was planned by the community organizer at the Whittier Alliance, who had collected our applications. Every other Monday night from seven to nine was the time she picked as when people were most available. Sometimes we met more often, sometimes less, but since we did not have a deep enough pool of committed volunteers, trying to fit in more times proved difficult. It seemed as if about half the time, we would wait around for an extra ten minutes to see if someone who had signed up, would show up. Cancellations or no shows were very common, and disappointing, but as long as we walked, and especially if we walked with a few people who I could talk to, I was happy. To have expected more of people, or become frustrated at their level of commitment, could have affected my motivation. When it was raining, extremely cold, extremely hot, or only one other person besides the organizer could make it, she would cancel it by phone or email. Since we walked in the

evenings, cold was a bigger factor than heat, but since this was Minnesota, it would have to get below about ten degrees, or be fairly windy, for a cancellation. Obviously winter walking was not as popular, especially since it was done all in the dark, so we would walk less frequently and often end early. Near the beginning of the Walkers the organizer tried a few day patrols, but they did not seem to provide anything that the evenings did not, and few volunteers were available.

The Black Forest Inn had donated a few shelves in a utility closet just inside the restaurant, so even when the Alliance office was closed or the organizer did not come along, we could still meet up and get our supplies (we just had to ask the bartender for the key to the closet). The organizer had obtained for us some meager but sufficient supplies such as a few flashlights and two-way radios, and the purple pennies. The radios were only used at the beginning, because that was the only time we ever had more than one group, and the batteries died soon after anyway. After walking we would return the gear and fill out the log book also kept there, listing the name of each walker, drawing on a map all the blocks we actually walked down, and reporting our evening's activities and incidents.

Looking back over the Walker paperwork a few years later, I found that during our most prolific period between August 2005 and January 2007, there were 58 actual patrols, of which 38 had logs, and 11 patrols had been cancelled. In those 38 logs there were 13 incidents reported, including 7 calls to 911, and once we flagged down a squad to report some possible crime. In the next seven months after that, there were 18 patrols with 13 logs, and 3 cancellations. And in the next year, until the Walkers died in October 2008, 25 patrols were reported, with not a single one leaving a log of any kind, and 2 cancellations (for a grand total of 101 reported patrols, 51 logs, and 16 cancellations).[cxxvii] Probably the most stimulating log I found was this one – "There was a lot of action at 28th and Pills tonight, and we saw a lot of cops. Including officer Arroyo who arrested a kid for pointing a BB gun pistol at people," this is not the stuff of Hollywood action movies (I probably could not get a movie made based on my field work).

After going over all these logs in 2010, I began to seriously question how often we actually even saw potential crime. In my mind, I had imagined we had seen been

performing counter-loitering all the time on drug dealers and prostitutes. But the log contained almost no indications of any contact with anything criminal of any nature. The only contact I ever remember having with a "criminal" was as we were walking casually past the little market in the Mexican Village on Nicollet. There was a group of about five teenage black men, most in long white shirts, standing in front. As we past them one commented to us, "nosy ass motherfuckers." The organizer was not with us that summer evening, but one of the regulars got a bit worked up about it and she called the community response team at the local police precinct, but getting no response, called 911 and described the men, as we returned back near the store (she however did not describe their ethnicity). Her real ire however was towards the store, as she could not believe how the employees could allow kids like that to hang out in front of their establishment. If *she* was a customer, she would not go there anymore. After going back over these logs, I began wracking my memory for other incidents of any kind, only coming up with that one time we followed around a drug dealer, and some fuzzy, sketches in my mind of a few random black men hanging around a notorious corner. I emailed the organizer asking for help and she sent this reply,

> You know, if I think back, I'd probably say we actually saw drug dealing on 28th 3-4 times. I was kind of surprised that there was crime/an incident 13 times. When we first started it felt pretty needed, especially around 28th. But then it pretty quickly got better and/or the evening times were slow. Street crime is so seasonal … When I think back, I saw quite a bit of crime, prostitutes, johns, drug dealing in my time there. Maybe weekly. It just wasn't when I was Whittier Walking. More often than not, it was when I wasn't even working.

But what about in years before I began my research, did people see more crime? In the mid-2000s when I first started talking to people about the state of the neighborhood, one phrase was oft repeated – "you should have seen it *TEN* years ago." Again and again, people would mention this "ten years ago" as when things were really, really bad. But by 2010 I could have said a similar thing to new residents – "sure, you don't see any drug dealers now, but you should have seen it five years ago." This would not have had the same effect though, because there was not much to see by 2002 when I moved to the neighborhood; I cannot brag that I lived through some arduous trial. This was a perk reserved for the longer term residents; this is one of the things that the "old-

timers" can bond over, I cannot. As a resident of a few years, I have stories to tell, and walking with the patrol gives me legitimacy, but I was not here in the dark ages of higher crime in the early 1990s.

I had heard rumors of prior iterations of the Whittier Walkers that existed during these dark days, but found no one who could tell me much about it. However, while interviewing an activist about his fight against Lydia, I learned he had helped organize a different patrol in the late 1990s to early 2000s that walked Pillsbury Avenue only. Rob worked hard to impress me with the plethora of destabilizing institutions on Pillsbury that housed the "mentally ill and mentally disturbed," including one house that he claimed lodged eight sex offenders. However, he also wanted me to know that his patrol had "worked with all of them, and invited them to be on block patrol." He connected the desperate need for walking patrols to the presence of people requiring supportive housing services, and was even quoted in a neighborhood paper on the issue (Brandt 9/17/01):

> If Rob turns one way when he steps out his Tudor home in Minneapolis' Whittier neighborhood, there's a nearby group home for vulnerable adults and another for people with disabilities. If the block captain turns the other way, there's a halfway house for released offenders. … Rob said that he has worked hard to make sure such residents feel included in block life, but that enough is enough. "I do not think we can handle another challenged individual," Rob said. "It tears the fabric of our neighborhood."

For Rob, these vulnerable and disabled residents created a massive *burden* on the rest. It was not that they were doing the crimes, but that they bred an environment that invited and nurtured crime. Many activists explained to me their theory that these vulnerable adults included drug addicts that were prime targets for drug dealers, or others who were marked by "muggers." These were residents who did not have the resources or wherewithal to "contribute" to the neighborhood, either by supporting businesses, sprucing up their front lawns, or walking on a patrol. I sensed again and again from activists like him that they feared that the "over-abundance" of in-need residents, generally created decline and miasma in Whittier, which directly led to even higher crime.

This burden he talked of was two-fold. The overconcentration of the poor and disabled burdened residents by the damage it caused to their property value and their quality of life. But for those with higher resources and a sense of duty towards their community, it also burdened them by placing a responsibility upon their head. It was up to them to stem the tide of disorder before it "tipped" the neighborhood into disaster. It was their obligation to stop both the cause, which was overconcentration, and its symptoms, with was crime. "We recruited heavily for the block patrol. It was a huge burden on us; I don't know how many pairs of shoes I wore out going up and down Pillsbury." "We walked and created a presence … we did that a lot … Inebriated people we walked back to where they needed to go … The police were very helpful … And it was not fun to do that 10 years ago, it was not something you took lightly." Rob's recruiting must have been effective though, because he claimed that at their height "we had a core group of fifteen to twenty patrollers."

This height, Rob said, was spurred by the larger neighborhood fight over the proposed opening of Lydia, which would be only a couple blocks from his home. Lydia was a massive neighborhood and legal battle at the time, and must have caused a significant rise in fear among many that the neighborhood was going to be lost to poverty, instability, and crime. While this helped recruit white homeowners on Pillsbury, enlistment did not fare well among the many immigrants living in apartment buildings on the avenue. "Many of the Hispanics there were illegal and they were distrustful, they didn't want anything to do with the neighborhood organization. We went through a lot of trouble to invite them to our block party, and they came out and looked but didn't join."

As for the Whittier Walkers, a major reason it eventually fell away was because open air drug dealing and prostitution had fallen away. When I first started walking with them I always wanted to be on the obscure side-streets and corners where dealing was known to occur. But when we could no longer find people hanging out on these corners, my focus changed to just walking up and down the Nicollet business corridor, because at least there we would be seen and find people to talk to. What was the point of walking down residential sidewalks with few people on them? Some patrollers kept pushing to walk down 1st Ave, or through Fair Oaks Park, because these had been traditional

symbols of crime. I felt that these patrollers were living in the past, wanting to clean up a park that now, on summer evenings, only held El Salvadoran families playing volleyball, and a couple quiet guys hanging out after the soup kitchen had let out. With no crime to forestall, I increasingly saw our role as goodwill ambassadors. But that is not as exciting as crime fighting, takes more effort than counter-loitering, and it breaks up one's exercise.

So if the Whittier Walkers did not directly affect crime, what did they do? I suspect that they influenced the police to do more work in Whittier, got residents thinking about crime and crime reduction, and increased awareness about the Whittier Alliance. Also, as for all the crime fighting activity and talk, including the Walkers, it seems inevitable that it would amplify an "us" and "them" perception. "From the late 1980s through most of the 1990s, crime prevention and community development were conflated in cities across the country" (Goetz 2003:117). Goetz and many others have felt that the Guardian Angels era of crime prevention, had re-imagined inner-city neighborhoods combat zones, and/or presented the choice that residents have as between the "reduced civil freedoms" of living in a police state, or the "continued carnage" (2003:118) of criminals running free. Goetz finds that neighborhood anticrime programs frame the issue as pitting ""respectable" neighborhood residents against the neighborhood's "bad elements," and these elements seem to always come in the form of renters and people of color (2003:119). The Whittier Walkers I knew in the 2000s, was a toned down kind of patrol with no interest in being angry or bigoted. Regardless though, the anti-crime talk in Whittier was full of references to "thugs," and it is hard to imagine these thugs as anything other than poor people of color. [cxxviii]

I hope that in some small way the Whittier Walkers made some feel safer, knowing that there was a patrol out there (every once in a while). Perhaps this inspired some to get out on the street more, and de-inspired others to sell their drugs and bodies on the street. However, it is possible that we had no influence on the dealers at all, and it is possible that the police were going to investigate the dealers in South Whittier anyway. It is also possible that by bringing attention to the crime, some became afraid of it, or

possible that we only angered the dealers and made them more resolute, or possible that they merely moved to another neighborhood. [cxxix]

The talk among patrollers was that citizen patrols can work to motivate the police to do more to directly affect crime. In general, police like to help those who like their help and who they perceive to be showing sincere effort at independently helping themselves (hence, the history of police working hard to protect white middle-class neighborhoods and ignoring others). At Whittier Alliance meetings police would urge people to call 911 anytime they wanted an officer to come around to do something. Education about 911 often involved getting people to understand they could call 911 for just about anything. Police would explain that the squeaky wheel gets the grease, meaning that neighborhoods and blocks that call 911 often about drug dealers, show that they care about getting rid of them. This small amount of cooperation and information, gives police motive and opportunity for investigating drug sales and making arrests.

In law enforcement circles, they call places like 28th and Pillsbury a hot spot. Drug dealers would rather not concentrate themselves into small areas that make it easy for police to find them, but they need their customers to be able to find them. Because the Whittier Alliance marketed Nicollet Avenue as "Eat Street" in the 2000s, many in the metro know to go to this geography to find "ethnic" food, even though they could not tell you that Pho 79 was at 2529 Nicollet, and in the 1990s men looking for prostitutes knew to go down Nicollet. While citizen patrols try to passively and temporarily scatter hot spots, CERT police actively break them up. And so while I have little evidence of this, for putting the Whittier Walkers out of business I credit CERT at our fifth precinct, in conjunction with a healthy local economy, a city hall willing to put resources into a stable and professional police force, the substantial decrease in crack nationally, municipal Tax Increment Financing schemes that redirected funds into Whittier, and a handful of assertive, neighborhood activists.

8: Perceptions of Danger are inflated by media exposure

On a 1995 KARE TV news report on a recent shooting in Minneapolis, the producer chose to show a man on the street basically telling everyone they could get shot

next, “You don’t know when they are going to shoot,” he ranted. Katherine Beckett (2003:75) sums up the problem this way,

> Americans have a love-hate relationship with crime. On one hand, we abhor it, decry its apparent increase, and worry about the safety of our loved ones and ourselves. At the same time, we are fascinated with crime – we cannot get enough of it. Indeed, crime-related news stories are among the most widely read, and many of the most popular entertainment shows also focus on crime and violence.

For example, when people in New York City talk about subway crime, I think it is safe to say they do not quote Kenney’s statistics showing the rarity of crime, what is in the public’s mind are mass media images of the subways. These images of course include sensational newspaper or television news stories about a violent crime, true crime or COPS style reality TV shows, or Hollywood thrillers. It seems as if every film set in New York City that was made between 1975 and 1995 had the requisite “alone on the subway at night” scene, where a gang of swaggering black youths terrorize a frightened citizen.

My research was wide-spread, qualitative ethnography with no surveys, and I never asked anyone about their television habits, so I cannot speak directly to any connection between media exposure among Whittier-ites and their fear of crime. But I would like to draw an image for the reader of what the research has to say about this connection among Americans in general, and place this in *the context of* the exaggerated fear of and talk about crime among Whittier activists. Whether or not those who attend Whittier Alliance meetings spend all their other evenings doing nothing but watching reruns of America’s Most Wanted, and frothing at the mouth over the increasingly rampant hoodlums terrorizing our streets that should spend the rest of their lives in prison, I did find a greatly inflated impression of crime cause by what they had heard about it.

The research does appear to show show that exposure to crime stories correlates with higher fears of crime. In New York, “Passengers need only short memories to recall images of Curtis Sliwa [on television] pronouncing them unsafe from the “mutants” who, he claims, continually prey upon them on subway lines he has dubbed … “The Beast.”” And Kenney found that 61% of subway riders thought it was very likely that something would be stolen from them within a year of riding, even though the vast majority had

been riding the subways for years and never even seen a theft. How tragic is it that 40% of them "thought it was very likely that someone would beat them up or hurt them within the next year" (488). This led Kenney to wonder if the Angels, by colorfully talking so much in the media about the dangers of the subway, were actually raising the apprehensions of subway passengers. If the Angels were trying to make people less afraid of crime, it "may, in fact, be contributors to one of the very problems they are attempting to solve" (494). [cxxx] Like the Angels but in a smaller and unique way, the patrols in Whittier were both a result of the culture of terror and a shaper of it. Without constant news stories of flagrant crime on the subway, Sliwa's crime-fighting character would never have been realized, and without Sliwa's image of "The Beast" being widely distributed, his organization would not have continued to get funded.

To understand the power of *danger*, take the example of the fear of flying vs. fear of driving. Exciting news stories about airplane accidents inflame an irrational fear of flying. While many experience symptoms of panic every time they fly, who gets the jitters every time they get into a car? However, per mile one is 65 more times more likely to die in a car crash than in a plane (Ross-Flanigan:2003). We should all be scared to death of driving, because every time we leave the quite safe world of not racing around on pavement in steel traps, we are incredibly magnifying our chances of injury. "More than 42,000 lives are lost in road traffic accidents in the United States every year. That is an amazing number of deaths, especially considering that many of these are healthy, young people who otherwise would have had long life expectancies." So while one of every 6,800 drivers in the U.S. dies in an auto accident, the annual rate of deaths for airline passengers is one in 1.16 million (U-T San Diego). "A MIT study, based on data from 1990 to the present, shows than an airline passenger stands a one in 8 million chance of dying in a crash" (?). That means you would have to fly every day for 21,000 years before a plane you are in goes down. "A person is ten times more likely to die in his or her bathtub than in an airplane accident" (Glassner 1999:184); if people were thinking statistically, each bathing experience would bring ten times the anxiety of flying. If one was living safely, when traveling through Harlem one would choose the subway, bus, or sidewalk, over the "safety" of their locked car.

When Barry Glassner reviewed media accounts of airline safety from 1994-96 he found that often journalists group "together isolated incidents, depicting them as dangerous trends, and allowing those pseudotrends to overshadow the larger reality of the safety of air travel" (1999:184). Who among us has not heard from time to time about a "crime wave ripping through our city." However, there are almost no crime waves, only separate ripples that can appear related. While some incidences of crime might make it into the back of the local section of the paper, almost none get farther than that unless they can be tied to an 'alarming' trend, or it is a story that the editors think their subscribers can all relate to. After all, what does a story about one black, drug dealer killing another have to do with the average Twin Cities reader? Beckett (2003:79) tells us that,

> Stories about crime provide society with a fascinating and never-ending series of conflicts between good and evil. This conflict is captured most dramatically in stories about violent, predatory crimes committed against people believed to be vulnerable and blameless, and this helps to explain the overrepresentation of white, female victims in the news.

A "wave" is something that can wash up anywhere, anytime, striking any random family (and an innocent child getting killed by a drive-by shooting tugs at everyone's hearts). These waves are a kind of pseudo-trend that overshadow the larger reality of the rarity of crime. For example, "between 1990 and 1998 – a period in which the homicide rate declined by 33% - network news coverage of homicide increased by 473%" (Beckett 2003:75), to the viewing public, this looks like *murder* itself is increasing 473%. Murder and plane crashes are rare, and while the rates of both have been trending downward over the long term, rates remain constant over any short term period, it is the rate of media and political attention to events that changes. 1992, the year that crime-fighting nationally shifted into high gear, a white police officer was assassinated in a Minneapolis pizzeria, and the "manhunt, capture, and trial of the suspects" (all of whom young were young African American males) dominated the local news scene. By 1995, the year of Murderapolis, "a crime story lead local evening newscasts approximately 40 percent of the time (Goetz 2003:95).

Exaggerated stories about crime waves or lapses in airline safety, claim to be "in the service of saving lives" (Glassner 1999:194). Whether from the media or neighborhood residents, stories told and re-told about the murder down the street are uttered with a seriousness that imply and concern, but are styled in ways that entertain and scare. However, if there are hundreds more dangerous hazards out there than the rare plane crash or murder, and if saving lives was the main concern, then talk would focus on the everyday dangers of workplace injuries, domestic violence, diabetes, or depression. In the mid-1990s "more than 5,000 Americans died in work-related fatalities each year. Almost seven million suffered injuries," many of which were children. While reporters focus on hypothetical problems with the FAA or airline companies (Glassner 1999:198), and government inspectors spent massive societal resources chasing accidents that will never materialize; in 1998 there were only 2,000 OSHA inspectors to oversee six million workplaces. "OSHA was in a position to inspect the average work site once a century" (Glassner 1998:198). And while penalizing the major airlines for accidents most likely prevents nothing, "when a company is inspected by OSHA and slapped with a penalty, the injury rate at the firm declines by 20 percent over the following three years" (Glassner 1998:198).

My argument here is subtle; while shifting resources from the FAA to OSHA would save lives, and while crime is also sporadic, I personally would not like to see fewer police or citizen crime fighting. What I am arguing is that all the talk and worry appears to not change crime, but does distract from other problems that do much more damage to Whittier-ites, such as substandard housing, immigrant disenfranchisement, helping the neighborhood school, job creation, and foreclosures. I again will use plane crashes and workplace safety, this time to explicitly illuminate how social structures configure the way society determines its concerns, and allocates resources to them. In the two weeks after the infamous 1996 ValuJet crash in Florida, USA Today published seventy-one pieces on it. Meanwhile OSHA had been doing great things to save thousands of lives but received almost no press (Glassner 1999:199).[cxxxi] If there had been more talk about OSHA, resulting in more it acquiring more resources, OSHA could have had many more successes, preventing many, many injuries that did actually occur.

However, the 1994 congressional elections brought in explicitly anti-OSHA legislators who worked to limit regulation of workplaces (Glassner 1999:198).

I write so much about talk about crime because it is not a matter of just people gossiping or passing the time; it can profoundly affect how people live, how and where the local economy grows, and where government and corporations spend their money. There is a set of psychological research called "cultivation analysis," that claims that people who are exposed more than others to the crime and violence on television, actually believe that there is more crime than those who do not watch as much television. One such project found that the amount of press coverage of crimes was a better predictor of how much crime people estimate is happening in their community, than the actual number of crimes committed (Gerbner 1988).[cxxxii] How many people read, let alone have access to, a comprehensive list of the crimes committed in their neighborhood? Compare that to how many people consume local news or talk to people who do?

George Gerbner is a communications researcher who found that perceptions of danger grow with amount of crime one sees on television. "Symbolic violence takes its toll on all viewers. However, heavier viewers in every subgroup [defined by such categories as education, age, income, gender, newspaper reading, neighborhood] … express a greater sense of apprehension than do light viewers in the same groups. They are more likely than comparable groups of light viewers" to – overestimate their chances of involvement in violence; [cxxxiii] believe that their neighborhoods are unsafe; state that fear of crime is a very serious personal problem; and assume that crime is rising, regardless of the facts of the case.[cxxxiv] I offer this research to highlight the potential impact of exposure to talk about crime in general, of which television is just one source, upon one's fear of actually being personally victimized. *Hearing/listening* is an active thing that does much more than simply store a few new facts somewhere in one's head. It also changes one's beliefs about the way the world actually is (world view), and even one's values (ethos) about how that world should be interacted with and changed.[cxxxv] [cxxxvi] Gerbner (1994) feels that,

> Television's impact is especially pronounced in terms of how people feel about walking alone at night on a street in their own neighborhoods … Whatever real

> dangers may lurk outside people's homes, heavy television viewing is related to more intense fears and apprehensions. [cxxxvii] [cxxxviii] [cxxxix]

As with everything, talk of is not just a representation of crime (a window into it, a mirror of it), but produces action that affects crime. When residents stop walking around at night, the streets actually become less safe for all the others who are walking. And when people believe something or somewhere is dangerous they will tell others about it, in a sense they are continually trying to convince everyone else that their own fears are objectively valid. This is the way neighborhoods become essentialized as off limits to the "law-abiding citizenry." And the consequences of that are devastating disinvestment and disenfranchisement.[cxl]

I administered no scientific surveys comparing crime fighters and non-activists, on how much and what kind of TV they watch, and how dangerous they find Whittier and the world in general. I do not know if the board of the Whittier Alliance watched more CSI than the Whittier Neighbors board, but I am sure it comes as no surprise to the reader that from my interviews with activists, those who were more concerned with cleaning up crime also feared it more. However, by definition, "activists" are the active ones on the streets of Whittier, and are not even close to being paralyzed by fear. They are the ones that are walking around for the sake of walking around, calling 911 routinely, and some are even personally calling out people acting badly. Remember, they are here by "choice;" they feel strongly about being in Whittier because they want to. They are not in the inner-city because that is all they know, they have the savings, income and car to be living in the leafy western suburbs where they would never see a drug dealer or prostitute. If they were very afraid, they would leave. But they chose to move here, many from suburbs or rural Minnesota, because this is where they do want to be out and about, walking to restaurants for dinner, meeting friends at the Black Forest Inn for a drink at night, walking their dog through Fair Oaks Park, or strolling to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

It turns out that while many of the activists who talk about crime do have fear of being personally victimized by crime, their real fear is that it will victimize the *neighborhood*. And while they probably do have concerns about crime hurting their

property values and profits, their talk and their theories relate much more directly to the damage crime does to the overall *integrity* of Whittier, in both the sense of its essence and its reputation. It is not so much that crime threatens their bodies, instead they theorize that it threatens the stability of their neighborhood by bringing into the neighborhood empty storefronts, empty sidewalks, "even more" affordable housing, an "over-concentration" of the poor, "burden-some" supportive housing, an overwhelming ratio of the disabled and in-need, and more crime, instead of filled storefronts, market rate housing, residents with disposable income to spend on neighborhood businesses, and assertive residents who will join neighborhood organizations, lobby their representatives, put developers feet to the fire, and walk on a citizen patrol. This is their fear. They chose this neighborhood because it means something to them, and their affection for it combined with their personal philosophy of citizen activism, their strong sense of crime around them, their uncomfortable-ness with this crime, their theories around how crime can affect housing option in particular negative ways, their uncomfortable-ness with a high ratio of the destitute and disabled, how this can "tip" a neighborhood into debilitating instability, and their belief that they personally can help prevent this from happening.

Since crime in Whittier is so rare, it is the ubiquitous fear of crime that has a much greater impact. It not only influences many to not walk, visit, live, invest, and fund projects in Whittier, but also leads some residents to strongly work to promote market-rate homeownership and to discourage any kind of subsidized housing or social services.

The experience of being robbed or attacked will take up none or almost none of anyone's life, but how much of one's life will be spent fearing either? The answer is every day; and this is the true tragedy.[cxli] As an academic exercise I ask the question, what if crimes were not reported in the media, or gossiped about among neighbors? Neighborhoods like Whittier would be fantastically peaceful places to live. If residents were unaware that last night at three in the morning a woman was mugged just outside their home, then they could sleep easy every night. If I personally never heard about the rape in the alley a block from my home, I would not ever worry about my wife outside at

night. And imagine the feelings people would have for Whittier if they knew naught about its crime, but only its amenities like the restaurants, closeness to downtown, tree-filled pleasantly-walkable streets, friendly neighbors, and people from around the world. If stories about muggings were not spread, then the victims of crime would be confined to very few who were stolen from, injured, and/or traumatized, instead of among everyone who worries that it might happen to him or her.[cxlii] [cxliii]

"More even than earthlings, we are placelings, and our very perceptual apparatus, our sensing body, reflects the kind of places we inhabit" (Casey 1996:19). This is not (necessarily) to say that our bodies physically change to be like or be a part of the place they are in, but that our bodies are required to continually be perceiving their surroundings, and to such an extent that they cannot but both be tuning into it and shaping it. Since one may go years without ever actually seeing a crime in Whittier,[cxliv] what the activist mind tunes itself to is the inescapable talk about crime in the arer; "the mind abhors a vacuum"). It is this image is the one that guides many Whittier-ites in their activism to shape the neighborhood. If your vision of the neighborhood is one of drug dealing, prostitution, vulnerable adults, addicts, destitution, homelessness, and a place with a bad reputation, the last thing you might want to come into your home is a van regularly giving away free heroin needles. Instead you might use your meager molding tools to gentrify the area (others however, seeing the poverty and addiction, will think it logical to bring social services directly into the neighborhood to help those people; bring the solution to the problem). These activists will fight non-profit developers tooth and nail in order to stymy any new shelters, and keep the existing ones clean and under control.

It stands to reason that there are no places without people to assign them meaning. Casey's argument is that there is no such thing as places with people and people without places; they go together like drug dealing and prostitution. It is not so much a matter of, "No matter where you go, there you are," but, no matter where you go, you find yourself drawn into living within particular, socially constructed visions of space. There is almost assuredly mass and energy out there independent of human perception, but places, ah, these are things people love and hate, feel comfortable relaxing in or screaming in. The

bit of suburban dirt where I buried my hamster in my background when I was eight, is a place with meaning; the "grassy knoll" that some thought JFK was shot from, this is a place so socially complex and so ingrained into the imaginations of a generation of Americans that its very name conjures up mysteries and strategies. But 500 years from now who will walk near that physical location and know that it was once "the grassy knoll?"

"Bodies and places … interanimate each other" (Casey 1996:24). Activists animate various and messy incarnations of Whittier, from assigning it conflicting meanings to promoting contrasting types of housing and restaurants, but I ask, what is this place that is animating activists as they are animating it? What is this "it"? We have seen that *it* is a place created in discursive spaces, from neighbors talking to each other, to formal meetings, to television and print. But there is a disconnect here, for if it is Hollywood, the local news, and gossip that is informing activists of what Whittier is like, instead of a comprehensive, accurate accounting of what occurs within the borders of Whittier, then won't activists be making skewered decisions on how Whittier should be changed? If they do not know what its actual problems are, then they might be creating projects, events, and buildings to combat minor instead of major problems. They will surely shape Whittier, but in an unintended way.

Chapter 4 – Fashioning Diversity and Ethnicity

1: Diversity as an Object of Study, and as an Explicit Topic of Interviews

When a Whittier neighborhood activist speaks of diversity, and they do so often, that individual may be referring to the differences they perceive in such things as race, ethnicity, nationality, language, wealth, lifestyle, clothing style, sexuality, architecture, values, behaviors, markets, and/or restaurants. It is not easy to know of which they speak. And when I hear the mottos of the reams of non-profit entities in Whittier, it seems that they all claim allegiance to some sort of ideal of diversity or multiculturalism. But again, it is not easy to know what exactly they are idealizing. This chapter will explore what diversity means in the context of activism in the Whittier neighborhood – what it means to these people and groups, what it means to work in the name of diversity, and how all this work carries the potential to construct specific ethnicities, and construct the meaning of diversity itself. Creating these meanings turns out to be not just an "academic" exercise, because it greatly affects identities, profits, and lives.

Table 5: Whittier and Minneapolis Population by Race

RACE AND ETHNICITY (2010)	WHITTIER		MINNEAPOLIS	
White	7,017	51.3%	230,650	60.3%
Black or African American	2,709	19.8%	69,971	18.3%
American Indian & Alaska Native	253	1.8%	6,351	1.7%
Asian or Pacific Islander	535	3.9%	21,567	5.6%
Other race	29	0.2%	962	0.3%
Two or more races	412	3.0%	13,004	3.4%
Hispanic or Latino	2,734	20.0%	40,073	10.5%

About half Whittier residents are minorities, and 39% of residents primarily speak a language other than English at home. Latinos, Somalis, and Blacks are the largest minority groups (in this table perhaps half those classified as "Black or African American" in Whittier are of Somali heritage), but I suspect that one could find residents

born in every most of the 196 nations in the world. While Loring Park, a downtown neighborhood to the north, was traditionally the "gay area" of Minneapolis, today Minneapolis is so gay friendly that one could easily find many "out-of-the-closet" gay couples living in any South Minneapolis neighborhood, with Whittier being a particularly popular destination. In fact, "in 1970, in Minneapolis, Mr. Baker and Mr. McConnell became the first same-sex couple known to apply for a marriage license" (Eckholm 2015), and today they still live together in SouthWest Minneapolis.

Whittier is also appreciated for being a haven for students and artists, for having a large museum, and having a large art college; it is also close to downtown, the University of Minnesota, and Uptown (what used to be an "alternative" nexus before it become more gentrified). Whittier though has less expensive housing than both Uptown and downtown, but is not considered quite as "ghetto" as Phillips to the east. While Whittier does not have old warehouses to exploit like the Warehouse District or Northeast, it does have a few industrial buildings along the old railway trench, which has been transformed in the highly touted "Greenway" bike path, with distinctive community gardens, and a probably soon to be built trolley line.

Clifford Geertz opined (1985:121),

> If it is in fact getting to be the case that rather than being sorted into framed units, social spaces with definite edges to them, seriously disparate approaches to life are becoming scrambled together in ill-defined expanses, social spaces whose edges are unfixed, irregular, and difficult to locate, the question of how to deal with the puzzles of judgment to which such disparities give rise takes on a rather different aspect. Confronting landscapes and still lifes is one thing; panoramas and collages quite another. That it is the latter we these days confront, that we are living more and more in the midst of an enormous collage, seems everywhere apparent.

That Whittier, the United States, and the world are more intermixed is not in question, and that diversity has become vogue in metropolitan, corporate, and academic America is also evident, but for me, what is in question is what "diversity" *means*, how it is being *used*, and what is it *doing* to inequality. I would guess that all of the activists in Whittier would agree with Geertz's collage representation, would be happy about the existence of this collage, and to varying extents would welcome the "puzzles of judgment" that post-modern diversity provides.

This is most evident in the slogans and mission statements of organizations all across Whittier that I began to notice in Whittier before it ever occurred to me to do research there, let alone in a neighborhood. At the time Whittier was simply the immediate area around which I lived; it was my neighborhood, with a small n, as opposed to the official, concretely bounded thing known to some as "The Whittier Neighborhood." I experienced my locality as a string of experiences, and ones that were relevant to me at the time, such as my building, my favorite restaurant, my bus stop, the block on which I parked, my bike path to school. This was before I became to know it as my informants know it – the interconnected tales of a place fraught with a unique and long history of community activism. But in this before-time, I was also interested in multiculturalism, and one thing I did notice about my neighborhood was the multicultural slogans scatted on storefronts, banners, and flyers.

- In 2006 the Whittier Alliance was "Where Diversity Becomes Community," and Whittier was "The International Neighborhood"
- In 1992 the Whittier Alliance was "Where Diversity Works"
- The Whittier Neighbors are "Embracing Democracy and Diversity"
- The Calvary Baptist Church is "A Multicultured People." "Our Vision is to be a multicultural movement of mature glad-hearted followers of Jesus Christ." And "We value diversity as an integral element of God's kingdom; experiencing it and expressing it through our worship and way of life.
- Salem Lutheran is "committed to Christ, our community, and the diversity of our neighborhood."
- The Church of St. Stephens is "Dismantling Racism"
- Source Ministries brags that it is in "the Most Diverse Neighborhood in the country"
- "The Fallout is a place to build community. We think this can happen by building relationships between people, encouraging creativity of all kinds, and facilitating discussion about spiritual topics."
- Whittier International Elementary is "An International Learning Community."
- Lincoln International High School – "Our mission is to empower a culturally diverse student body to participate in positive continuing education, and make important career and life choices upon successful completion of their academic and community endeavors"
- "Whittier Community Education strives to create diverse learning experiences while forming a bridge between the school and community, and fostering a joy of learning among people of all ages and cultures."
- "Southside Family School is a k-8 elementary alternative school providing an academically challenging, socially conscious education to a diverse community of learners since 1972."

- “City of Lakes Waldorf School encourages children to meet the world with reverence, nobility, and authentic action.”
- “At Watershed High School, we live the mission through encouraging discussion and reflective inquiry in the classroom. We acknowledge the wholeness of each individual and strive to create a community in which students can contribute and benefit from the greater social whole.”
- “The Minneapolis College of Art and Design educates individuals to be professional artists and designers, pioneering thinkers, creative leaders, and engaged global citizens.”
- Common Bond’s “mission is to build community by creating affordable housing as a steppingstone to success.”
- Bethlehem Community Center offers “Multicultural Learning Activities.”
- Greenleaf Lofts provides “the diverse offerings of Minneapolis’ Whittier Neighborhood.”
- “The mission of African American Family Services is to help the African American individual, family and community reach a greater state of well-being through the delivery of community-based, culturally specific chemical health, mental health, and family preservation services.”
- “At Children's Home Society & Family Services we help children thrive and build, strengthen and sustain individual, family and community life.”
- “Intermedia Arts is a catalyst that builds understanding among people through art.”
- “The Children's Theatre Company seeks to be an international model for excellence in theatre. We strive to lead in the creation of new work for young people, in theatre training and generating initiatives for using theatre in education and community development.”
- Loaves and Fishes “are guided by our vision that all people, regardless of socioeconomic, cultural or ethnic backgrounds deserve to meet their basic needs for food, dignity and respect.”
- St. Stephen’s Human Services was founded with a mission to end homelessness through programming that includes housing opportunities, employment support, emergency services and outreach, and systems change.”
- Old Arizona mission is “To be a hub of creative expression that inspires growth in our community's youth, thereby creating social change in the neighborhood.”
- Jungle Theater’s vision is to “Enrich its role as an active and catalytic partner in the cultural and economic life of the neighborhood in which it resides.”
- “American Association of University Women Minneapolis advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research”
- At the Main Street Project “We’re intentional about cooperating across culture, place, and language. In order to transform systems”
- “The Peace House Community seeks to empower each person through mutual sharing, respectful listening, shared responsibility and appreciation of each other's contribution.”
- Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation is “Inspired and guided by our faith, creating homes for those in need, building community for us all.”

- "The mission of the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority is to promote and deliver quality, well-managed homes to a diverse low income population and, with partners, contribute to the well-being of the individuals, families and community we serve."
- Simpson Housing first two values are, "We believe that everybody has the right to safe and affordable housing. We celebrate and embrace the uniqueness and dignity of every person."

Why were there so many agents of multiculturalism willfully advertising to me? Everyone seemed to be selling the ideas of diversity, community, and multiculturalism. It could not be coincidence that in one neighborhood there were so many like-minded mantras. Was there something particular in Whittier that had attracted the believers of multiculturalism, or was there some kind of war of slogans being fought, with each organization pitted against the other in a battle over who could be the most inclusive? What were these people doing, and what did it mean?

During my years of field work I was not disappointed in the amount of talk I heard about diversity. For example, a man running for the board of the Whittier Alliance one year announced to the electorate, "if elected I'd like to continue the growth and diversity in the neighborhood." One year later a woman candidate declared, "I love this neighborhood, it's ten years ahead of the rest of the city in terms of diversity and urban-ness." What bizarre things to say, what could it possibly mean to "continue diversity," or that a neighborhood is "ahead of the rest" in terms of diversity? What did this man want to continue exactly? If elected was he going to go out and recruit non-whites to move into the neighborhood? If there began to be too many Latinos would he discourage more from moving here, while encouraging Liberians and Indonesians? Did the woman mean that demographically, there were more races here than other places, and that this was the way of the future? Or did she mean that those in the neighborhood were more tolerant of alternative sexualities and lifestyles than others? Or were they just *tolerant* of the idea of diversity? Or were they "ahead" of others in terms of actual programs celebrating diversity? If so then should she have used the word *multiculturalism* instead of diversity?

Diversity, as a concept, is important because it is so ubiquitous, so valued, and legitimizes so many political/social projects today. Sociologists Bell and Hartmann (2007:895) find that,

> Everyone in America — school administrators and business leaders, political activists, marketing gurus, and Supreme Court Justices — seems to be using the language of diversity these days. It is not just that Americans are talking about diversity that is extraordinary; it is how they are talking about it: extolling the virtues of difference, celebrating diversity as a value in itself, and describing diversity as the new cornerstone of American democratic idealism.

A large-scale, national phone survey that these sociologists were involved in found that "less than five percent see diversity as an unqualified weakness. With some relatively minor variations, these findings hold across racial, religious, class, and gender lines" (2007:895). But for something so important, something so very many have written about, with hundreds of books telling us how and why Americans should be diverse, there is "very little empirical data about how ordinary Americans understand and experience diversity" (2007:896). If, as Nathan Glazer famously pronounced in 1997, "we are all multiculturalists now," this begs the question, what sort of multiculturalists are each of us?

What I found was that Whittier politics was a significant site in the construction of ethnicity and diversity, and this chapter explains how activists in the neighborhood are constructing the meaning, practices, and material forms of ethnicity and diversity. When talking about and promoting diversity, they are usually referencing *ethnic* diversity, so I will focus primarily on their production of actual ethnicities (such as Somali, white, and Vietnamese), but also focus on their production of the term "ethnicity" itself, and their production of what it means to be "diverse." To show this, in section two I will analyze some of the things my informants explicitly told me about the concept of diversity. I will also utilize this data to show how I as the researcher, as well as the context of my research, affected the study's results. I will then analyze four different neighborhood campaigns – resisting the expansion of the Somali mall, implementing controlled parking around the mall, and branding Nicollet Ave as "Eat Street."

After years of pricking up my ears at any mention of race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, immigration, nationality, and religion, and doing scores of interviews on issues directly and indirectly on diversity, multiculturalism, and equality, I still am not sure I know what those multicultural slogans mean. And the more I thought about thinking

about what diversity meant, the less I cared. I suspect though that I was just mirroring the activists' enthusiasm for the word; for while they used it often, it did not hold the greatest of meaning for many of them. Usually they would rather talk about specific issues or events involving minorities or poverty, rather than diversity in the abstract. So regardless of whether someone was using it in a slogan because they thought it sounded good, or spent their days fighting for the rights of the poor (or both), the word diversity was used diffusely and passively.

Diversity is a kind of empty signifier (word) that can stand in for any number of things; it can mean anything from a architectural types to a socially constructed hierarchy of immigrant statuses. Being so diffuse, it can be an expedient word when one either does not want to specify exactly what one means, or does not know more specifically what one means. And this is what makes it so passive, because anyone can use the word in passing without having to make a precise statement on where they stand on particular issues. In my interviews I did not demand that people tell me exactly what they stood for, but I did want to get specific about what their thoughts were on various issues. This is why I ended up often substituting questions about "diversity," "race," and "multiculturalism," with ones about concrete events and concerns in the neighborhood.

However, the word "diversity" was my way into the research, and ultimately into more interesting things. Seeing and hearing this word around the neighborhood is what got me interested in the project in the first place, and then, when reflecting the word back to interviewees, the word allowed them to start talking about all sorts of issues that were more important to them, such as housing. And ultimately, following the trail of talk about diversity, it led me to be able to understand the social construction of actual ethnicities themselves. And this was one of the crucial things at stake in Whittier.

When putting together my interview questions, I borrowed many of the questions directly out of a sociological, telephone survey that was part of The American Mosaic Project (AMP), which survey Americans on race, religion, and the meaning of America. Questions included – "Are there any specific ways you see diversity as a strength?" "As a weakness?" "Do you value having people who are different from you in your neighborhood?" However, by about my second interview, I felt as if these questions did

not fit well into my research. The problems were many – I was not clear myself if I was asking about diversity in relation to the neighborhood or the nation (or both);[cxlv] I was not clear how I was going to analyze the relationship between the nation and the neighborhood; the answers felt forced; the questions did not necessarily translate into the kind of ethnographic research I was doing, and lastly, while their organizations' slogans were littered with the words "diversity" and "multiculturalism," these were not necessarily salient categories to them. Because of all these issues, I became quickly bored with the questions and answers. As an anthropologist I am first and foremost interested in what informants were interested in talking about. I had sold myself to them as doing research about activism in Whittier, activism is what they did, and that is what I ended up being personally interested in; these factors became an undeniable force steering my research away from diversity as a concept and a national issue. [cxlvi]

However, while a comparison of my findings of those of the AMP survey would be like comparing apples and oranges, I did received answers from interviewees that are useful in the context of the findings of an interview-based, sister project to the AMP survey. Bell and Hartmann's project recorded 166 in-depth interviews with various kinds of activists in a few large US cities, in order to study "popular conceptions of diversity" in America (2007:895). Like me, they found many of the responses to be forced and trite. However, what I found more interesting was how my lack of interest in the topic, as well as the neighborhood context of my study, lead me to interpret my similar data in a very different way than Bell and Hartmann. So while I will recount some of my findings in relation to theirs, it is mostly in order to do a *methodological* analysis showing how my data was affected by the context within which I collected it.

When it came to the topic of diversity, the answers Bell and Hartmann received were "generally upbeat, even optimistic about the term itself" (2007:899), but also "often thin, vague, and underdeveloped" (900). Interviewees said things like, diversity "makes life more fun," "adds beauty to life," makes the world "more interesting," and in general was a positive thing for individuals and the community (899). "Most respondents not only feel comfortable with the language of diversity, they are open and optimistic about the term" (900). Similarly, when I asked one Whittier activist what aspects of diversity

she liked in particular about the neighborhood, she said she liked them "all equally. I like to hear different languages, hear the Somalis playing soccer at the park, see the kids with purple hair." [cxlvii] This kind of response was typical, and I am sure it also comes as no surprise to the reader to learn that many activists appreciated the diversity of restaurants in Whittier (and aren't ethnic restaurants are all about "fun," "beauty," and being "interesting").[cxlviii]

While Bell and Hartmann's interviewees would eagerly and easily say a little about diversity, "when pushed to explain their answers … many respondents struggled for words or offered only generic platitudes" (900). My interviewees however rarely struggled for words on this topic, they simply had little to say explicitly on it. However, in their brevity the most common answers were also platitudinous, and this is one reason I did not push them on the topic (I dislike platitudes, upon entering my ears my eyes glaze over and my mind quarantines them). My interviewees were intimately involved in concrete issues of multiculturalism, so they were able to speak on issues of diversity more fluidly than your average person, they simply did not really want to. This went especially for those who were opposed to more affordable housing in the neighborhood. I think that this is not necessarily because they did not value diversity as much as their ideological opponents in the neighborhood, but because they had routinely over the years been accused of racism, and I suspect that they did not wish to say anything that might add fodder to the charges of racism.

They could however talk about diversity in terms of topics such as Eat Street, homeownership in Whittier, and Whittier's concentration of poverty. "Racial attitudes are complex and are dependent upon the situation and context" (Croll, 2011). Like Bell and Hartmann's interviewees gave awkward responses on the benefits of diversity, but "expansive, substantial answers" on race and religion, most of mine gave brief, banal responses on diversity, but detailed, well-thought-out answers on such topics as co-op housing, organization by-laws, drug dealing, fast food, and the plans for the expansion of the Somali mall.[cxlix]

As an anthropologist I know that everything anyone says is meaningful in some way, it is just that my informants' answers on diversity were simply not meaningful *for me,* in the context of my study, as I understood it. For example, when I asked what multiculturalism meant to one man, he replied,

> Oh my god, I don't even know. The neighborhood has this new International School; I never know. Is multiculturalism going to the Art Institute and looking at Asian art and appreciating it, or is it being able to walk down the street and not being inherently afraid of the black kids on the corner … I don't understand what it means … It's amorphous to me.

I am sure that for many researchers this would be very interesting for what it has to say about race, fear, art, appreciation, and the vapidity of the term, as well as how it seems to conflate multiculturalism with the problem of racism. But in this interview I left these abstract questions and critiques behind quickly and moved onto what I found much more interesting, his critiques of the anti-affordable housing activists in his neighborhood.

For the activist who answered my question about diversity in Whittier by saying how she liked purple hair, she immediately added, "I'd like the neighborhood to be safer, and properties cleaned up that look bad." She obviously related diversity with bad looking properties in some way, and wanted to talk about that, so that is what we did. To this day I still do not know how she relates diversity to ugly buildings, but even if she were sitting in front of me right now I would not ask her, because I have learned through experience that the answer would probably be short, not useful to me, and make me feel like I should not have asked. The same goes for a man who was running for the Alliance board, whose stump speech went like this, "For me, the beautiful part about Whittier, like most of the candidates, is the diversity of the neighborhood, we have unlimited opportunity here, there comes a time in one's life when they want to give back. And that's why I got involved." I do not know what diversity has to do with giving back.

While many activists used the topic of diversity to discuss the current political issues in the neighborhood, many also used it to express how they specifically *chose* a diverse neighborhood to live in. When I asked an activist, "Do you value having people

who are different from you in your neighborhood" (AMP Question 112a), he answered, "I think it's more interesting, but frankly it's not an important thing to me, it happens to be the community I live in, but I chose this community." For another, "It's the reason I live here, we deliberately chose a diverse neighborhood." They later added,

> I'd like to have diversity not just in terms of race and orientation and all that stuff; I'd also like to see economic diversity, people of all income levels. Because … the best weapon we have against stereotyping is to have people constantly rubbing shoulders together, and you get to know people of all different kinds, once you know an individual instead of someone you think is a stereotype of a group, it's a lot harder to be biased against them.

A beautiful thing to say, beautifully spoken, and the kind of data that academics love to report into their publications, but tiresome to me. This is something that anyone, anywhere could have said. But an explanation of the actual difference between the Whittier Neighbors and the Whittier Alliance, that is something this informant could give me that not many people in the world could.

Unlike me, Bell and Hartmann found the platitudes and incoherence to be informative in and of itself, and were able to successfully theorize around these results; finding that while interviewees would talk happily about the joy of diversity, they were not able to make sense of their fondness for diversity in the context of the not so happy issue of inequality. They did not know how to integrate these seemingly incompatible things, becoming inarticulate when asked about the inequality within the diversity they so valued (Bell & Hartmann 2007:908).[cl]

> We contend that one of the primary reasons why our respondents are able to live with these various tensions and contradictions is because the discourse of diversity captured in our interviews rests on a white normative perspective. This perspective starts from the dominance of white worldviews, and sees the culture, experiences, and indeed lives, of people of color only as they relate to or interact with the white world.

"In short, in-depth interviewing allowed us to delve beneath the surface of initial answers to reach the deep structure and cultural commonsense implicit in diversity discourse" (898). What is so interesting here is how the results of two similar studies, could be so interesting and useful for the researchers of one study and not at all for another. While I obviously wanted these diversity and multiculturalism questions to work, in fact I had

never felt comfortable about how they would fit into an ethnographic study of neighborhood activism.

In the doing of my research, I became less interested in what diversity meant to my informants, and more in what their talk of diversity, and action in the name of it, *did*. My focus on race, ethnicity and ethnic relations shifted away from the answers they gave me to questions on diversity during private interviews, and onto what activists were doing in public with ethnic diversity. This is why I will now turn to specific moments and efforts in Whittier, ones involving a Somali mall, parking wars, restaurants, and gentrification.

2: Creation of Ethnicity through Conflict over the Expansion of a Somali Mall

> You might have heard of the "Somali Mall" on Pillsbury and Lake. The two buildings are officially called Karmel Square and Karmel Suuq, but I think most non-Somalis in the neighborhood just know them as a source of traffic snarls. Karmel is definitely more than a traffic obstacle. From the moment you park (a dollar an hour) you're in a different world.

So begins the only review on Yelp.com at the time of Karmel mall. The “mall” is comprised of two buildings taking up half city block, each building a two story bazaar that houses dozens of small businesses, each one run by refugees from the ongoing violence in Somali (almost one third of people of Somali heritage in America are in Minnesota, or about 25,000). I must admit, I myself have become exasperated at cars while trying to go by Karmel; when not in a hurry to get home, I sometimes even purposely choose this street just to see what was unfolding on it. More often than not, as I come near the main entrance of the mall, the cars in the street are stopped, as drivers try to figure out whether or not to try their luck at finding a spot inside, wait for one on this block, search elsewhere, double park in order to run in and out again, or just spend a few minutes talking from their car with a friend on the sidewalk. If I can get past the entrance, I will probably have to navigate through more searchers who seem to me to randomly stop, make U turns, or speed up in their pursuit of a space (sound of my horn).

In the introductory chapter I mentioned that about a year after beginning research in Whittier I started complaining that all I ever seemed to hear people talk about at Alliance meetings was parking and crack cocaine. At any Alliance meeting that deals even remotely with a development/rehab proposal, parking is always an issue and always a problem; to the Whittier activist, unlike crack, there is never enough of it. City codes clearly specify exactly how many parking spaces each type of business must have. "Eat Street" presents a challenge because while a store usually only has a few people in it for a short time, restaurants are the opposite, and so a concentration of them puts a lot of pressure on the available parking. And while one can only hope that any restaurant or shopping hub actually delivers the required number; the code turns out to be a pipe dream.

After I had spent years hearing about the parking shortage on Nicollet "Eat Street," in 2013 the city completed a parking study that found that the area around Eat Street actually had 1,000 more parking spaces than were required! [cli] This estimate was part of an ongoing effort by neighborhood activists and others to turn this stretch of Nicollet Ave into a "pedestrian friendly zone," where the street experience is geared more towards walking, browsing, biking, leisure-ing, and dining on the sidewalk, while discouraging things like – cars commuting through the zone, drive-through windows, wide roads, wide intersections, car oriented businesses, low density, driveways, and parking lots fronting the street. And so this parking study by the city was actually in the service of discouraging parking lots, since they encouraged car culture, since lots make for long stretches of sidewalk where pedestrians have to brave walking over driveways, and since it amounts to walking past parking lots instead of open windows showing cheerful diners and bright merchandise. According the study,

> Staff has estimated that there are approximately 2,400 parking spaces provided within this area, of which approximately 1,400 are needed to meet the existing minimum requirements … This is an example of how minimum parking requirements sometimes create an excess of parking which also makes choosing the personal automobile the preferred mode of transportation, and can run counter to the livability and sustainability strategies outlined in the comprehensive plan.

The irony is that very same activists that had spent years decrying a shortage of parking, now find themselves promoting a pedestrian overlay whose very success is predicated on

reducing the number of parking spaces. Parking was originally desired in order to prevent restaurant patron's cars from spilling over onto their residential blocks, but now, to help businesses thrive, gentrify the neighborhood, make it more "green," and/or heighten their own walking/shopping experience, these activists found themselves in the position of having to admit that perhaps it is not always preferable to be multiplying the square footage of the neighborhood that is dedicated to the temporary storage of (other people's) cars. As this dynamic played out, the tension within individuals and between them must have been palpable. The tension however was partially diffused by activists calling for more *underground* parking (underground parking though is incredibly expensive to build, at up to $10,000 per spot).

Karmel square however is another kind of parking beast, an "ethnic" one. While many hundreds of Somalis visit the dozens of businesses at Karmel each day, there were only a few parking spaces on the property. Somalis drive from all over the metro to stay here from anywhere from a minute to all day, and the residential streets around Karmel can only offer up a pittance of the parking demanded. While parking is personally important to me (I routinely report cars to the city that have overstayed their three day maximum visit in one spot. Also, one of my wife and I's favorite spectator sports is watching from our living room while people try to parallel park on our street), in this chapter I am going to use parking as a conduit through which to explain how ethnicity is constructed, and explain how relations between class/ethnic groups are affected by parking, as well as explain how controlling parking is done in the name of building community and improving quality of life.

A wide array of Whittier activists expend a great deal of talk on how to get Somali and Latino immigrants involved in "the neighborhood," and while I have heard a few people of color remark on how little minorities are represented at neighborhood meetings and events, I heard it more from middle-class whites. It is always lurking in the shadows of all Alliance meetings; it is an open wound. And while the white, long-time activists genuinely do regret not having more minorities involved, the reason it is such a sore point is because as long as there are few to no minorities represented, the white activists are so susceptible to the charge of being discriminatory, irresponsible,

insensitive, or even racist. Being people that are for such things as tolerance, diversity, community, and democracy, they have no defense against critiques of their own lack of inclusivity. If the white activists were 1960s Jim Crow southerners, or contemporary White supremacists, they might not care about being called racially insensitive. But for the cosmopolitan progressive, all one can do in the face of a charge of racism, is half-heartedly mumble something about their organization having tried to recruit minorities, about of valuing diversity, and about immigrants not having the time to volunteer for neighborhood causes, and then hope the accuser stops poking at the wound.

They are in a similar position as the Republican party; Republicans desperately want more minorities to join them so that the party can be free of the encumbrance of being seen as bigoted. Most in the party do not mind equality, but not being willing to support nearly as progressive policies as Democrats, they are stuck in a difficult spot in the current multicultural environment. Since Republicans do not value equality of condition (as opposed to equality or opportunity, aka equity) as much as Democrats, but understand that it would be suicide to deny valuing diversity as such, they have nowhere to go but to try holding the line against further government interventions towards equality. All they can do is keep vaguely referencing such popular concepts as "individual responsibility," "small government," "no new taxes," "state's rights," and "reverse-discrimination," in order to throw up roadblocks against "big government." [clii] And like Republicans, many Alliance activists do not understand why minorities would not flock to their organization and policies, as they see their policies as so obviously being in minorities' best interests. For example, those activists advocating for gentrification and less subsidized housing, feel that their policies will bring less crime, stronger businesses, better rental management, and better overall quality of life will help everyone, including minorities living in blocks plagued by drug dealers and living in buildings beleaguered by poor maintenance. Meanwhile, those whites advocating for less gentrification and more subsidized housing would think that the immigrants and disadvantaged in Whittier would all want to join their cause. So while there is little interaction and cooperation between the whites and minorities, between the homeowners and renters, and between the native born and immigrants (and for that matter between

whites who are pro-gentrification and anti), this does not mean that diversity, as a concept and a practice, is not being defined and enacted. I will even show how Whittier activists are helping to define what it is to be "Somali," as well as "white."[cliii]

While many activists see themselves as front line saviors creating a more integrated society, what I take note of are the ways that they are reifying racial/ethnic distinctions, but in new ways unexplored in the research. I find that their activism often falls within what is known as the primordialist approach to ethnicity (Bart); primordialism is idea that each ethnic group exists in and of itself, and is distinct from each other group. It holds that, from "times primordial" we have been separated out into mutually exclusive cultures, each strange to the other, as if from the time of Babel. However, a more contemporary, academic understanding of racial/ethnic groups sees them as socially constructed, as things that have been recently cobbled together by specific political, economic, and social events and tactics, and for the purposes of particular interests. And while the primordial view sees ethnic conflict as arising out of the simple fact of difference, social constructivism instead has shown the means through which conflict between groups can be caused by outside forces and trends impinging upon them. These forces are externalities stirring up trouble that would have not been stirred up otherwise. World wars, famine, colonialism, and other global tragedies arrive at local places, and actually create or exacerbate ethnic/religious identities that may not have even been salient before the external problem arrived.

When viewing images of "ethnic conflict" in the media, such as young, raggedly dressed Africans grinning behind their big guns, or innocent families running through the streets trying to escape the wrath of their rivals, or destitute clans rising up like insane mobs and burning the treasures of their society, the standard interpretation is that these groups kill each other because they hate each other – always have, always will. Their cultures or religions are seen as diametrically opposed, and fate has them destined to repeat cycles of truce and violence. However, what if, it is not so much that ethnicity leads to conflict, as that conflict leads to ethnicity. In the case of Whittier, parking is the conflict that impinges itself upon the white and Somali people. And even though the white activists are very sensitive to the problems of reproducing stereotypes and creating

differences, I will show how they are reifying and re-imagining the differences between the two in ways particular to this area.

When the chair of an Alliance committee walked into her meeting in 2003, she found a large group of Somalis present, and must have felt a great deal of anxiety. Even though there are many Somalis who live and work in the neighborhood, there are usually none at Alliance meetings, or almost any meetings called in the name of "neighborhood" (Somalis have plenty of organizations, meetings, and activism, but it revolves around other contexts). If the chair had walked into a room full of white Quakers she probably would not have felt fear, but the limited experience that neighborhood activists have had with large groups of Somalis, has led them to see Somalis as loud, argumentative, and disorderly; tonight the chair would not be disappointed. I will use this meeting to explain the social construction of ethnic identities and of diversity in general, and it will also help explain the construction of democracy in the neighborhood context.

On the agenda that night at the Transportation and Land Use Planning Committee, was the plan by Karmel Properties to double the size of the Somali mall.[cliv] The chair began the meeting by trying to put on an authoritative face, which turned out to be a futile attempt to head off any early dissention. She did not usually perform in this way; she, like the person who crosses the street to avoid walking past a group of black youths, was modifying her behavior based on a stereotype of how people behave. Neither she, nor the man she turned the meeting over to, would be successful at maintaining what they would consider decorum. Things started with a few long arguments on changing the agenda of the night; some wanted to put the Karmel issue up front, as it was most had come for. I could see some of the long-time activists bristling at this; I assumed they were thinking that this meant that the Somalis attending had only come for this one topic and would leave immediately after. A stereotype of neighborhood Somalis is that they do not care about issues not directly related to them, they do not know/respect Robert's Rules of Order, and are trusted less with voting. One white board member challenged everyone present to stay for the entire meeting. Yet another asked how we would know who in the room is really from the neighborhood and therefore qualified to vote; but yet a different

white homeowner piped up with, “we trust them.” In this room, ethnicity was being made by fashioning Somalis as different, or as not so different, as the case may be. For example, in no other meeting that year did I ever hear anyone question anyone’s right to vote, this only occurred at the meeting with the most Somalis present. But at the same time, at almost every meeting where I have heard someone cast suspicion on Somalis, no matter how politely it was done, it has been immediately challenged by other whites.

What is interesting though is that the defense of Somalis usually comes in the form of drawing Somalis as noble, hard-working people, rather than simply, people. And while many whites in the neighborhood appear to me to get nervous when walking into a meeting room full of Somalis, they would probably experience the opposite reaction if in a crowd of them on the street, for unlike urban African-Americans, Somali-Americans, with their headscarves, long sleeved shirts, and abstinence from alcohol, are felt by Minnesotans to be safe, decent, family types. But what all these ways of talking and feeling about Somalis share, is them as *different*. While no one at neighborhood events ever portrays them as bad, they are either portrayed as slightly off the mark, or good, but portrayed none the less.[clv]

At this meeting were a dozen or so long-time Alliance board members who were aligned with the old Friends of Whittier party (FOW) (this party had been active in the 1990s by fielding slates of candidate who were opposed to any social service expansion in the neighborhood, including affordable or supportive housing projects, and were for the expansion of market-rate, home-owner housing). They were all homeowners, were all white, all believed that homeowners should control the Alliance, and all believed that it should represent “homeowner interests.” While the FOW was no longer publically active as a party, its past members, and those that these members had since recruited as Alliance regulars, still controlled the board. Having so many non-homeowners at this meeting was a clear threat to their interests and continued dominance. This was especially so because other item of note on the agenda was the election of the committee chair for the coming year. So when the acting chair had asked at the beginning of the meeting if there were any changes to the agenda, someone aligned with the FOW had moved that, due to the full agenda, the election of the chair be moved to the next meeting. The effect,

presumably, would be to not run over the allotted time tonight. However, another effect would be to move the election to a time where there would likely be many fewer people, and no Somalis. Alliance meetings are usually attended by a small crowd of regulars, composed mostly of homeowners sympathetic to "homeowner" interests. The motion failed, but another FOW ally moved that the election be delayed to the very end of the meeting, and this did pass. If the Somalis all left after the Karmel discussion, then moving the vote to the end would mean the Somalis would not be present for the vote of the chair (when the vote for the committee chair was eventually held, the acting chair, a FOW ally was defeated by a nonconforming member of the Alliance board who was antagonistic to the dominant "homeowner" agenda, and a student of the Somali language).

This highlights a tension within the homeowner crowd, a tension between valuing that everyone always do their civic duty by staying for all of the meeting, and also fearing that they would stay for all of it and exercise their democratic right to vote for the chair of a committee they knew little about. However, even for those who may have held both feelings, these are not necessarily contradictory positions. It is not that the "homeowners" do not want Somalis, or renters to vote, it is that they do not want people to vote who do not "care" about the neighborhood. They feel that if one cares about land use in the neighborhood, one will come to multiple meeting of this committee and stay for their entirety; if one does not, then he or she is not well positioned to be voting on any issue. He or she is seen as lacking the context, expertise, and true citizen perspective needed to make an informed, ethical decision that is in the best interest of the *entire* neighborhood.

The acting chair, also a FOW ally, then turned the meeting over to another FOW ally. He came out strong, slamming a huge book on the podium, and pronouncing that "this is the bible for what we do here." It was the Minneapolis building codes, and he informed us that "everything we need to decide tonight is in here." He was a "get things done" kind of guy who wanted to avoid any more of these side debates, "politics," and confusion. But I wondered, what if all this debate, politics and confusion, was the stuff itself that gets things done, instead of the stuff that gets in the way of getting things done? To most, these distractions, like re-ordering the agenda, not following the building code,

leaving early, and wondering who can and cannot vote, do nothing but cause trouble. However, as I watched the flurry of angry voices, mix-ups, interruptions, and power plays that went on that night, I saw democracy in the making.

The chair had a different perspective than me; he imagined he could control the debate and quickly get to the vote results, by appealing to the "objective" authority of this book. Up first on the agenda was a couple requesting a variance to build a four car garage, but after the details are laid out and vetted, debate ensues not over whether or not they should be allowed to have only a one foot setback from the neighbor's garage, but whether nor not the voting at the meeting will be anonymous. Voting is never anonymous at this committee, but tonight the Somalis in the room were beset by many anxieties. Many of them were merchants who rented space in the Karmel mall, and their landlord, Ahmed, was in the room watching. I had heard rumors that over the years he had retaliated in various ways against those who opposed him. This owner is not Somali, but Palestinian, and while he sells himself as helping the Somali community, many accuse him of actually being their exploiter. I suspect that many in the room did not want him, or the Alliance regulars, or both, to observe how they voted. The Somalis in the room were familiar with each other, while the whites were almost all strangers to them, but both their old relationships with fellow countrymen and new ones with their new countrymen, were fraught for them with consequences. Eventually, Ahmed made a motion that the voting be anonymous, and it passed 33 to 30.

Before the vote is taken though, various debates in Somali around the room break out, and it begins to become clear to my amateur eyes that the real divisions in this room are not between white and Somali. A Somali leader very well-known in the metro is arguing with another Somali man who represents Karmel Properties, while other Somali's try to intervene; the leader then goes to another side of the room to loudly discuss something with others. At about this time two uniformed police officers arrive, and looking a bit menacing, they slowly weave through the room, eyeing people as they go. Although I highly doubt there was any chance of violence or illegal activity of any sort, this was also the only Alliance meeting at which police were ever called. Someone

with pull with the police has apparently called them, wanting them to make a show of force.

When the expansion of Karmel Mall does come up on the docket, everything hinges on parking. The square footage of the new mall requires 144 additional parking spaces, and the plan appears to include more than this. However, an Alliance board member owning a home near the mall reports that he personally has counted the number of cars that are visiting the mall at a given time on Saturdays; it is usually over 250. He feels that while the parking plan is up to code, in reality there will continue to be many more cars than spaces, and these cars will end up in front of his home. Ahmed then attempts to win over voters by talking about those things that he thinks the middle class whites in the neighborhood want to hear. He contritely admits that parking has been a problem, but he will "create community" by putting porches on the backside of the mall which fronts The Greenway bicycle path. He also argues that the presence of the existing mall has lowered crime in the neighborhood, and the expansion will create jobs, develop an unused piece of land, and offer the neighborhood a diverse ethnic market. The car counter replies – "Diversity is good, but I'm talking about parking spaces."

Ahmed's gambit to get off the topic of parking failed. Where he did not fail however was in typecasting the whites in the room. His praises of the new mall could have come right out of the satirical book, "Stuff White People Like," which does include both Diversity and Bicycles, but just as well could have included bike paths created from old railroad right of ways, as well as such tropes as "crime fighting," "community," and "job creation." Ahmed did not accuse anyone (that night) of racism, but instead took a more positive route. I felt like his words tilted the image of middle-class whites away from malicious racists, and more towards being silly bourgeoisie who ride their bikes to a neighborhood ethnic market while feeling sophisticated, green, and a part of their community. The strategy failed because he did not understand the white homeowners; they really did care about cars and parking, just like they said. I would guess that Ahmed's theories about how the new mall will help the neighborhood did not sway anyone's vote that night, but his theories did work to publically construct an image of middle-class white people.

The vote on the expansion plan ended up 36 in favor and 12 opposed (and 4 abstentions). It did not matter that he had misjudged the white activists, because organizing efforts brought out many of his supporters. Grassroots work (or at least businesses acumen) had taken the day, while the FOW camp could only muster a measly twelve people. However, two weeks later the vote was overturned by the board, which was a déjà vu of two years prior, which the last time Ahmed had come to the Alliance with a plan for this site. I suspect that one reason the board voted opposite the committee was because they felt that Ahmed had selfishly and undemocratically stacked the meeting with his mall tenants, who they feel are bullied into coming. I also suspect that the board members predicted that those Somalis would only return to an Alliance meeting the next time there was another vote on Karmel mall. This prediction would have been accurate, and this would also have reinforced the view that Somalis as not really care about neighborhood, but only care about issues that directly affect them (which may include a fear of losing their lease in the mall).

With all the negotiations, open debates, and inter-ethnic interactions going on, this meeting could have possibly held great potential for change. One definite effect of the election and the voting by Somalis that night, was the upset election of the new chair, who was a car-free renter and a fiery social justice activist. But this lasted only until the new chair had a child, and no longer had time for the Alliance. Things then returned to status quo when the succeeding committee chair was a FOW ally who worked in the for profit construction industry. So while the meeting I highlighted here was democracy in the making, in the long term it did not appear to alter much. While it was a lesson in voting for all involved, it changed little in terms of the way people thought of Somalis, whites, homeowners, and the Alliance, and it made the Alliance no more diverse in any sense of the word.

3: How Restricting Parking Creates Ethnicity

In this study I have described how almost all the activists doing their activism in the name of Whittier are white homeowners, and how “homeowner” itself is such a charged word. The Alliance and its individual board members have been accused many

times of being racist and classist, so much so that the regulars are dulled to this indictment. Ironically though, the event that showed me the divide between white homeowners and minority renters more starkly than any other was not a rancorous vote at an Alliance meeting, but a block potluck whose white organizers were very sensitive to issues of race and culture, and tried hard to welcome as many of the residents as possible that lived on and around their block, including the renters and Latinos. And the divide I felt so palpably while at this potluck was epitomized by one unexciting, fleeting moment that I am sure I am the only one to remember; I will soon describe it for you.

The potluck was held three years after the heated meeting described above, and the expansion of the Karmel mall did happen eventually; Ahmed is not one to be hindered by the board of a neighborhood organization. There are rumors that a few years earlier he orchestrated an extremely contentious and litigious takeover of the board of a nearby neighborhood, resulting in that organization's disbandment; and at the time of the potluck he was serving nineteen months in federal prison for bribing a city council member. Many years later in 2012, he would initiate an amateurish campaign to totally restructure the city government; in 2013 supporters of his attempted a takeover of the Alliance board itself, in 2014 there was an open meeting called to promote the termination of the Alliances director, and in 2015 he filed a lawsuit against the Alliance because of its voting rules. Each time though, he would be out-maneuvered by a lack of due diligence, and by the vigilant Alliance regulars who keep tabs on his undertakings. In 2014 a number of candidates sympathetic to Ahmed attempted to run for the board, but were stymied by a controversial application process that denied candidacy to some, and by a multipronged opposition. Ahmed's organizing was egregiously overshadowed by the larger contest between current board members and an upstart group of young, mass-transportation and rental minded activists, and these rival groups were united in their opposition to Ahmed's agenda. The new Karmel addition ended up not being built exactly as he or anyone else wanted it, as building codes seem to mean little to Ahmed. "In recent years, Ahmed has started construction without permits, taken the city to court and had enough tangles with inspectors that properties he controls make up half the city's

watch list of chronic code violators" (Rao 2012). The doubling of the mall did not help the parking situation.

The potluck was not simply a friendly get together, but specifically organized to educate residents living just north the Karmel mall, about parking codes in Minneapolis; and the organizers of the potluck wanted to start an agreeable dialogue on how to remedy the tight parking. Their gripe was that on this quiet residential street of single family homes and occasional duplexes, they and their guests could almost never find a spot to park on the street, because all the spots were continually being taken by visitors of the mall. While not an Alliance function, the event was organized by a long-time board member, Timothy, and it was held one summer evening on his driveway, a stone's throw away from Karmel. What are the neighbors of Karmel to do when their residential, low-density blocks are a tangled mass of cars, slowly trolling for any spot that may fleetingly open up before being devoured by the mall goer fastest to claim it? In an open letter to neighbors and the city, a landlord on Timothy's block wrote,

> Reckless driving is very common with people looking and scrambling to find limited parking spots. Many of the patrons of the International Market never look for traffic or pedestrians as they exit from the market parking lot, or as they see an open parking spot. I walk, bike, and drive past the Market frequently and most of the time it is I who is the one yielding to the Market crowd. I drive a full size van, one would think I would be easy to spot they just don't look, accidents are frequent but from what I have seen they are mostly between Market patrons. My driveway has become a major turnaround point for motorists; often the car will sit blocking the sidewalk as the driver scouts the area for possible parking openings.

I would guess that in America the most common target of "bad driving" complaints are women and Asians, but in Minneapolis it is Somalis that seem to be the most reviled for their perceived driving abilities. Add to this that most of the taxi drivers are Somali, and you get a double stereotype. I have no pithy quotes from white activists that capture the angst and racialization of their frustrations with Somalis and the mall, but resident torment and stereotyping are too palatable not to feel. If the letter quoted above was from a public, written document, then imagine what others must be feeling and saying privately (where there's smoke there's fire). If I were a journalist hashing out a quick article instead of an anthropologist spending years on a dissertation, I would call this conflict "a true clash of civilizations." Having heard homeowners in the

neighborhood complain about the situation, I can tell you that they do attribute it to a difference in cultures. However, they do it gingerly and do not elaborate, not wanting to offend or sound ignorant. For example, a black homeowner living across the street from an apartment building that is half Somali, half Latino, once told me in casual conversation that the annoying honking that he hears coming from cars stopped in front of the building, is because of "a difference in culture" (trying to stay the neutral observer, I neither validated nor contradicted his theory, and to this day I fear he took my silence as having taken his comment "the wrong way").

Regardless of what influence culture and nationality had on the parking conflict, it is only because others beyond this resident/shopper circle had failed to provide for adequate parking that the Somalis shoppers ever got constructed as trouble. The outside influences that generated this conflict are the city that set up the underlying street/parking structure, the management of the mall that had not allowed for enough parking, and the car culture of America that provided the language and ideological framework with which to recognize and elaborate on a "shortage" of parking (for the many residents of Whittier who get around by bike and bus, there is a huge glut of parking, and an egregiously unjust lack of biking lanes and bus routes). While the new addition did have an underground parking area, Karmel Properties charged money for it that many patrons would rather not pay, and Karmel was also accused of purposely not even opening all of the parking.

Meanwhile, the city had approved all this retail/commercial activity at Karmel while having very little plan for where cars would place themselves while their drivers were not in them. Downtown Minneapolis holds dozens of private underground lots, scores of private surface lots, seven large municipal lots, and seventeen municipal ramps, including one contiguous set of ramps holding 7,500 spaces, of which interstate 394 dead ends into (in the Twin Cities, multistory parking structures are called "ramps," which begs the question – what do you call the sloped byways leading from one level of the ramp to the next? Meanwhile, The Mall of America is fifteen minutes away and can hold 12,500 cars). And yet, the city has built not one ramp outside downtown, and the closest private ramp is a mile away from Karmel.

The parking conflict is an example of how very local conflicts can be created by outside forces, and how this can all lead to concretizing the racial, ethnic or religious identities within communities. An horrifying and instructive example of this was the 1994 Rwandan genocide, where over the course of one hundred days, 800,000 people, almost all of the Tutsi ethnic group, were slaughtered by the Rwandan army (made up of Hutus), Hutu militias, and Hutu mobs. The maintenance of the Somali/White dichotomy does not have the same murderous implications as the Hutu/Tutsi dichotomy, but the tools provided by Mahmood Mamdani in this study of the Rwandan genocide, can show the construction of ethnicity in Whittier. The typical explanation of "ethnic strife," would write all this violence off as the barbarism of ancient tribes, fighting as tribes do ("boys will be boys"). However, Mamdani showed that not only are these two ethnic identities relatively recent, but they were at least in part the creation of anthropologists, Dutch colonialists, and others from beyond indigenous Rwanda. For example, the Dutch appeared to take a fuzzy class boundary that they found in the indigenous political structure, and reified it into a very rigid racial boundary, for their own purposes of control.[clvi] I maintain that Karmel Properties, the City of Minneapolis, and the national car culture/industry, by creating this parking situation, have provoked ethnic stereotyping and racial antagonism. I do not mean to suggest that these three factors stirred up rancor between white homeowners and Somali shoppers, or that they revealed any essential differences between these groups, I mean that they actually *invented* the differences between them.[clvii]

Within the complex contexts of "the mall parking problem" and the "shortage" of parking, the answer seemed to some to be something known as "critical parking." Under critical parking, residents of an area are only ones able to buy special permits that allow them (and maybe a guest) to park unfettered within a certain zone, while everyone else is limited to a certain amount of time and/or a time of day, or simply totally denied. Just as the power that the elite in any society wield is entangled with both government policies, corporate practices, the media, and various organizations, local grassroots movements are not simply "local" but are also very entangled with these same "large" entities (Gregory

1998a:54), in this case, with various municipal bodies within the City of Minneapolis. While the organizers of this potluck marketed it and performed it as neighborly, informal, and just for the regular folk living in one corner of one neighborhood, I saw this enterprise as extending way beyond these few blocks, and involving much more administrative bodies and networks. After a bit of socializing at the beginning of the potluck, neighbors sat down in folding chairs set up in nice neat rows on Timothy's driveway, facing toward the street. On the sidewalk facing the audience, short talks were given by one city official each from Parking, Traffic, and the local police precinct; afterward the food was served and people talked.[clviii] In the larger sense, this this was not just about a few innocent neighbors "getting government to do its job." Considering all the different roles, occupations, and jurisdictions present (including the field of anthropology and my University of Minnesota, a tentacled entity with a three billion dollar annual budget), some operating indirectly or hazily at the margins, this event was about savvy operators engaging each other in a multi-way negotiation and power sharing operation.

The parking restrictions, which were only one of the many things produced by this activist campaign, did eventually go up and were quite severe, today each of three blocks has four signs that read, "NO PARKING. 8AM-MIDNIGHT DAILY. EXCEPT BY PERMIT." Park not for even five minutes, all day, every day. I had had experience with not quite as draconian permit parking, having spent a lot of time at a friend's who lived on Nob Hill in downtown San Francisco. Residents were given stickers allowing them unlimited parking, while others were limited to a few hours, but regardless, finding any open spot could be an exercise in futility. It was not uncommon for people to circle this neighborhood for literally an hour before finding a spot, giving up, or taking their own life. But it had never bothered me in the slightest that parking was *discriminatory* against me in favor of the residents. Parking is not a subject most would easily associate discrimination with, but non-residents are discriminated against because they face a different and much stricter set of rules than residents. While there is nothing wrong with cars parking on Nob Hill, as the street is plenty wide enough and there are no safety issues, the issue is that cars driven by a certain category of persons are not as welcome. If

the rules were discriminating against certain types or sizes of vehicles, that would be one thing, but the critical parking rules refer to the *people* parking them; it is a matter of whether or not the owners of the car live in the neighborhood or not. Imagine if the category of person being explicitly excluded from parking on a given street was an ethnic or religious group, this would absolutely have been a civil rights matters. However, non-residents are not a group recognized as a relevant social category in America today, especially not one needing special protection under the law.

However, the fact is that the actual people who were going to be turned away from parking on these streets were almost all Somali, while Somalis would be totally or almost totally absent among the people granted permits. De facto discrimination is where the law, a rule, or a policy negatively affects one group of people to a much greater degree than another group, even though neither group are explicitly named in the statute. A commonly cited example of de facto discrimination is The Controlled Substances act of the late 1980s, which created massively harsher sentencing of the sale of crack than cocaine, even though crack is nothing but a derivative of cocaine (Kurtzleben 2010). The charge is that the only reason lawmakers in Washington created this discrepancy is because crack is thought of as a black drug while cocaine a white one, and during the "crack epidemic" of the 1980s, blacks users of drugs were seen as criminal drug addicts while white users where seen as upscale, recreational, weekend users ("de jure" discrimination would be if the drug laws explicitly said that blacks must receive longer sentences than whites). The importance of this charge was that whether or not this law was *intentionally* framed to hurt blacks or not, it does, and that this was simply one of the mechanisms that make up the systemic, long-term regime that keeps blacks from gaining equality in America. However, de facto discrimination can occur anywhere in any number of subtle forms; in 2011 the European Community banned frozen chicken from many of its foods products, and Brazil claimed de facto discrimination since almost all of its chickens exported to Europe are frozen, while chicken produced in Europe itself has the luxury of being able to quickly get to market, hence not frozen (USDA 2011).

Parking permits appear to me to be de facto discrimination because while permits are given out regardless of ethnicity or immigration status, they *effectively* ban Somali

immigrants from parking on three blocks of my neighborhood. Do they ban Somalis who are residents? No, but there are no Somalis living on those three blocks, nor do Somalis tend not to be guests of those who do live there. I am sure that those residents and officials who advocated for and implemented critical parking do not consciously think about the civil rights of critical parking, however, this does not change that the whole point of the campaign was to ban those going to a *Somali* mall.

The handout by the parking official at the potluck explained that,

> A Critical Parking area is a zone where residents pay for the right to park their cars on-street while others without permits cannot … Critical Parking Areas are common where an outside influence brings large amounts of car traffic to a neighborhood.

In this case, the "outside influence" was Somali, war refugees recently arrived from Africa. But am I being unfair by twisting their words and making it into a racial thing? Yes and no. The Somali parkers are seen as outsiders not because they are from another continent, but because they are from another neighborhood. But yet, the reason they are seen as such bad parkers and dangerous drivers is because they grew up in a foreign culture. At the Pillsbury Avenue main entrance to the mall, one can often *observe* cars and people doing all sorts of illegal and impractical things, thereby totally blocking all traffic. One resident at the potluck wondered, "do they understand what loitering means?"

This begs the questions, if it was a mall of white people, would there still be a shortage of parking, and if there was, would the residents still be as resentful of them? I feel that it is because the Somalis are foreign to the style and guidelines of parking in America/Minnesota, that they are seen as a threat to traffic flow. A neighborhood activist of Scandinavian decent had once told me that the lack of adequate parking at Karmel was especially problematic because this was not going to be a "Scandinavian market," and the cars that park at Karmel are there all day (I do not know exactly what she meant by that, as I am very sure that pressing her on it would have resulted only in her denying being racist).

When I recruited my first interviewee in Whittier, I had told her I was interested in talking to her about multiculturalism, inequality and community building. At the

interview a week later she brought a box of old letters that had been written by her own Scandinavian ancestors to each other. She pulled them out and made a point of describing the high level of literacy among her ancestors. She proudly informed me that at the time of their writing, there had been an "emphasis on handwriting." She instructed me that people need education such as this in order to think, people need to be taught the value of "taking care of things," but that the Somalis and Latinos who come into the store she works at, pay her in "ratty" dollar bills. Without prompting on the topic, she gave me two examples of the poor driving by Somalis, and derided the way they talk. It was clear to me that she found her northern European ancestry to be sophisticated and responsible, while Somalis were the opposite; they were unruly, obnoxious, and did not value living in an orderly, fair civilization. Without saying as much, she was telling me that Scandinavians follow the rules of the road, drive in a straight and straightforward manner, and politely let everyone take their turn, while Somalis drove like they speak, erratically, selfishly, and with little regard for maintaining decorum. Under this worldview, I understand a "Scandinavian market" as a place that would not need so many parking spaces, because the shoppers would get in and get out, quietly, efficiently, and civilly, opening the space for the next shopper, whereas the Somali shoppers linger, mingle, and gab in the streets. While the views of these two women may or may not have been representative of other activists, their comments were a tangible example of the continuing construction of difference.

If one drives a few miles outward from Whittier, to the affluent and almost all white southwest corner of Minneapolis, one might encounter the boutique shopping area marketed as "50th & France," which includes "an array of spas and salons to pamper yourself," according to the business organization's website. However, judging by most of their marketing photos, one would expect to find it a totally pristine place, empty of any vehicles or people that would interfere with your pampering; a perfectly serene space where you wait for no one, interact only with those who wait on you, and consume all that you wish. However, driving and parking in this area is a constant source of complaints and aggravation for those subjected to this bottleneck, and the two cities that

border this district are often working on possible solutions, including building large parking ramps.

Figure 2: Images of emptiness from the 50th & France website

Homeowners here complain about parking just as in Whittier, and on France Ave the target of complaints were middle-class white people, so there is nothing inherently racist about not wanting outsiders clogging up your streets. However, anytime that any racial/ethnic group is being portrayed any particular way, positively or negatively, passively or aggressively, diffusely or explicitly, sensitively or insensitively, racial prejudice is involved, by definition. So the next question that needs to be asked about the Karmel situation is – how is the prejudice being acted on? By this I mean – are people being actively *discriminated* against in the service of inequality? Since there is de facto discrimination against a lower class, dark skinned, refugee group, then critical parking is a technology manufacturing segregation, as well as manufacturing bigotry and ethnicity. And while the spas at 50th & France may not be inciting bigotry, they are writing the story of white identity and culture. The photos render an ethnic group that shops in solitude, while parking activists in Whittier render an ethnic group that shops in mobs (as I write this I watch two cars on my block passive aggressively honking at each other long after they are out of each other's way).

Somalis in Minneapolis are not different from others simply because they are inherently, objectively different, but because they have been constructed by themselves

and others as so. They were not simply "careless" drivers from the beginning of time, who are just now bringing their carelessness to Minneapolis. Thirty years ago Minneapolitans had no experience with Somali people, and so had no opinion of them, they had not yet put the work into talking about them in any particular way. Being Somali in Minnesota would have simply been an oddity, but nothing more. Fast forward to today, and there is not only a body of knowledge about Somali driving, but solutions to the "problem." One resident at the potluck explained how the issue was not just about making a law to stop people from being a nuisance in the streets, but "education is the issue;" read – those people do not know how to park/drive/socialize, and *we* have to teach them. Yet another resident felt that unruly Somali kids were disturbing the neighborhood with their yelling, trash, and running into the streets; "children are welcome, but take responsibility for them, please!" The message is that Somalis need to learn how to 1) look where they are driving, 2) drive safely, 3) park appropriately, 4) not loiter, 5) take responsibility for their children, 6) dispose of trash, and 7) be more quiet.

One white homeowner near the mall had been particularly upset about the parking/driving situation for a long time. He told me that when he tries to help the parkers by warning them about the dangers to themselves of their careless driving, their kids, and their cars, he gets "hollered at." And when he has complained about Karmel in the past, his home had been vandalized. He told me that his garden had been maliciously killed off by poisons, and that "some of us are intimidated by the people" at Karmel. By "the people" he was not referring to the Somali shoppers or merchants, but the Palestinian owner, his family members, and his management team. The alleged violence visited upon this resident has come from *beyond* the two groups appearing to be at conflict here, the white residents and Somalis drivers. However, the stories about these attacks on this man's property are known about far and wide, and it is talk about violent incidents such as this that leads to our very understandings of middle-class whites and others. To some, this story is evocative of white homeowners as protectors of community, and Somalis as not. To others, the story verifies the overbearing, intolerance of middle-class white residents, and the mistreatment of immigrants who are just trying to make their way in a new land.

The police lieutenant at the potluck espoused her own theory of culture, one I recognized as being informed by James Wilson's famous "broken windows theory." Her focus was on the open air drug dealing a block away. The lieutenant explained that problems in the area "draw unruly people doing unruly things … because the neighborhood feels untended." She specifically mentioned vacant, boarded up properties and a lack of lighting as contributing to the crime problem. However, the implication was that chaos created by Somalis going to the mall was also a "broken window" that signaled to drug dealers, thieves, and prostitutes, that this was a place to do business. The broken windows theory plays out like this – If no one cared enough about this area to clean up the traffic problems, trash, and illegal parking, then drug dealers and gangs know that no one will stop them. The officer melded theories of ethnic culture with criminal culture, in the service of changing the culture of this city block, from one where people felt free to be unruly, to one where it was expected that everyone would take responsibility for anything out of order.

What the parking snarl at 50th & France tells us about the Karmel problem, is how complex it is to be concerned with parking in a such a diverse and dense space as Whittier. Not only does the parking activist have to negotiate with bureaucracy, abuse, and their own anger, but also the terms of diversity itself. When the residents near 50th & France organize for traffic control, do they have to go out of their way to host an inclusive potluck where people of many different colors, nationalities, and languages are recruited, made to feel welcome, and not offended in any way? Do they have to watch their every word and step for fear of being labeled a racist pig? And do they have to do all this, while worrying about their home being vandalized and their person attacked one night while walking their dog? All this, including poisoned gardens, heartfelt invitations, and parking discrimination, are the stuff of urban American diversity. And all of it ups the ante of the challenge of "building diverse community."

As we sat listening to the city officials at the potluck, we had been purposely arranged to face the street in question. Cars with Somali drivers trolled by, pressing the point of the meeting. However, this weird configuration of sitters and drivers produced

something much more interesting than simply us noticing that yes, cars were circling the block. *They* were noticing us, and we noticed them noticing us, and I do not know about the others sitting there, but I noticed them noticing that we noticed them. In particular, I remember one Somali man as he drove slowly past, looking at us. On his face was this slightly confused, slightly ill at ease expression that was impossible to miss no matter what culture you were from. It was as if he were thinking, "what are all these white people doing sitting neatly in rows staring at me?" Beyond this, I cannot begin to imagine what he guessed we actually were doing. But what an uncomfortable experience it must have been for him. Especially because this assemblage was not simply looking at him, but mildly glaring/sneering at him; could he sense the disapproval in their eyes? Did he know the part he was supposed to be playing?

We were not only the audience of the invited speakers, but more importantly we were the audience of the uninvited parkers. In the film "The Discrete Charm of the Bourgeois," after dinner guests sit down at an elegant dining table, the curtains on one wall draw back to reveal that the diners are actually on a stage, with an entire theater audience expecting them to perform for their entertainment. At our meeting, the stage was the street and sidewalk, and the unsuspecting performers were the Somali mall goers. To play their part correctly, they were to drive erratically, and park as if clowns. To be in character the kids would pile out of the clown car, run through the street, and throw trash on the ground. To fail at the role, would be to disappoint the audience and embarrass the director (typical circus music or The Pink Panther theme would have put this show in better context). We were surveilling them, and we were trained at this kind of surveillance, having all been brought up in a society were "bad driving" was such a chief topic of conversation, and having lived in a neighborhood where Somalis were so often the recipients of this conversation.

Having a group of people being fashioned as strange and a problem is nothing new, lower class people around the world and across history have often been re-imagined by those above them as essentially different, and vice versa. The Burakumin of Japan were a lower *class* occupational group who over generations had been relegated to such

dirty jobs as the slaughter of animals, but over succeeding generations they were reimagined by the middle and upper classes as an entirely different *ethnic* group, in order to more easily marginalize and exploit them (Kottak 2010:242).[clix] And of course the traditional caste system of India over many generations worked to separate out dozens of different communities into fundamentally dissimilar categories of humans, each arranged neatly into a hierarchy for the benefit of those in the upper quadrants.[clx] Similarly, viewing the parking conflict through a racial lens, the standard interpretation would be that it was merely the expression of the racism whites feel towards Somali newcomers, and the resentment Somali refugees feel towards the dominant group they now find themselves among. According to the perspective of Primordialism, these groups and attitudes would be seen as having existed ever since all these people first encountered each other, and the parking conflict was merely the conduit through which these attitudes emerged, instead of being the incubator of these attitudes.[clxi] Primordial interpretations of ethnicity, like those that motivated and legitimated Hutu militias, belie the contemporary global trends and the everyday activities/discourses, which fashion the changes in the way that people understand the ethnic identities around them.[clxii] I argue that the critical parking potluck is one of these kinds of everyday events that produce a shift in thinking about what is white and what is Somali.

Identities however are never created simply for the purpose of creating difference; difference is in the service of hierarchy, and hierarchy for the gain of those at the top. One invents and then promotes positive stereotypes about oneself in order to place oneself above others, while negative stereotypes about others demote them to a lesser position. [clxiii] The Hutu militias in Rwanda seized upon particular representations of Tutsis as tyrants who were foreign to the nation, in order to deny their humanity, in order to take away their influence, possessions, and lives.

Those agitating for critical parking in Whittier are not interested in exploiting and certainly not hurting the Somalis, but I am not (primarily) interested in their intentions. I care about the ultimate effect of actions/words on race. In a video blog by DJ Jay Smooth, he explains the difference between calling someone a racist, and calling what they said racist. The first is unproductive, the second necessary.

> When somebody picks my pocket I'm not gonna' be chasing him down so I can figure out whether he thinks he's a thief deep down in his heart, I'm gonna be chasing him down so I can get my wallet back. I don't care what he is, but I need to hold him accountable for what he did. And that's how we need to approach these conversations about race. Treat them like they took your wallet and focus on the part that matters, holding each person accountable for their words and actions. I don't care what you are, I care about what you did.

This being an anthropological study, I am also not interested in holding specific individuals accountable for their actions (especially since most of what Whittier activists say about minorities carries so little venom, if any); I am interested in understanding how what activists specifically *did*, changes what *is*. I hold their activism accountable for the effects it has, just as Jay Smooth holds the thief accountable for his. So I tell the story of critical parking in order to show how a topic of conversation (bad driving), a concrete event (the driveway potluck), and a moment (the Somali parker noticing us), makes ethnicity, segregation, prejudice, discrimination, community, and diversity. Each of these things, and all together, do hurt Somali's position in Minneapolis. How can being seen as the source of so much trouble in the area, not damage their reputation and standing? If pressed, I would say that way down deep in the hearts of the activists, one thing they really, really want, is to park and drive unhindered; they are "essentially" highly devoted parkers. But I don't care what they are, I care what they did.

4: Diversity Sells: The Making of Eat Street

After a Harvard professor came to Minneapolis to briefly research neighborhood activism, she told me that she felt she had gotten a broad enough spectrum of activities in Whittier because she had visited "the school, gym and Eat Street" (and the gym is attached to the school). Judging by the amount of time she spent in Whittier and the superficiality of what she wrote about the Whittier Alliance, I am confident that she failed at getting any kind of understanding of what was going here; she however did not fail in identifying one of the most obvious of the Alliance's initiatives, the marketing of "Eat Street."

Whittier today is perhaps best known for being home to this "Eat Street," a stretch of Nicollet Avenue that runs north/south down the middle of Whittier (previously

Whittier was might best have known for prostitution, but to be fair, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts has always loomed large in people's minds). So while there are other commercial corridors at the edges of Whittier, one full mile of Nicollet is owned solely by Whittier, and if you walk nnorth on Nicollet away from Whittier for ten minutes you would end up travelling directly through the very heart of Minneapolis' central business district (CBD). The downtown "Nicollet Mall" as it has been called since the city banned all vehicles on it besides busses and taxis, is the lifeline of the CBD, where the metro's most expensive restaurants, shops and office spaces align. And before the modern office towers replaced the shorter buildings, Nicollet actually held many times the number of shops it does today. "Eat Street" begins about where the "Mall" ends, at the southern edge of the CBD at Grant Street, and runs about fourteen blocks south, through the neighborhoods of Loring Park, then Steven's Square, then Whittier, and dead-ending into the K-Mart at Whittier's southern edge. However, the heart of Eat Street and its greatest concentration of restaurants and markets are the five blocks from 24th Street to 29th, entirely within Whittier.

Having such a density of restaurants along any short stretch of road outside of downtown would be a thing of some note and convenience, but not particularly *interesting*. What makes for excitement is that these restaurants are "ethnic" and "diverse," representing foods styled from a dozen different nations. In addition there are no less than eight Chinese and/or Vietnamese markets within five blocks of my condo. As of 2013 there were eleven Vietnamese restaurants on Eat Street, and while these numbers change, other varieties include five Chinese, an Asian fusion, a pizza joint, a coffee café, four Mexican, one American-Mexican, two middle-eastern, a Malaysian, a Greek, a German, a Caribbean and a McDonalds. Later came Thai, a Starbucks, a local coffee chain, and two New-American gastro-pubs (on top of this there are dozens of restaurants along the southern and western corridors of Whittier). [clxiv] However, as I explain, not all of these restaurants are considered to be equally ethnic, in fact, the McDonald's is not welcome within the pantheon of Eat Street, as it is considered neither ethnic nor tasty.[clxv]

The abstraction known as “Eat Street” is not something that just organically came about, like Somalis being bad drivers, it had to be invented and finessed. I do not mean that there was a central plan to bring all these restaurants here; there was no conspiracy in that regard, these restaurants and markets pretty much came here independently. What I mean is that once they were here, Minneapolitans had to specifically be told about this grouping, and convinced that this was something more than a random assemblage, but instead was something special, something worth making a trip to. And to successfully make this case does require a conspiracy, in this case, an “ethnic” one.

By ethnic conspiracy I do not mean a scheme *by* ethnic minorities, but a scheme by largely white Americans to amplify and exploit the exoticism *of* ethnic minorities, for the benefit of everyone. To recruit more eaters to come to Nicollet, more people from the Twin Cities needed to become hyper-aware of the ethnic identities identified with the food stuff on Nicollet. That pork broken rice is an inexpensive, tasty meal, will draw some to Nicollet’s delis, but that this dish is *Vietnamese*, and made by people of the land, culture, and ancestry of Vietnam, in the area of town that actual Vietnamese go to for their pork broken rice, that is its attraction. And having Nicollet be known as *the place* to get Vietnamese food is a crucial facet of the plot to “revitalize” Nicollet and Whittier itself (the Midway area in St. Paul along University Avenue is perhaps better known for having Vietnamese delis, but they are more spread out. Like Minneapolis is the hub for Somali refugees, St. Paul is a major hub for Hmong refugees). Likewise, shopping at the nearby Mall of America is not just shopping, but “shopping at The Mall of America,” and driving a Ferrari is not just driving a sports car. The marketing executives at these corporations had to construct an exotic but also authentic image of their product to get people to come to it. And like Whittier activists have constructed “diversity,” “ethnicity,” and “Somali” in the name of parking, they have also constructed what it is to eat ethnically, diversely, and Vietnamese-ily.

Fortunately for my research, a graduate student in the geography department at my university wrote a master’s thesis on who built Eat Street. This research is so detailed, so relevant to mine, and includes so many analyzable theories (both folk and academic)

on community building in Whittier, that I will summarize parts of it at length. At the end of the 19th century Nicollet was one of the two most popular ways to get from downtown Minneapolis to the wealthy suburb that would later be the northeast quadrant of Whittier (Jacobson 2004:5). Starting in 1875, horse car tracks were built for these residents, who included the logging and milling magnets such as the Pillsbury brothers; then in the 1880s steam powered "motor lines" were put in, and in 1890 this route went electric. At this time many people were drawn down Nicollet for the Minneapolis Millers baseball team, which built a 4,000 person stadium in 1896 on Nicollet just south of (what would become) Whittier (7).[clxvi] But as the wealthy began moving farther and farther out from the city center, by the 1920s Nicollet began to carry less well-heeled whites out to the higher density housing being constructed all over Whittier (9), and Nicollet itself accumulated more business storefronts. However, in 1955 The Millers left to play elsewhere, and "beginning in the mid-1950s, Whittier was becoming a neighborhood that was decidedly poorer than the earlier version, with real consequences for stores on Nicollet Avenue" (16). With the coming of the auto-centric era, the freeways stole Nicollet's traffic, the suburbs stole its income rich tenants, and suburban strip malls stole its business.[clxvii] By 1970 "Nicollet was home to a number of thrift stores, bingo halls, consignment shops and also Maggie's Midnight Massage and Sauna at 2734 Nicollet. Lake Street meanwhile was chock-full with adult bookstores and peep show theaters" (30).

So in 1972 the city took a bold but ultimately tragic step to try to stem the "urban decline." They would raze an eight block area around Lake and Nicollet, turning it into a bustling shopping hub (33), which would

> de-emphasize the commercial function of Nicollet and thus make Whittier a quieter place to live, and at the same time, provide a better shopping environment for all residents. Like the 1960 plan, it is easy to understand the mindset of the planners in trying to copy the suburban malls, since the depopulation of the city in favor of the suburbs was still going strong and automobiles were still dominant. A modern shopping center to replace a withering streetcar-era intersection must have seemed a good idea at the time.

While the city got many positive responses for the plan from those in the area, it seemed to have forgotten to consult any potential retailers that might anchor this new shopping

hub. [clxviii] It turned out that none were interested. The city had already laid waste to the zone, and since no one came to build anew on it, the city was bleeding money from the loss of property tax and the payments for the large bonds it had taken out to finance the whole project. So the city was elated when Supervalu grocery expressed interest, and then Kmart.

> Kmart had one big condition; it needed a parking lot of suburban scale if it was going to stand a chance of competing with other retailers. The developers insisted that the only way to get Kmart, Supervalu and enough parking for both of them all into the same space was to close a street (Jacobson 2004:34).

They would pave over Nicollet between 29th and Lake (30th), and create one solid parking lot two blocks wide. The city council voted 7-6 for the plan; one of those voting for it felt that "any kind of business activity was better than a big hole in the ground that cost the city $1.6 million a year" (36). Kmart opened in 1978, and within the next five years 44% of the businesses on Nicollet in Whittier failed (37).[clxix]

The only good thing that activists later saw as coming out of Kmart was the resistance against it. The Keep Nicollet Open movement brought residents and business owners together in a common cause, the legacy of which was lasting relationships and consciousness. Nicollet was a dead end (pun not intended), but a few years later this group succeeded in getting the city to link the end of Nicollet over to 1st Ave to the east (40), and later it was connected to Blaisdell Ave to the West. "The construction of Kmart attracted a lot of media attention, and with clear evidence that some businesses were hurt by the closure, remaining Nicollet business owners gained strength" (40). And the early Whittier Alliance theorized that Whittier-ites "gained some cohesion, had learned how to make themselves heard at City Hall, and had earned a few favors" (Hanson and McNamara 1981: 24).

Nicollet Avenue was now more than just a street, more than just urban space, it was a singular *place* to be cared for. It was reified into something valuable, beyond simply being a way to get from place to another, or a corridor upon which to find stores. Keep Nicollet Open had not just given consciousness to this strip of land, but elevated it to a higher level. Like whole neighborhoods (or the soul [clxx]), it was now something that had to be "saved," and in the rhetorical arena that was opened up by this, anyone who did

not buy into this campaign could be painted as anti-small business (like President Obama) and anti-neighborhood. In 1983 the active care of Nicollet took the form of a Moveable Feast (Jacobson 2004:43), which was a

> a progressive dinner where people would buy a ticket and then go around to a few local restaurants and have an appetizer at one place, soup at the next, salad at the third and so on. Originally the intention was just to help people get to know each other and support local business, with no idea that the street would later become locally famous for its restaurants.

But at this time many in Whittier wanted to make Nicollet famous not for dining, but as a center for the media industry, since Whittier already had a large museum, a children's theater and art school (44).[clxxi] What is interesting is that this Feast was not primarily a way to promote the restaurants themselves, but to raise money for Alliance programs that promoted other industries, such as art and entertainment (while at the same time trying to reach this vague social goal of building diverse community). Unlike creating commercial hubs for industries such as media, shopping, or manufacturing, having hubs for food alone was not yet a standard idea in American businesses models (Jacobson 2004:52).

> In 1987, Gus tried to get bank loans that would allow him to start Christos but could not convince bankers that a Greek restaurant in a "bad" neighborhood had a chance … Bankers saw no visible demand for Greek food, and moreover, thought there already were enough "exotic" restaurants on Nicollet. There really was no imagination that people would travel to a particular area to eat at one of a handful of restaurants, since the standard idea was that people always went out with a particular place in mind.

Not only had the business world not developed the allure of clustering food together, but having a *diversity* of food in one place had also not yet been sold to Americans as a means of profit and pleasure. On one block of Mulberry Street in Manhattan's Little Italy, tourists such as myself have found a dozen (mediocre) Italian restaurants. While Little Italy holds few Italians today and serves mostly as a tourist trap, in Chinatowns across the world there are high concentrations of people and cuisines from China. Chinatowns are a particularly good example to use to try to understand how geographies are made synonymous with food. San Francisco's Chinatown in particular has been developed in the national consciousness as a microcosm of China itself, where authentic Chinese goods of any kind can be found. But this consciousness had to be

invented and nurtured, because while Chinatown itself was developed in the second half of the 19th century, it was a ghetto in the true sense of the word, an undesirable place where undesirables were quarantined from civil society. Unlike today, it was not a place any self-respecting white person would voluntarily go. "White leaders considered the Chinese an economic threat, filthy and dangerous, and were trying to push them out" (Hua 2006). It was not until after the 1906 earthquake/fire, when the city threatened to move Chinatown out of downtown to an out of the way area, that the Chinese merchants hatched a plan to save their neighborhood by rebuilding it as a tourist destination. Like street-scaping and pedestrian overlays today give symbolic capital to commercial corridors such as Nicollet, the San Francisco Chinatown had to be given the right kind of capital to be seen as authentic. The pagoda style of architecture that Americans associate with China, had in China only been used for religious structures such as shrines. But after the 1906 fire white architects rebuilt Chinatown shops to look like pagodas, in order to connote true Chinese-ness to tourists (Hua 2006). [clxxii]

However, while Nicollet has an amazing concentration of Vietnamese restaurants and markets, mixed in were restaurants emblematic of many of nationalities. Eating at Christos Greek Restaurant or Harry Singh's Caribbean does not offer a *taste* of Greece or the Caribbean beyond the door of the restaurant, since no one recognizes Whittier as being indigenous to those peoples. Before the Eat Street campaign, while each of the "ethnic" restaurants on Nicollet could sell themselves as exotic, the *whole* of the street was not perceived as anything in particular. Since the area around Nicollet could not realistically be re-imagined or re-built as a "China-town" or any other pick-your-favorite-ethnic-food-town, the idea of the bazaar is perhaps a better precedent for the commercial strip (most real bazaars would not be particularly attractive places to the average Westerner, but in children's stories of far off "Persia" they loomed fantastic and sophisticated). And Minnesotans love a bazaar, evidenced by the Minnesota State Fair, the largest state fair in the nation, which is most famous for offering a huge selection of foods that are put on a stick and then deep fried, including candy bars, spaghetti, and butter. Nicollet's promoters were able to pull off a bazaar effect because after the initial influx of Asian markets, Nicollet started to attract restaurants beyond East Asia.[clxxiii]

In the early 1990s Latino restaurants and shops began opening, but not as a destination hub for Latinos who lived far away, but for the many immigrants from Latin America who had been moving into the lower rent, south-eastern portion of Whittier. The Lake Street corridor a few blocks south was already burgeoning with Latinos and Latino businesses, but Nicollet itself held a meat packing plant that employed many Latinos.[clxxiv] The GFI plant was well known in the meat industry for selling high quality hamburger patties to schools and Dairy Queen, but in Whittier it is mostly known for its hiring of undocumented immigrants. In 1980 the Immigration and Naturalization Service arrested 69 undocumented Mexicans at the plant, and in 1983 arrested half the plant's employees, 84, which at the time was the largest such raid ever in the state (Robertson 1993). The INS had found many workers hiding in boxes and under stairways (Kennedy 1993). A year later GFI really made a splash when it hired 39 Latinos in a Texas border town, and bussed them directly to an emergency homeless shelter in downtown Minneapolis. When the new hires refused to stay in a shelter, saying they had been promised apartments, they were put up in a motel. Five however refused the motel and stayed at the shelter for two days, then went to the media with their story (Ribert 1994). This episode is legend among Whittier long-timers, and for at least one of them, the loss of GFI was a gain "for the community." Nicollet now had not just Vietnamese and Chinese restaurants, but Mexican ones, as well as one German, one Greek and one Middle Eastern. Jacobson (2004:53) points out that,

> By the end of the 1980s, Nicollet's new status as a culinary center was well understood. An article in a neighborhood newspaper in January 1990 seems to be the earliest published recognition of its new character. In an article entitled "Whittier Diner's Club: A tasty walk down International Avenue," Curtis Millburn describes how some of his friends from New York were pleasantly surprised by the diversity and quality of Nicollet's restaurants.

The restaurants themselves had always been tasty, but the significant change here is that now the tastiness is coming from the area as a whole being "international." Sure, pho soup tastes good, but "International Avenue" is *tasty*. The restaurants attracted media attention not because of the quality (excellence) of their food, but because of their *quality* (character) as a whole. One good restaurant a good meal makes, and having many different restaurants in one stretch makes for being able to make a good choice, but many

restaurants of different natures, makes a sophisticated bazaar (or the world on a miniature scale). In this case, quantity really does make quality, for it takes many, many restaurants to lend legitimacy to the image of a place being representative of the whole world. Being international can make a place distinct, in a state that has been seen as basic "white bread" America.

While branding is most often associated with corporate products such as Sprite, branding happens everywhere to all things large and small, including ethnicity, neighborhoods, and shopping destinations. Everyone's family is branded, often as Scottish, or Norwegian, or Mexican, but the hard truth is that everyone is a mutt; go back far enough on all sides of anyone's family, and diversity is the rule. [clxxv] In fact, almost all African-Americans have white ancestors – and do not tell white Americans this, but many of them have black ancestors. Americans love to essentialize their ethnic roots, making a pilgrimage to a grassy county in Ireland to find the Tombstone of a great, great grandfather so they can validate their claims to being "Irish," regardless of where their other fifteen great, great grandparents were from. Or tracing a family member back to a Scottish clan so that they can lay claim to a kilt pattern or coat of arms. The fantasy of Americans is to find a long lost European (or African?) princess in their past, making one royalty; this is the ultimate way to rise in class standing (in fact in the past some Chinese families would simply graft a royal lineage onto their own). Like all families, all neighborhoods are also branded; if a geographical area has a name or the thinnest of reputations, someone has branded it. 'I avoid that neighborhood, it's all just Starbucks and BMWs,' 'that area over by the lake has the cutest little houses,' 'south of 26th Street has too much crime.' Simple vocalizations such as these create a brand, whether wanted or unwanted, formal or informal.

An informative example of small-scale, local branding is in a low rent area east of downtown Oakland. In a book on multiethnic neighborhoods in America, an activist is quoted as claiming that Oakland "is the most integrated city in America." The author found that "the city and various organizations go out of their way to promote this fact, lauding the diversity in marketing brochures, business-development literature, and public speeches. "I would have said that Oakland has as close to an official ideology about

promoting and celebrating diversity as a place could have," noted a local academic (Maly 2005:163). Downtown Oakland already had an area that had claimed the title of Chinatown, but as many Asians moved into a neighborhood east of downtown, "with rents substantially lower than in Chinatown and residents in need of goods, [Asian] merchants quickly set up shop, disregarding the area's reputation for criminal activity" (201). Above his Chinese grocery store one merchant put the sign "New Chinatown," in a basic attempt to brand the area as also a place to get Chinese goods (202). However, twenty different languages were spoken in this commercial center, which included more Vietnamese shops than Chinese, and a reporter for the Oakland Tribune felt that this sign did not capture "the multiculturalism of the small businesses and residents there" (202). Debate by locals over the appropriateness of this sign led to an organizing effort that brought distinct groups together who eventually put up banners that read "East Lake Business District" in four languages. This was part of larger effort to brand the area as not just having a diversity of residents, but a diverse ethnic market (Maly 2005:205).[clxxvi]

The branding of Eat Street was a long time in the making. In 1994 activists and staff from Whittier and (to a lesser extent) the two neighborhoods to the north, commissioned the Nicollet Avenue Corridor Study, a professional document put together by a large California architectural firm specializing in traffic engineering. In effect, the activists and professionals worked to create the idea that twenty continuous blocks of Nicollet were one thing, and that this entity needed concerted help. This is akin to casting a neighborhood as "unstable" as way to get money and effort spent on its behalf.[clxxvii] One of the major goals of the project was to advance the "image and character of the corridor, especially as it relates to the pedestrian environment and perceived and actual personal safety" (Barton-Aschman Associates 1994: 2). Eating Indian or Southeast Asian curries can be an adventure incurring the exiting risk of overly spicy food, but getting mugged at gunpoint is something few romanticize.

This study helped to obtain $4.5 million worth of help in the way of "streetscape" improvements, including shiny new sidewalks, classical looking lighting, new garbage cans, benches, flowerboxes and bike racks, as well as traffic modifications, such as turn lanes and detours around the massive Kmart (Jacobson 1997:57, and Corridor

Revitalization: Minneapolis Case Study).[clxxviii] When I asked an activist what changes she had seen in the neighborhood over the years, she was proud to tell me of her part in getting the traffic to flow "beautifully" on Nicollet. "I worked for ten years to get turn lanes and turn signals on Nicollet Ave, so the first day they striped Nicollet [with a middle turn lane], I road in my car making every turn, and I also almost got killed three times." [clxxix] In preparation for the August 1997 grand opening of the new corridor, some Whittier merchants hired a local public relations firm to come up with a catchy name.[clxxx] The Minneapolis Star Tribune's food writer had called Nicollet, Eats Street; so they shortened it to simply Eat Street (as the story goes, Sean Parker convinced Mark Zuckerberg to shorten the name of his website from thefacebook.com), and decorated the boulevard with banners bearing that name (Jacobson 2004:58).

> Since its inception, the term "Eat Street" has attracted attention as a great example of the power of place marketing and has inspired imitators. Business owners in the area around East Lake Street, for example, are now developing the brand name of "Midtown" in hopes of giving their area more cachet.

Successfully marketing a place as international not only brings a kind of prestige to the restaurants, but also to the diners sophisticated enough to find their way to this treasure trove. Tastes are both markers of class and actively create class identity (Bourdieu 1984:2). The marketers of Eat Street strive to teach the people of the Twin Cities that this it is a classy place. A good meal is sure to be had at any number of restaurants, but in the eyes (taste buds?) of customers, high class dining affirms that one personally has class. "Diversity sells, from the consumer's point of view it can be a significant basis of cultural capital formation" (Robertson 1995:29). It is as if acquiring a taste for pho soup, souvlaki, green curry, AND chile relleno, confers prestige, or at least being able to talk about such dishes does.

Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu famously explained how tastes in all kinds of consumables are things that one learns from one's social milieu (Bourdieu 1984); given different influences such as family, neighborhood, occupation, and level of education, one's preferences are acquired. However, like anything with meaning (i.e. everything), preferences are ranked. Families are ranked relative to other families, and educational levels, jobs, and neighborhoods all have formal pecking orders. A neighborhood only has

qualities as it relates to other neighborhoods, which are placed either above or below. The more money one's family, neighbors and classmates have, and the more money one's education costs, the higher will be his or her *class*. [clxxxi] Bourdieu theorized that formal education was the primary site of taste acquisition, as he found schools to be where the French learn about literature and classical music (the better the school the classier the tastes acquired), but the teaching of Eat Street works not through high schools and colleges, but the much more modern and American process of business marketing. Eat Street's promoters have the difficult task of convincing their white middle class audience that Nicollet is no longer sleazy and dangerous, and that its particular "hole in the wall" Vietnamese and Mexican restaurants have better tasting food than one would imagine. But part of this schooling is the even more challenging project of moving the whole category of "Vietnamese deli" and "Mexican taquerias" up in class standing.

This means modifying classifications of meaning; it means convincing local society to restructure the hierarchy of culinary tastes. In other words, getting people to believe that Vietnamese food is perhaps better than hamburgers, and that Mexican food is as good as Italian. But marketers are masters of attaching new meanings to products, such as when the formula for Sprite was kept the same, but its image was reformulated as being hip hop coolness.[clxxxii] Re-ordering a hierarchy is a much more fundamental modification than just adding a particular dish, like tamales, to the list of acceptable forms of food. And reordering pecking orders is never something those at the top take kindly to.[clxxxiii]

Normally, the more something costs the more prestige it has, and the more prestige it bestows upon those who have the means to possess it. But a huge bowl of pho soup only costs six or seven dollars, and its appeal is in this low cost. Prestige does not have to only flow from high price, Bourdieu felt that "nothing is more … distinguished than to confer aesthetic status on objects that are banal or even 'common'" (1984:5). Normally, everyday things such as catsup and sidewalks are seen as purely pragmatic things, while champagne and Asian fusion cuisine are beheld as things of art, things to ponder. But what if a respected "authority" begins to contemplate the wonder of something that was heretofore of the commoners. "Hipsters" supposedly do this with the

cheap beer Pabst Blue Ribbon, or modern Chinese did with nostalgia restaurants serving simple foods from the Great Leap Forward commune era. While high cost is the front door to prestige, the exotic is a side door that Eat Street exploited. Being able to drink and talk about high end champagnes confers instant stature, but knowing what Vietnamese bahn mi sandwiches are, and where to find them, can also.

In the 1980s no non-Vietnamese in Minnesota would have cared if you knew about bahn mi, but once people began hearing about this category, while knowing that these sandwiches were from the Far East, but not really knowing what they are, then knowledge of bahn mi became something one could use to impress (especially because these sandwiches are a synthesis of Vietnamese and French cuisines, due the French colonial influence). It is because so many people liked bahn mi, but so many more had never tried it nor knew exactly what restaurants served it, that it could be a tool for gaining esteem. These sandwiches were in an in-between place, neither unidentified nor familiar, so the culturally adept could be seen as bridging this gap. Anyone adventurous enough to actually visit these hole-in-the-walls and be able to talk a bit about the food they ate, would be seen as cultured.

"A work of art has meaning or interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence, that is, the code, into which it is encoded" (Bourdieu 1984:2). Those knowing what a bahn mi sandwich consists of can prove their inter-cultural competence by interpreting these Vietnamese sandwiches for others, and can hopefully parlay this cultural capital into the admiration of others. Bourdieu separated out the mid-20th century French populace according to their preferences in classical music; those of high class had been schooled to know how to appreciate the ever so classy "Concerto For The Left Hand." They had learned the musical codes corresponding to this style of music, and this gave them capital with which to demonstrate their class standing (something that leads directly to material benefits). The French middle class however did not have the schooling needed to be able to decode music as "sophisticated" as this, but did appreciate the middle-brow "Hungarian Rhapsody." Meanwhile, the "simplistic" Blue Danube was accessible to the lower classes (1984:16).[clxxxiv] In America today, being sophisticated is

not so much a matter of just knowing about things high class, but having "diverse" tastes (cosmopolitan).

Traditionally, cosmopolitans were thought of as people who knew the streets of London, the fashions of Florence, and the museums of Paris, but today a popular alternative kind of cosmopolitan is the one that knows the street food of Mumbai, the back markets of Bangkok, and the mines of Bolivia. Cosmopolitan is now a more inclusive and expansive category, as it associated with a higher number of potential consumables, and ones that are more affordable. A cosmopolitan today needs to know about people and culture from the poorer global south, and one does not need formal training to appreciate these things. This opens up membership to people who cannot afford to experience the luxuries of Europe, but it also can make it more challenging to be cosmopolitan, since one needs to know about other continents besides just Europe and North America. Being cosmopolitan now means being even more diverse, not just in terms of geography, but also in class. However, since most people do not routinely visit multiple continents, a globally diverse palate can only be cultivated if there is a large range of food styles available *locally*. If Somalis had not been bold and wily enough to make it to Minneapolis and open their own businesses, I would never have been able to try to impress friends with my knowledge of the many Somali restaurants in town.

While many ethnic restaurants are designed to appeal to whites, almost all the Vietnamese and Somali restaurants I have been to were not started to serve whites, but to serve Vietnamese and Somali (in fact today I know of only two Somali restaurants that do not serve almost exclusively Somalis). It is only a side effect that outsiders discovered these restaurants, and added to the white middle-class world of what it means to be cultured. Whittier-ites that love their neighborhood because of the ethnic restaurants, can only do so because Vietnamese immigrants have worked to open these restaurants for themselves. "Cosmopolitans largely depend on 'other people' carving out 'special niches' for their cultures. Thus there can be no cosmopolitans without locals" (Robertson 1995:29). I can imagine myself to be cosmopolitan only because Somalis, like me, have made south central Minneapolis their home, and have concentrated their "culture" within certain small localities such as Karmel mall. The local here is glocal, since it is only

through trans-national processes like immigration and refugee diasporas, that the very local entity of Eat Street can come about.

Globalization is often characterized in the media and by "anti-globalization" activists as a monolithic force that destroys local life, replacing it with a cloned version of Western corporate culture. However, the *uniqueness* of the locality known as Eat Street is an aspect and product of globalization (Robertson 1995:30), not the opposite of it. Globalization should not be seen as a strict binary opposition of the global vs. the local, but as a product of the multi-way interaction between localities and scales (Gregory 1998a:50). Similarly Anna Tsing has warned that the popular dichotomy of "global" *forces* and "local" *places* elides that no phenomena could be either just one or the other (Tsing 2000:353). And Steven Gregory advises that to understand globalization ethnographers must study particular places like marginalized communities, in order to observe the differences in the way that aspects of globalization are actually occurring (Gregory 1998a:54). Globalization is a connected but diverse set of mechanisms that is not the same everywhere; in different localities globalization is being invented and resisted in diverse ways.[clxxxv] While there must be many streets in the world where one can find food from a number of different nations, such as Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley, Adams Morgan's 18th Street NW in Washington DC, East Lake in Oakland, and Frogtown's University Avenue in St. Paul, these strips look, feel and taste very different to me than Eat Street. Eat Street is productive of different diasporas, different political eras, different clientele, different immigrants, different economies, different majority populations, and different marketing schemes.

Sylvia Yanagisako (2002) has argued that ethnography needs to study the businesses of particular places in order to see the variety involved in the creation and practices of global capital. Arguing against Harvey, Yanagisako explains that the capitalist system of flexible accumulation does not exist independent of "cultural meanings and processes" (2002:4), instead capitalism is formed within and by distinct cultural traditions and sentiments. As such it corresponds to no single "logic," method, or motive (2002:6). For example, Yanagisako studied business relations in the silk industry of northern Italy, finding that capitalism is constitutive of changing and unique systems

of gender and kinship. By exploring the social meaning of doing business and the "cultural" systems constitutive of this silk industry, Yanagisako has embedded the social into our understandings of global capital. My analysis of Eat Street is attempting to embed the social processes of multicultural activism, into our understandings of the global movements of people, and the local movements of capital (or is it vice-versa).

To better flesh out the uniqueness of that which made Eat Street and the unique phenomena that it begets, I will delve further into the meanings of class that Eat Street exploits and modifies. Eat Streets accumulation of prestige was aided by already having on Nicollet a mid-priced German and Chinese restaurant. These two had been long-time tenants, but in the 2000s the hip, even more expensive Azia Restaurant opened in a renovated old bank building, right in the middle of Whittier and Eat Street. When this bank space was being renovated for Azia, workers tore up the moldy carpet that a series of failed Chinese restaurants had left behind, revealing the original terrazzo floor. Tearing out the ceiling exposed the original printed tin squares (more stuff white people like). After Azia opened, a stone's throw away the first fine dining Vietnamese restaurant opened; and nearby a high-class Malaysian restaurant was put in. And while Azia closed down a few years later, soon after its demise, two, large, ultra-trendy bar/restaurants were crafted on either side of it. The renovation of one of these had exposed the old wooden beams of their new home. These terrazzo, tin, and wood excavations allowed the new restaurants to reach back in time to exploit a connection to a classier past, where more "natural" and "authentic" materials such as stone, brick, metal and wood were used.

There is a social hierarchy of consumers, arranged by something we call class (Bourdieu 1984:1); and the culture of each class lives on through the manner in which its members execute their lives (2), particularly in the way they perform their tastes and use their purchases. At Azia, one performed on an elegant stage of terrazzo, eating sophisticated "Asian fusion," putting only high quality ingredients into their bodies. This enactment helps catalogue one as higher class, but performing on the scratched laminate floor of the tiny Pho Quan deli indicates that you may be lower class. "Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier" (6). In other words, foods are placed in a hierarchy based

on how good they taste to people, but the food one prefers marks him or her as belonging to a particular class, and having the particular characteristics of that class. When we tell others what foods we like we are placed by them in particular class categories (we are constantly on stage being judged by our performances, just as we are constantly being gendered by all who sees and hear us). Personally, I have prided myself on having eaten at every establishment on Eat Street. This I suspect is an achievement than few could also boast about, because the *kind*, and by kind I mean class, of person who eats at Azia does not also visit the dingy Pho Quan, whose one window is covered in a hand-written sign, and whose front door is mostly blocked by cardboard boxes.

Not only are the performances executed differently at these two restaurants, but their stages were designed for different purposes. Azia is designed consciously to be a stage, a place where one can be seen. One dresses "up" because that is what is called for to be in character at Azia; diners are specifically aware that Azia has a larger and more discerning audience. Pho Quan however is less of a stage, in fact its whole façade deflects entering it or being seen within it. While Azia has wide, high windows and outdoor seating, Pho Quan is a take-out place, has one small window that is totally blocked, very limited seating inside, and hard to find.[clxxxvi]

However, no one is simply just their class (or simply ruled by their class constraints), because the lower class Vietnamese who enjoy Pho Quan, do not enjoy the simple Liberian restaurant a few doors down (hidden in the back of an East African market). While these two restaurants may share the same category of class, their *ethnicity* (or national origin) makes them worlds apart. And while El Mariachi is mostly frequented by Latinos, and Pancho Villa has only about one third Latino customers, and I doubt any person born in Mexico has ever set foot in Little Tijuana's even though it costs about the same and sell dishes with the same name (it is known as a late night punk hang out for students of the nearby art college). Ethnicity not only influences which restaurants one visits, but why one enjoys the food there. Asian immigrants go to "their" market for nostalgic reasons, for a bit of home. Whites however go to the Asian markets and restaurants not to engage in adventure; the whole point is to experience something very

different from what they grew up eating. In Mary Waters' study of white ethnicity in America (1990:100), she found that most of the suburban whites she spoke with

> were perfectly happy with the way their neighborhood was. Some younger respondents who had spent their whole lives in the suburbs, however, reported that they did not think they were lacking some type of "ethnic experience" … In these cases, the ethnic neighborhood is viewed as an experience that might be enriching or rewarding and that one has missed out on by living in a white suburb. Some people solve this problem by commuting to the ethnic neighborhood when they desire some ethnic experience.

But during the lunch hour many of the Vietnamese delis are filled with South East Asian immigrants who may work or shop in the area but largely do not live here. In fact, many come from white suburbs exactly for an "ethnic experience" that they feel lacking, it just happens that they experience is one they can claim ownership of. They rub elbows with the white locals who are devotees of pho noodle soup, vermicelli salad, and pork broken rice. At the largest deli, Quang, the customers usually seem to be about half white half Asian, and as an anthropologist I am tempted to characterize this site and all of Eat Street as an interstitial zone where people of different ethnicities mingle. But dining at Quang seems more about separation than blending. The Asian markets cater almost exclusively to Asians, and some of the Asian restaurants feed whites almost exclusively. To appreciate pork broken rice or even know what broken rice is, does not go along with knowing what it means to be a refugee, knowing anything about the Vietnamese war beyond that the American military used lots of helicopters, or knowing anything whatsoever about contemporary Vietnam. That you and they both like the same dish could possibly be a way into a casual conversation, but this is a superficial connection between two people who share the same space. Just because American laws do not enforce segregation and because "we are all global" in our technology and media consumption, does not mean that we choose to associate with those different from us.

When I asked a past Whittier Alliance staffer about her thoughts on diversity and community in Whittier, her mind moved to Eat Street – "Eat street is distinct … It's like having a salad, the different aspects of the neighborhood can retain their individual identities, and the neighborhood organization will be the salad dressing?" She felt that this diversity had "incredible potential. People can get outside of themselves and develop

a community" by getting to know each other. My reaction to her answer was full of fluffy aphorisms about "everyone coming together" (she ended up running for political office). Like me, she had grown up on the pop music of "We Are the World." No doubt, there is a sharing of cultures going on Quang, and no doubt, dining next to an immigrant Vietnamese family is a far cry from the racial segregation that America's past, but this mingling lacks consequence. By this I mean that it changes nothing much in particular aside from people's taste in food.

More likely, food is a vehicle for essentializing ethnicity and bleaching out the power relations between them, as if ethnicity is a buffet, each ethnicity sitting neatly alongside the others in their own bins. This perspective reminds me of the more traditional social science textbooks that I was given in elementary school, where a chapter on ethnicity or on immigrant history is broken down into the headings – Irish, Mexican, Black, Italian, etc., as if all you need to know about the Irish is contained in reading about the intrinsic character the Irish, and not the power relations between the Irish and English, or blacks. By giving each ethnic group a separate heading in a textbook or restaurant name, they appear to be in serial, one next the other, but what this hides is the hierarchical, unequal relationships between the groups. This is the smorgasbord approach to understanding the histories of different groups. Compare this type of perspective to potential topic headings of a textbook such as – The U.S. Immigration Act of 1924, The Legacy of Slavery, The Japanese-American Internment, How the Irish Became White, Forces of Assimilation and Acculturation, De-Industrialization, Class and Ethnicity, etc. – these fictional sections show the ways that oppression, history, economy, and government policy creates ethnicity. They show the complex, unequal inter-relationship between different groups, show the social structures that create both ethnic groups and the hierarchy that oppresses them, show the mechanisms differentially change ethnic groups over time, and show the inter-relationship between race/class/gender.

Jacobson's main question was who built Eat Street, and his research found three main groups. I will detail exactly who these people are and exactly how they did what they did, because the specific mechanisms used to construct place in Whittier, are part

and parcel of the construction of ethnicity and diversity. Two of Whittier's business owners led the effort for the streetscape improvements and marketing campaign of Eat Street; they "worked hard to improve the look and feel of the street and to encourage people to come back to a place they had written off as a place to avoid" (60). However, more important was "the very gradual, day-to-day work of people like" the two employees of neighborhood groups, who in the late 80s and early 90s worked to make sure the new businesses survived, by connecting them with such vital resources as low interest loans (61). Without these two men, many of the restaurants and markets that came to be seen as "Eat Street" would not have lasted to even make the term Eat Street plausible in 1997. However, Jacobson (62) stresses that

> By far the most important component … was small-business owners, many but not all of whom were immigrants, and many but not all of whom were restaurateurs or grocers who deserve credit for Nicollet's revival. It cannot be stressed enough – <u>they</u> built Eat Street. All of the streetscape improvements and 2% loans in the world wouldn't have made a difference without their energy, hard work and willingness to start a business.

Jacobson found that most of the accounts of Eat Street have painted the successes (and failures) of Nicollet businesses to sudden, single events, such as interruption of Nicollet by the Kmart, or an organic events such as Vietnamese just suddenly showing up, or comprehensive plans by the city or a neighborhood organization. However, he argues that changes were actually from a multiplicity of forces and individuals that exerted influence over long periods of time. This includes the heroic efforts mentioned above by particular businesses leaders, community staffers, and immigrants. For example, the labor of the two community development staffers continually prevented Nicollet's small businesses from failing. Jacobson's research is useful because it takes the tropes of success and progress out of the realm of the abstract, immodest and fantastical, and into the specific, realistic, and micro-cosmic.[clxxxvii]

There is an origin story about how Nicollet became the center of Asian markets and restaurants. It was told to Jacobson by three different people and is one I also heard from residents. The tale is of a Vietnamese man who regularly took the bus down Nicollet to his English classes, who noticed the boarded up storefronts, and thought it would be a cheap place to open a grocery. In 1981 he started A Chau Grocery at 2738

Nicollet (Jacobson 2004:46). He later bought the building, and rented out spaces to other Vietnamese immigrants, and ten years later the street was filled with like-minded business people from East Asia. Jacobson argues that it was the depressed rents on Nicollet produced by the street being blocked off, that actually allowed for the "rebirth" of Nicollet. Without the unusually low costs to open a store here, those businesses never would have arrived. The lack of foot and car traffic in front on their stores was not a problem for them, since their customers were destination shoppers who came from all over the metro to get such foods as the roast duck and rice noodles that were not available elsewhere (48). "This unexpected development from Kmart's presence further complicates the notion that Kmart "destroyed" Nicollet, since it is likely that these businesses flourished not in spite of Kmart, but *because* of it" (48).

A merchant on Nicollet once told me that the only influence in the neighborhood that had been "100% detrimental" was Kmart; it was where urban life died "utterly." This was a common sentiment among Whittier activists. She felt that all the businesses on Nicollet were creating positive change except for Kmart. Like Jacobson, she referenced the low rents as making it possible for the immigrant businesses to open on Nicollet, but unlike Jacobson she did not give any credit to Kmart for helping to create the accessible rents. 44% of the businesses on Nicollet failed within five years of the Kmart opening (Jacobson 2004), and this statistic appears to give legitimacy to a dominant theory in Whittier explaining why Nicollet experienced the increased crime and empty storefronts that it did in the 80s and 90s. Jacobson however adds comparative and economic context to this simple explanation, by explaining that the business failures and crime on Nicollet after 1978 were part of a larger decline of strips nationally that had lost their streetcar line. [clxxxviii]

Jacobson feels that since it was not Kmart alone that "destroyed" Nicollet, and that Eat Street had subsequently succeeded with Kmart there, knocking down the Kmart to allow Nicollet to go through not only might not be the godsend that everyone thinks it would be, but could actually be detrimental to Eat Street. Jacobson wonders if reopening Nicollet could result in enough of a rise in rents to force out the Asian markets and delis (67). If higher end restaurants and markets (such as Trader Joe's) replace them, Eat Street

could still survive, but the immigrant, small businesses owners that made Eat Street what it is could be casualties of their own success. This "success" would seem to fall unequally. However; while the two business owners who put in the bulk of the effort to redesign Nicollet's streetscape are both whites who own land on Nicollet, some of the Asian immigrant merchants have snapped up long sections of the boulevard.

While Jacobson does not say this, his central research question, who created Eat Street, could be answered with "Kmart." About every two years it seems that people get excited that maybe a plan has come around that will be the one that finally replaces Kmart with Nicollet, and lately I have heard rumor of a new plan that has even more optimism behind it than normal. But even if Nicollet really does get restored, it might be a while before it gentrifying to the extent that the Asian and Latino businesses will be forced out. The great recession put the freeze on gentrification for a while, and while a few notable upscale establishments did move in in 2012 and since, empty storefronts remained even after, and the recession smacked everyone in the face with a dose of reality, humbling those grand plans to quickly remake Whittier into something much more "classy." Also, except for the new county clinic, the wealthier Uptown area to the west has for the last three decades always gotten the big investments, and massively so since 2010.

In Minneapolis there are handfuls of ethnically diverse neighborhoods, it is just that Whittier activists put so much effort into specifically marketing their neighborhood as such. There are even many other places in Minneapolis itself where one can find a huge diversity of restaurants (e.g. East Lake Street, The Midtown Exchange, Central Avenue North, Uptown's Hennepin Avenue), but Eat Street has grown out of different social networks of funding, product distribution, and most important to me, non-profit activism. It is through a unique conflagration of the particular and clever individuals I have just highlighted here, along with a very unique neighborhood political arena, global movements of people, metro movements of money, and the distinctive municipal movement of cars on Nicollet, that "Eat Street" has been, and is still being, produced. And while being intentionally produced by its promoters, Eat Street has perhaps

unintentionally been producing not just money, livelihoods, and tasty food, but also political coalitions, public policy, non-profit strategies, and the meaning of diversity.

5: The Fantasy of Attaining "Diversity"

At the beginning of the chapter I listed a myriad of slogans and buzzwords used by various organizations in the neighborhood, which evoked the value of diversity and multiculturalism, and while I sincerely did wonder what each of them meant, I implied that perhaps they were meaningless. For Noam Chomsky (WBAI 1991),

> The point of public relations slogans like "Support Our Troops" is that they don't mean anything ... that's the whole point of good propaganda. You want to create a slogan that nobody is going to be against and I suppose everybody will be for, because nobody knows what it means, because it doesn't mean anything. But its crucial value is that it diverts your attention from a question that does mean something, do you support our policy?

The question would then be – do the slogans of these organizations cheer us on to create the world they suggest, or distract us from thinking seriously about the actual policies being enacted? Is the Alliance's slogan, "Where Diversity Becomes Community," distracting us from its gentrification of the neighborhood? Bell & Hartmann would suggest yes; ""like most euphemisms," Andersen (2001:197) suggests that "terms like multiculturalism and diversity have begun to blunt the [sociological] imagination," making it more difficult to understand the inequalities and injustices associated with race" (2007:910). Is calling Whittier "The International Neighborhood," lulling its residents into a trusting harmony that ignores their own poverty and lack of political participation? This may be so, but I made a conscious decision to not try to answer these kinds of questions. If the answer was yes or no, either way nothing much would be learned. We know entities are constantly trying to distract and lull us (like we know racism is everywhere), so what would be the point of academic research saying, gotcha, you guys are frauds (or racists), who are trying to trick us into thinking how just you are. Chomsky explains an example of a slogan that possibly creates inaction and status quo, but my focus in not on how slogans prevent things from happening, but how they do make things.

In this case, jingoisms such as building community, embracing diversity, creating balance, ensuring health, and maintaining stability, do things such as create ethnicity, change the meaning of diversity, manage "ethnic relations," increase rents, inhibit subsidized housing, and erect NO PARKING signs. And *this* is what practicing diversity can be today, this is how it is actually being done in many corners of the world. I do not mean that this is the evil way it is done, or that it is too bad that this is the way it is being done; I mean that this is truly the substance of the one of the diversities that I encountered. The idealistic messages of political slogans and the nasty reality of political policy do not have to be pitted against each other as opposites or rivals; they are one and the same. If you think building multicultural community means creating wealth equality, and giving everyone an equal voice at the table, then maybe it is *you* that has it all wrong, and not those "sellouts," "capitalists," or "mainstream liberals" who are often thought of as subverting the "true" meaning of diversity and community.

Idealistic multiculturalism is not just a fantasy because it is never actually practiced in its pure form, but because it is actually unattainable. I do not mean that it is impossible to create equality (although, it does seem pretty hard), I mean that the attainment of equitable diversity is a non sequitur. Diversity requires difference, and difference has to be created. Many people have to go about the hard work of defining one group as substantively different from another, and then convince everyone else of this, in order for a community as a whole to notice that it is or can actually be diverse. To have a diversity to celebrate, you need to convince groups that they are not like each other. Only then can you say, come join together in a community (inclusion implies exclusion), so that it can attain diversity, and people can intimately experience this thing called *diversity* that they fantasize about. In order to give respect to those other people amongst you, you need to first make them into an "other," and keep doing it over and over again every day, because if you do not they might become you, and then where would your happy diversity be? Your neighborhood might become homogenous just like those dreaded suburbs. Communities of difference are communities of othering, but pointing this out would seem to take the fun out it.

"Building diverse community" may also be fantastical because it could be that those calling for it the most are searching for something they feel they lack, and are desperately trying to manufacture. The Native American scholar Vine Deloria is sick of the inane film and book image of the wizened Indian chief; it is a doppelganger he feels is created by whites to try to fill a spiritual hole in themselves. The "old chief" is pure spirituality and earnestness, who only speaks in the most pure of wise adages, and calls for peace and for forgiving the whites, thereby letting them off the hook by accepting his own people's fate as tragic but inexorable (1980:xvi).

> Therein lies the meaning of the white fantasy about Indians - the problem of the Indian image. Underneath all the conflicting images of the Indian, one fundamental truth emerges: the white man knows that he is alien and he knows that North America is Indian – and he will never let go of the Indian image because he thinks that by some clever manipulation he can achieve an authenticity which can never be his.

Deloria finds that whites buy into the idea that Indians and other minorities have lots of cultural heritage, and buy into that whites are afraid to dance, sing, and recite poetry. So whites manufacture an image of the perfect Indian who does these things naturally and holistically, in order to try to learn from the "old ones" so as to heal their own "psychically damaged" souls (1980:x) (sort of like how whites argue for affirmative action at college because having minority perspectives in class will make the class more educationally complete, as if minorities are only there to help the education of whites). Deloria contends that the problem is that "Americans are really aliens in North America, and try as they might, they seem incapable of adjusting to the continent" (1980:x), but it is just a fantasy forever unfulfilled. Whites know they stole they land, but are not interested in hearing about how supremely unjust they were to the original inhabitants, and definitely are not about to give anything back, including full access to places of power and wealth. But they are desperately searching for an authenticity to latch onto (1980:xv), since they have constructed *themselves* as inauthentic in all their consumer superficiality, suburban emptiness, Western greed, and ethnic bleaching. Now that all the old, traditional, Indian chiefs with their teepees and buffalo hunting are gone, leaving behind only what are seen as hybrid and corrupted Indians who themselves are now also

alienated from their past, I wonder if the thing that whites now latch onto for completeness is this notion of diversity.

I try not to psychoanalyze whites or anyone else in my anthropological study, but I will psychoanalyze the category known as diversity. What if it is a fantasy, recklessly created to resolve an incompleteness perceived in American society? If the white activists in Whittier, of all stripes, spill so much ink and drop so much talk extorting us all to be peacefully diverse, what are they afraid will happen if they stop all this talk? Like all Americans, they do genuinely have a dream that they "will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character," and they do genuinely hope to help create a utopian neighborhood that is safe, clean and prosperous, while also boarding people of many different nations, languages, lifestyles, incomes, and needs. They are channeling Martin Luther King and Barak Obama, but why? Why all the multicultural slogans? Is a diverse society the only authentic one for them? It would seem so, given how contemptuous the activists are of the all-white suburb, or the middle-class neighborhood without any housing for the poor or disabled, or the ghetto neighborhood that is too homogenously full of housing projects, rentals, and the mentally ill.

While the multiculturalisms being practiced in Whittier, including the gentrificationist and crime fighting varieties, are concrete, every day, and meaningful to them, this is not to say that fantasies are not being fruitlessly envisioned. Diversity is a ghost, and now that everyone has bought into the ideal, or at least bought into the idea that they have to pretend like they have bought into it, it is a specter that we all chase. We will never get there, not because it is impossible to ameliorate otherness, discrimination, prejudice, tyranny, and inequality, but because there is no state of diversity to be achieved. For the middle-class activists in Whittier who pride themselves on having "chosen" to live in such a "challenged" neighborhood, whether or not they come because they are communally lost and looking for some semblance of authenticity in their social lives, I cannot say. What I can say is that it is a fantasy based on the hypocritical manufacture of other-ness, on creating a utopia where people that are different are all

equal and all love each other, and on gaining an authenticity that is not an intrinsic part of the activists and their social circles.

To sum up, this chapter has shown how Whittier not only houses ethnicity but is productive of it, and how place making is ethnicity making. But while the chapter has done this, it is really about the construction of diversity, and as a dynamic thing. It is important to understand this category and arena because it is a preeminent site of social struggle and political engagement today, encompassing everything from elementary curriculums, same-sex marriage, racial inequality, immigration policy, separation of church and state, ethnic identity, affirmative action, to disability. What social issue today is not about diversity? You see the diversity advocates on one side, marching for same sex marriage, structural equality, tolerance of Muslims and so on, and the critics of diversity on the other side, warning of the persecution of Christians, the loss of the values that made America what it is, the endangerment of the family, and the perils of socialism and reverse discrimination. What makes my study different is how it shows not only how the advocacy of diversity can itself be used in a way that endangers equality, acceptance, and the breaking down of otherness, but how this use can be both sincere and hypocritical at the same time, both empowering and un-empowering, both in the service of justice and injustice, and both in the name of community and profit, all at the same time, and not mutually exclusive.

Today, there are three blocks with critical parking near Karmel Square, and they are always blissfully almost totally bare of cars. But Timothy is not there anymore to enjoy it. Between a brick that was thrown through his window due to his activism, and an underwater mortgage due to the Great Recession, he was driven out, and now rents in a different quadrant of Whittier.

Chapter 5 – Attaining Democracy in Whittier through the Election of Representatives is Neither Realistic nor Desirable

1: Election does not equal democracy

Imagine if, similar to the governing assembly of ancient Athens, the board of the Whittier Alliance was randomly chosen ("by lot") out of all the adults in the neighborhood. Two of the most common complaints/laments in Whittier politics are that the Alliance board is unrepresentative of the neighborhood as a whole, and that only a very small portion of those in the neighborhood ever vote on Alliance matters. Both of these problems would be solved by choosing the board by lot. Random selection of the board would ensure that over the long-term the board would have about the same ratio of Somali refugees, undocumented Latinos, and subsidized renters, as the neighborhood at large.[clxxxix] Having the governing body look like the general population is referred to in political science as *descriptive*, or mirror, representation. [cxc] Under this circumstance, "representatives are in their own person [e.g. race] and lives [e.g. class, political bent] in some sense typical of the larger class of person whom they represent" (Mansbridge 1999:629). [cxci]

Neighborhood activists in Minneapolis would go apoplectic if someone publically suggested that board positions of neighborhood organizations not be elected. Considering how ingrained the idea of the "democratic" election is in the minds of Americans, as the only fair way to select those representing us, other ways are not even considered. I find that democracy has been overly conflated with election, and I will argue that this is to the detriment of neighborhood governance. If we can put aside all the obvious practical problems with a lot system, just flirting with this hypothetical gives insight into what democratic governance means, what it means on the neighborhood level, and what it has meant specifically in Whittier.

This chapter will analyze the challenges/barriers that Whittier activists experience in their quest for representative governance. This dissertation has already recounted many failures of democracy in Whittier politics, particularly in Chapter Two where we saw the polarizing battles fought in the 1990s within the Whittier Alliance. This chapter however examines the contemporary failures of democracy in an organization that ten to twenty

years later appears stable and congenial. The dysfunction, open combat, outright viciousness, and blatant injustices we observed in that prior era were problems that while not easy to remedy, were obvious, egregious, often exacerbated by one particular personality, and had some very concrete solutions (such as changing board terms from one year to three). But by the time I started doing interviews in the neighborhood in 2006, the most belligerent personalities had mellowed and/or retired, there were no longer political parties, the organizational structure had been improved, and voting issues had (somewhat) improved. In the previous chapter we saw how Whittier activists use the word "diversity" in a diffuse and passive way, in this chapter I will show how the malfunctions of democracy in the 21st century Whittier Alliance were also enacted in a more diffuse and passive way. This makes these failures harder to see, harder to diagnose, and harder to fix, as well as putting into question the functionality of representative democracy itself.

When people publically make fun of the blind, or tell renters not to run for office, it is easy to shake one's head in disgust. But what about when volunteers are respectful, keeping order at a rowdy meeting, or preventing votes from being hijacked by narrow special interests, are in the process of doing these things are also accused of being disrespectful to minorities and of hijacking democracy? Barriers to participation and justice can be found anywhere, and be put in place by anyone no matter how "community" and "multiculturally" oriented they are. One of the challenges of this study was researching deeply and long enough to be able to find barriers resulting from your average, well-meaning, neighborhood activism.

Bringing these barriers to light is always a worthy exercise in life, but academic research is held to a higher standard. In this case, it is supposed to bring to light barriers in a new place, new tools for understanding barriers anywhere, and understanding barriers in general in wholly new ways. The barriers to democratic representation I will examine in this chapter include voting snafus, voting manipulations, apathy, low minority participation, and rivalries between organizations. There is nothing particularly original about writing on these issues since everyone is aware of them, but what is new is how I will analyze them in light of another barrier to participation and justice, the unhealthy

fixation on democracy and electing representatives. My unusual exploration of mundane problems will show that the challenges to justice, participation, and inclusion, are so severe and so pervasive, that democracy may not even be possible in Whittier. If the solution to democratizing the neighborhood is attempting something so ridiculous as choosing the office holders randomly, then perhaps trying to make democracy work on the neighborhood level is itself ridiculous.

Mirror representation for the sake of mirror representation is not always preferred by political scientists; the most common argument being that “no one would want morons represented by morons" (Pennock 1979:314). A troubling question of mirror representation becomes, exactly which types of people should be mirrored, if not morons? “Common sense rebels against representing left-handers or redheads. What of Lithuanians? Italians? Jews? The uneducated. Mirror view provides few guidelines for selecting which social characteristics merit representation” (Morone & Marmor 1981:437, as quoted in Mansbridge 1999). Out of the infinite number of characteristics that the general population possesses, it seems that the structure of the electoral system should encourage certain characteristics over others. It is not so much that only those with the finest qualities should attain office,[cxcii] but those having the qualities that are the most *meaningful* should. Presumably this would mean that selection would take place along lines of race, class, religion, and political bent (in the case of the USA, bent would mean support for higher or lower taxes, legal or illegal abortion, for or against gun control. In Whittier the meaningful categories might be, for or against subsidized housing, or distributing free heroin needles or not).

However, choosing by lot avoids the very sticky problem of having the debate over which features are salient for representation and which are not. It also circumvents deciding how to design a system that actually can select for those features, because mathematically, over the long term the salient categories among the population would be mirrored in government. Also, while the electoral system creates biases towards selection of the power hungry (and wealthy), in the lot system you would only end up with maniacally despotic leaders in the same ratio as in the general population (a ratio that

surely is lower than the high ratio of maniacs out of the total number of leaders throughout history).

It is ironic that the Alliance and the government of ancient Athens are more similar than they first appear; they are both a timocracy (a system of rule by those who own property). To even be a citizen of Athens one had to be a man, who had completed their military training, and owned property. This left out about 80% of the population, because women, slaves, freed slaves, children, resident aliens, and free men who did not own land, could never qualify (in the later days of the Roman Republic even the poorest of citizens could vote, but their votes counted less than those with more wealth, and they could only vote for the propertied citizens of the upper classes (Manin 1997:46)). In the Alliance, while every resident is encouraged to vote, renters have been discouraged from running for board. At one board meetings I heard the board president remark that "traditionally" it was not appropriate for renters to run for the board. Whittier has no slaves, but 89% of the residents rent, and in the past the Alliance board often had no renters on it whatsoever. A rotation or lot system avoids this timocracy. Also, if board slots rotated frequently and randomly, no factions would be able to coalesce, preventing any group from attaining a dominant, long-term hold of policy, timocratic or not.

Also, a lot system would avoid another problem of timocracies, landholders using their civic position to increase the value of their own land. Long-time critics of the Alliance board complained to me that board members have in the past steered government funds towards the rehabbing of their own properties and those adjacent to theirs. Chosen by lot, nine out of ten on the board would be renters, who would have no stake in the value of any particular plot. Jean-Jacques Rousseau felt strongly that "in every true democracy, the magistracy is not a benefit but a burdensome responsibility, which cannot fairly be placed on one particular individual rather than another" (Manin 1997:74). If executed as a temporary burden instead of a long-term opportunity, board positions would present no occasion for personal profit. The existence of timocracy is an obvious example of the intersection of representative government and class, but as we will see in the next section, democratic governance is not simply criticized for enriching the wealthy, but also for disenfranchising the poor.

2: Debating whether workers should be full members or not – voting rules at neighborhood organizations act upon class and race inequality

Where there is voting there is corruption, confusion, and inequity. The Whittier Alliance is no exception. The 2004 annual meeting was the first annual I attended, and fortunately for my research it was big, bold, and bad. According to one board officer, "that was a nightmare meeting … Quite the circus." At a board meeting a few months prior, Shelly proposed that at the annual meeting the neighborhood vote on changing who can vote on Alliance matters – "We propose to change the bylaws so that members of the Alliance be changed to only those that live or own property in Whittier." The significance was that the current bylaws also allowed anyone who *worked* in Whittier to vote. Various board members chimed in with the problems that the Alliance had had when workers from neighborhood businesses showed up only at committee meetings only when that particular business was on the docket, and showed in overpowering numbers. One member voiced her concern with how to determine which Latino workers were not actually eligible to vote, on the rare but predictable occasions when they actually did show in large numbers.

"Stacking" is a word heard often in and around the Alliance, and while homeowners have been accused of stacking votes, the usual accusation is against businesses owners who bring their employees to a meeting where the owner is seeking support for changing something about his or her business, such as major expansion of the building, putting in a drive through, operating at irregular hours, eliminating parking, or any other changes which the city must give its permission (remember, neighborhood organizations in Minneapolis have no power to grant or deny much of anything, the boards only make *recommendations* to the city).

Another board member argued that excluding workers from membership had already been done at many other neighborhood organizations in Minneapolis, and it was necessary because recently the organization representing the nearby Central Neighborhood "was blown apart by Ahmed stacking the committees" with his employees and commercial tenants. The voting wars that destroyed this organization were apparently

so fraught with trauma, bad blood, lawsuits, and the threat of violence, that no one wants to speak of it, let alone recreate it in Whittier. And the stakes were high in Whittier, since Ahmed's largest property was the Somali marketplace in Whittier known as Karmel Mall, and when his property had been on the agenda in the past, large numbers of Somalis had shown up.

The board meeting continued with members bouncing around the procedural ins and outs of changing the Alliance's voting membership until Gregg, a new board member, exploded. While not naming them as such, the following tirade concerned the Somali and Latino workers in the neighborhood.

> I've heard people talk about stacking here tonight, but this is all about who these people are … These legalistic arguments [about bylaws] are only a thinly veiled attempt by those that want things to go their way, to keep it going their way … Look at this board, we don't have, well, black and brown people. We need to get them involved in this organization and on this board … This mistrust is based on who these people are. This fear mongering needs to stop.

Shelly defended her proposal – "Gregg, we have tried for many years to get minorities involved, we have begged them. But they come once and then they don't return. You're on the committee for the annual meeting, you can recruit minorities to come and run for board." Aaron told him – "We are not against any race." And the chair calmly explained – "This is not an ethnic or racial issue, it has nothing to do with ethnicity. This is an issue that we are addressing with the Somali and Latino initiative, but what you are talking about is different … You are confusing process with culture." Gregg argued his point more, and was given all the time he needed to do so, but convinced no one. The lecture by Gregg on race was something Alliance regulars had heard many times before Greg had shown up on the scene. All of them had been at one time or another personally accused of being racists, but their skin was thick and their determination strong. To them Gregg was just another firebrand idealist in a long line of race-baiting, finger pointers who stood in the way of real and crucial improvements in the neighborhood. To the Alliance regulars, they were the ones who consistently and generously volunteered their time and skills, and stuck out their necks time and time again, because they actually cared about the neighborhood.

At this point Shelly changed tack by attacking Gregg's administering of the voting at the most recent Urban Planning committee meeting. That meeting was the first since Gregg was elected chair of the Alliance's most important committee (in a close election in a room full of Somalis who had come because of a controversial development proposal at Karmel mall). At this latest committee meeting the owner of the "Mexican Village" strip mall was asking for support to add a liquor store to his mall; it was a meeting that was attended by no Somalis but many Latinos. Shelly accused that "at the meeting there was no accountability for who was voting. There was no sign in sheet passed out until I suggested it. The brain was not there." Gregg was ready for her, lifting up a sheaf of paper he declared – "here is the sign in sheet! Highlighted in pink are those that work in the neighborhood, highlighted in green are those that live in Whittier. They are about equally matched." However, this line of defense held little water for those who were proponents of excluding workers from voting; they neither had faith that these individuals legitimately worked in the neighborhood, nor had faith that they cared about the neighborhood.

At this point, an Asian man on the board wagged his finger at Gregg,

> Don't you talk for me! You need to let these people fight for themselves and fight for what they want … They are not disabled, they are not disabled … I was here [living in the neighborhood] for three years and no one ever came to me [from the Alliance to recruit me]. I came on my own … You need to let them grow, you need to let them grow.

While he gave agency to minority people by suggesting that they be allowed to speak for themselves, he missed the larger point that Gregg had originally been trying to make – that this board was at this moment actively marginalizing minority groups. He saw the Latino members as coming to the neighborhood meeting to exercise democracy.

A month later I interviewed Gregg at the Spyhouse coffee café,

> I felt bad after that board meeting, because I didn't want to open up the race debate, it's really a class debate … The voting ID requirement is a major blow to working class … Shelly wasn't even elected, she was like the 3rd alternate, three people quit and she got on … Seats are at the whim of the board … That's a way of keeping a possibility of a democracy at bay, appoint the people you want.

Gregg felt that disenfranchising workers and appointing board members (instead of electing them) was a way "to strengthen their control as property owners." As we learned from the battles in the Whittier Alliance a decade earlier, Gregg's theory was not new. For eleven years activists had been hounding the Whittier Alliance board as nothing but a tool of the propertied class. For Gregg, taking away the workers ability to vote "is all about continually increasing the profit for those that are on the board, and getting them more money" at the expense of worker's rights. On the other hand, those who do not want workers to be able to vote, feel that those who live or own businesses in Whittier are the ones affected by things like the negative effects of liquor stores, while the liquor store employees can go home to their neighborhoods, and do not have to live with the fallout of alcohol sales.

A few months later the raucous annual meeting was held, and on the docket was a vote to change the bylaws so that workers could no longer vote at the Alliance. While a meeting that was open to all in the neighborhood would seem democratic, Gregg explains how he feels democracy had already been subverted by the dominant faction on the board.

> They have layer upon layer of lies, but they need a two thirds vote [to pass their bylaw change] and don't have a snowballs chance of passing it. They are having it at the Gale Mansion, but the minority people are going to think, what's a mansion, do I have to wear a suit? Place matters incredibly and I think it's a tactic to keep others away.

If it did dissuade any it was not evident, as the room was packed with many hundreds of people, including a large number of Somalis sitting near the back. The board invited four officers from the Minnesota League of Woman Voters to manage the voting, and also invited the city attorney to process voter registration. Those that had been certified were given blue cards, and while there were obviously over 200 people in the room, only 144 people had been certified as members.

The first major malfunction of democracy became apparent a while into the meeting when people starting turning in their ballots for the election of the new board. When members had been certified upon entering, they were given a blue card, which they

then turned in for one candidate ballot and one bylaw ballot. Getting wind that something was amiss, the chair got back on the microphone and announced, “we are only voting on the nominations for the board, we are not voting at this time for the bylaws. If you are leaving for the evening you must turn in your bylaws voting card, we won’t be voting for this until later.” Alarmed, one man revealed that while he was not leaving the meeting, he had already turned in his bylaws ballot. A hubbub ensued when it became clear that many people had turned in this ballot, some of whom had already left. Some became afraid that the bylaws ballots already cast would be invalidated. The chair, becoming defensive, reiterated that “the only voting we were doing is on the candidate, the bylaws voting is later.”

The talk continued ping-ponging in this manner for many minutes, and it is important to detail here because it shows the working out of democracy in process. Someone from the audience complained that they had been instructed to turn in the bylaw ballot, but the chair testily re-re-iterated, “No, we aren’t voting on that.” Ahmed protested that “We need to acknowledge” the votes already turned, but the chair repeated that as of right now “there was no motion to vote on the bylaws.” One of the few board members against the motion chimed in – “They left with the understanding that their vote would be counted.” A board candidate said – “For those that already voted, there was intent to express vote, shall we just hold off on counting those” until all of them are turned in later? An activist for the new bylaw change however argued that the instructions to hold off on that vote had been clear, and those who turned in had already cast their ballots clearly “chose not to understand” those directions. Another candidate argued that since it was mostly Somali workers in the neighborhood who had already voted and left, it was those who would be most negatively impacted by the motion who are being disenfranchised by having their ballots invalidated. He was rebuked by the chair for speaking to the motion itself and not the voting on it. “Let him talk!” Came a shout from the back. Chair – “You are out of order.” Dave Hoban then argued that the pre-cast ballots must be thrown out, by pointing out that if in the course of the meeting the bylaws become amended before they are voted on, then the ballots already cast would not even be voting on that particular motion. Besides, he said, the standard of conduct states that

people stay for the whole meeting. Eventually the lone Somali board member moved that the bylaw vote be suspended for another day. It was at this point that the chair began backing off from her insistence that everything keep going according to plan, and she recognized the motion. After a lot of chatter, and a consultation with the parliamentarian, a hand vote was allowed on the motion to suspend the bylaw vote. "The I's clearly have it."

Earlier in the meeting a monitor from the League had instructed the crowd to put aside the by-law ballot "for the time being" and use it later. However, fifteen minutes later the League parliamentarian told the crowd that if anyone needed to leave early they could give their bylaws ballot to the sergeant at arms. The vote obviously had been compromised, because even if the early votes had been counted so as not to disenfranchise those voters, any later modifications to the motion would have made those early votes unsound. What if the vote had happened, but the membership had agreed to make no modifications to the motion, so that the early votes would actually be voting on the same motion as the later voters? This might sound fair, but not allowing amendments and modifying motions would subvert the rules of order, and deny the membership the legitimate right to vote on what they wanted.

It would seem a lesson on democratic procedures was learned this day, however, almost the exact same boondoggle had occurred at the 1996 annual. In order to expand voting to people not able to make the evening meeting, members were allowed to turn in ballots earlier in the day. However, that evening before the votes were fully collected, a controversial amendment was made to the ballot (see Ch. 2), which meant that all the members that were turned in ballots early had actually voted on different motion. In the weeks to follow, lawyers and city officials were brought in to resolve the matter. The debate over the 2004 voting snafu is just as much about developing governance as the debates on voting that go on in government assemblies all over the world, whether it be James Madison in Philadelphia arguing for federalism, or the Democratic Party in Florida arguing that "hanging chads" count as legitimate votes. The difference is that these last two events are a matter of historical record that are revisited by Americans on a regular

basis, whereas the problems of the 1996 Alliance annual are forgotten, and as we see in the 2004 annual, doomed to repeat themselves.

The making of democracy is dependent on institutional memory; and if the wrangling of years past is not historicized, then regularly discussed, then it almost might as well never have happened. One would have hoped that they legacy of that 1996 inquiry into Alliance voting rights, was a more insightful understanding of how NOT to manage voting. Its legacy however was a deeper polarization between those wanting non-profits to have a stronger presence the neighborhood, and those wanting the opposite. Few today remember the specifics of that conflict, but many, even those who came to Whittier politics long after 1996, consume and incubate the feelings of distrust that the conflict bred.

3: The 2004 alliance board elections and beyond – representation by election is a fiction

The raucous 2004 Whittier Alliance annual meeting also included a board election, that seemed for the first time in the Alliance's long history to possibly be the beginning of real participation on the board by a wide variety of ethnic minorities. There are fifteen at large seats on the board, and since each seat was for three years there are five seats up for election each year, and this year there were sixteen candidates vying for them. Of the five winners, only one was a white man (and a lawyer to boot), while six other white men lost. The only woman to win was white, but the other three winners were immigrants from Iraq, Somalia and Vietnam (and four other immigrants did not win). While three of the five in the incoming class were from the global south, of the twenty people on the board the day before, there were only two.

The woman had gained popular support by playing the mother ticket; she received loud applause when she told the crowd that she had raised her two kids. I later heard that one reason she was running was in order to spend more time with her husband who was already on the board. The irony though is that he lost his seat that night. However, depending on what camp you affiliated with, ultimately the joke may have ended up being not on the couple but on the other 142 voters that night, since within a few months

the husband showed up on the board. Not only that, but three other white men who also lost, also found their way onto the board, two of which at the next board meeting only three weeks later. Out of sixteen candidates these four stragglers had come in 6th, 12th, 15th and 16th, while none of the minority candidates that lost that night were ever heard of again. This turns out to not be a rare phenomenon in the Alliance; a great many board members are never elected at the annual meeting.

Being elected is only one of four ways of becoming an Alliance board member. Four board members are elected by the Business Association committee, which has the special right to elect two representatives from non-profit businesses in the neighborhood and two from for-profits. Another seat is given to whoever is elected to the chair of each of the Alliance's committee, elected by those few members who happen to show up to the particular annual committee meeting where the chair is elected. At the September meeting of the Community Issues committee the chair, Gregg, resigned after the birth of his first child, and the husband who had lost at the annual meeting was elected to replace him (from a pool of one). Ironically, he had been nominated by Gregg, who only a few months prior had complained that the husband had only been on the board in previous years because he had been appointed by the board.

Being appointed by the board to an open board seat is the fourth way onto the board. Seats become open when someone resigns before their term is up, if there were fewer than five candidates up for the five open seats at the annual meeting, or a member misses three board meetings in a row and is voted off. It turns out that people resign from neighborhood boards all the time (or simply stop coming), and a board with holes in it looks bad, and does not function as well (it is then theoretically possible for a board to be made up entirely of people who were never elected by the general membership at an annual meeting). This explains how four candidates that lost the board election *could* end up on the board, but does not explain why *these four* particular ones did.

Out of all the losing candidates that night, the only ones that got appointed to the board later were white men who were opposed to more affordable housing in the neighborhood, and three of them were longtime Whittier Alliance activists who owned or worked for businesses that made money off of providing market-rate home-ownership.

This helps to explain both why they got appointed and why the Alliance's critics find the board so undemocratic. The candidate who placed next to last in the annual board election (just ahead of a man who did not show), was trying to get re-elected to his three year seat. However, I later learned that "re-elected" was a misnomer, as he had never been elected to it in the first place, but only been appointed the year before. Never fear however, because at the next Business Association meeting he was elected as one of the for-profit representatives to the board, as he worked for a commercial developer active in Whittier's condo craze. The other for-profit representative was another white, male, real-estate agent who lost at the annual election. And when Greg resigned from the board six months later, his replacement was the white male who came in last at the annual election, and another real-estate agent.

The husband who made it on the board in September 13th by being elected chair of a committee, eight days later also appointed to a board seat newly vacated by the Vietnamese man who had won the seat at the annual election, thus guaranteeing that even if the husband lost the committee chair at the next election in six months, he would still remain on the board for another two years until "his" (actually the Vietnamese man's) at-large term was up. At the subsequent board meeting in October the Iraqi man who had been elected at the annual resigned to return to war torn Iraq, and his seat was replaced with a white woman homeowner who was also a landlord. Three months later one of the Somali board members resigned, and was replaced by the board with yet another white male real-estate agent.

And remember the white board member who had dated two Arab men, like the condo developer described above she had only had the opportunity to fight with Gregg on the board because she was appointed by the board in 2003. She needed to be appointed because she had lost in the 2003 general election, along with a different white woman homeowner who was against any more affordable housing, who was also later appointed to the board, and who worked for the condo developer who had come in last place. And yet another white woman against more affordable housing who also had been a long-time Alliance activist, had been appointed to the board at the board meeting just six days before to the 2004 annual election, over the objections of Gregg and others who wanted

that open seat to be filled through election at the annual. However, fellow anti-affordable housing activists argued that "good candidates should be taken when available" (Whittier Alliance Minutes) (it occurred to me that as one of the longest running board members, she may never have actually run in a contested election).

I discovered that a similar debate had occurred at the exact same time one year prior, where again there were two unfilled seats immediately before the annual meeting. When the chair had announced that those seats would be appointed by the board *after* the annual meeting, the Alliance minutes record that a board member not attached to the dominant faction

> asked why the Whittier Alliance doesn't just fill all those seats at the upcoming election. He said that, at least, the two seats to be appointed should be mentioned at the Annual Meeting – the Board should close loopholes in its policies that might make it appear to be a self-perpetuating group of insiders.

However, a number of anti-subsidized housing proponents spoke up in favor of appointment, and at the next board meeting, two of their compatriots were appointed by the board. At the annual however, a few new pro-affordable housing did get elected.

After experiencing the crowds and drama of the 2004 Whittier Alliance annual meeting, I looked forward to a raucous 2005 annual. However, at the start of the annual there were not even enough people to attain quorum (the bylaws state that an annual meeting must have at least fifty members present in order for any business to be conducted). Out of a neighborhood of 15,000, with thousands more working in Whittier, they could not muster fifty souls. How pathetic it seemed to me, as both a researcher and a resident; not even one-half of one percent of the organizations official membership showed. In an effort to reach quorum, Joan even called her husband at home to get him to slog the half a block. The poor turnout though should not be surprising given the unpleasantness of the last annual. I sometimes forget that for your average, not particularly activist-inclined resident who shows up to try to feel a little bit a part of their community, division and confusion are probably not attractive. Some of the legacies of the 2004 annual were: a board that was not necessarily elected, a bad aftertaste, and

disenchantment with the purpose of the organization. On top of that there were no motions in 2005 to change the bylaws.

However, there had been an anonymous campaign to boycott the meeting, flyers had been placed on cars around the neighborhood entitled, "Ban the Whittier Alliance Annual Meeting." The flyer accused the Alliance of purposely excluding minorities and not caring about minority concerns. While there was another neighborhood organization that had been the Alliance's head-on rival, and whose members had made all these same charges many times, this tactic was not the their style. At the Annual's after-party down the street at the Caterpillar Lounge, a talked with a long-time Alliance volunteer who attributed the flyer to "Ahmed's henchmen … I mean, it may all be true, I don't know, but it's just Ahmed's tricks." She agreed that the board was of course not representative of the neighborhood, and that it was all about white people politics. But she countered that none of the neighborhood groups in the city were representative, and that there are almost no boards with mostly African-Americans. I wondered, if Ahmed was the reason that there were so many Somalis at the previous annual, perhaps he was the reason for the paucity at this one.

For a boycott to be effective, I would imagine that it would need to do damage, be one part of a sustained protest, and have a stable group of people behind it. This one had none of those, and as such was just ineffective anarchy. This flyering only further weakened the already weak ties between white homeowners and minority renters. It further marginalized them from a center of neighborhood power, sociality, information and knowledge creation. If quorum had not been reached and the boycott had prevented the Alliance's board election, then this might have meant something, but eventually some stragglers to the meeting allowed quorum to be reached, and the chair gave her opening remarks.

Her opening was translated into Spanish and Somali, a laudable effort, but it became evident that everyone present spoke fluent English (aside from the Somali translator and the Somali board member, I counted two Somali men, no obvious Latinos, only one Asian, and four African-Americans). I imagined that the critics of the Alliance board, of which only a few of many were in the room, would characterize this as a case of

too little too late – a nod towards pretending that they care about minorities, while doing little to actually bring minorities into the room. However, the board chair later told me she was proud that she had brought in translators; when she had brought up the idea to the full board before the annual, she had received a very muted response, so just invited them there herself. She thought that many on the board had the attitude that "if they can't speak English they shouldn't vote."

Since the effort to remove workers in Whittier from the membership had failed a year before, they were allowed to vote at this meeting. However, the task force that organized this annual had recommended that workers prove their membership status by showing their paychecks. At the board meeting a week before the annual, the lone Somali board member had objected to this – "Family businesses do not issue paychecks, and thus individuals have no proof of employment in the Whittier neighborhood" (WA Minutes). However, I doubt there were any workers present, so this seemed a moot point. Or was it? Had requirements like this one already done the work of thwarting participation by workers? The requirement was meant to make sure that those that did come to Alliance meetings were legitimate members, but if it helped to dissuade workers from coming in the first place, then actually checking documents was not needed, just like translating into Somali or Spanish.

The board election turned out to be as disappointing as the minority attendance. For five open board seats, five candidates had come forward, all white, and one even failed to show. The chair tried to convince the audience that the board had tried hard to get more candidates, and she had even personally tried recruiting them. It was decided that the ghost candidate could still run, and a motion for unanimous consent for all candidates passed. And as for the five board seats that were so passionately contested the year before, two of the winners were no longer even on the board.

I was sure that the next annual meeting, in 2006, was going to be another barn burner, since two years after the aborted vote to cut workers out of the Alliance, this issue had been placed once again on the ballot. However, not only was it not a lightning rod, it was not even a bug zapper; not a single person questioned the bylaw change. When the

motion came up, a board member explained it would mean that instead of everyone who worked in the neighborhood being a member of the Alliance, instead each businesses in Whittier would be allowed one representative; one business one vote. It was spelled out clearly, and even with its full impact made explicit, still no one objected. It was explained that "people who are simply an employee are not as invested in the neighborhood as those who live here." The whole episode was clear, cut and dried, and totally routine to the point of tedium. Only one person even asked a question, but was only concerned about how exactly the representative from a business would be chosen.

The proponents of the motion seemed to me to be unnaturally casual about the whole issue, and at the time I took this to be betraying their hidden anxiety that at any minute someone might begin a tirade against it, starting a groundswell. But the next day as I typed up my field notes from the meeting, it occurred to me that perhaps I was the only anxious person there; the architects of this proposal probably knew it would pass. Between general apathy, the boycott, the "social justice" homeowners having jumped the Alliance ship years ago, Gregg resigning over a year ago, and no new "social-justice" types having broken onto the scene that year, the motion did not even register as provocative.[cxciii] The board election was equally anti-climactic; exactly like the year before, there were no more candidates than open seats.

4: People who are infuriating inhibit community participation – apathy is a barrier, discourse, and strategy in community participation

Neighborhood politics is usually defined by its defense of community, or its empowerment of the local. These are fine things, but after doing research for a while I began to wonder if activism in the name of neighborhood could also be defined by its *apathy*, because the concept, discourse, and practice of apathy are all so pervasive and so potent in neighborhood politics. I ask you to peer through the lens of apathy in order to understand neighborhood participation, and to see apathy as participation's defining characteristic. This is not difficult to imagine, as not many people would want to spend many hours each month listening to discussions over such things as: all the ins and outs on whether or not the owner of the business on 2571 Blaisdell should get a variance for

five parking spots or for six. Or, should the new youth program that most in the room know will never actually happen be recommended for a $1,500 grant or just $1,000. And exactly how many bike lockers should the new condo building have in the basement. And should the lockers be 6 or 6.25 feet long, high on the wall or down below. And when this architectural proposal comes back to this committee in three months wholly altered, will this discussion have to take place all over again, be forgotten all together by the different group of residents showing up, or be moot because bike lockers had been taken out of the plan all together?

The average Whittier Alliance meeting corrals a small fraction of one percent of its potential membership. Many activists complain this is mainly the cause of apathy; if so, then apathy is the main motivating factor in their neighborhood participation for almost everyone. Gentrification, homeless shelters, chain stores, and drug dealing are hot button topics, but any of these only motivate some of the less than one percent; what small motivators they must be compared to the incredible clout of apathy.

Most Whittier-ites have never even considered attending a neighborhood event, let alone heard about one of the neighborhood organizations, but for the ones that have made attempts to get involved, they can be turned off very quickly and permanently by the behaviors of a few other participants. Since there is a limited and small pool or people who might ever become regularly involved in their community, if you want wide participation, it is crucial that those few not have their initial experiences be negative ones. I will start by analyzing the potential negative effects on democratic participation of lone individuals who infuriate others, but then move to the main event, the much larger-scale effects of one group of individuals on participation.

My field notes from one particular neighborhood meeting read,

> *A few of the attendees asked what seemed to me be random questions about some details of the neighborhood program being presented,, but I didn't see how the questions helped anything, it seemed like just a way for the askers to look involved and interested. If people really wanted to know something about this program they would read the report on it, but few wilt. It will be forgotten until the next time this presenter comes and talks about it. Then people will ask the same questions, or different but equally random and trivial. They ask questions that confirm their own biases. But they also preface their questions with speeches that affirm their own self-importance, their own part in a self-righteous cause.*

Meanwhile the presenters put up some defense of their projects against complaints, but mostly they just give a good-natured smile, shrug their shoulders, and move on.

A fake headline I once saw from the satirical paper The Onion periodical read – "Town Hall Meeting Gives Townspeople Chance To Say Stupid Things In Public." I could not help laughing when I read this story in a spoof newspaper; like any good parody, it hit a nerve. The article describes community members raising their hands in order to rant about issues that are at once absurd, unrelated and unfixable, and it reminded me of a lot of speech I had heard at a meeting. I came to think of these kinds of comments as spoken by people I called – the "over-empowered." Empowerment is a common buzzword in community engagement; it is understood as a crucial factor needed to prevent injustices from going unchallenged, and to prevent any opportunity from going unrealized. But what of those whose empowerment gets in the way of majority rule?

We all have had the experience of working in a group on a basic problem, and a solution seems just around the corner, when one person takes things totally off topic, goes on a rant about their personal pet peeve, introduces a whole new set of problems, or throws up a roadblock because one small part of the proposed solution is problematic to him or her. You may have felt that while the solution was not perfect, it was arrived at through compromise, and was still better than *nothing*, which was what will result if this road-blocker is allowed too much say on the matter. An activist complained to me once of fellow board members who he called "trust fund kids," who reproduce the chaos of their families by instigating problems. "They were always looking for the next conflict to create after the present one." This comment made me think about the activist who loudly and pompously objected to a renovation of the scruffy Fair Oaks Park because it included more lighting at night. Meanwhile everyone else wanted lighting in order to encourage safety and discourage sleeping on benches and dealing drugs.

I write all this not to ridicule well-meaning neighbors (or not so well-meaning in rare cases), but because many find community meetings to be full of "blowhards," and this keeps people from participating in community events. My research was not designed to judge the quality of people's complaints, instead my job was to analyze how phenomena affect civic democracy. The serious and thoughtful community activists I

know find these annoying comments as just something that comes with the territory; they are a small price to pay for open governance. Sure they take time and effort from serious problems, but we all know that not allowing people to say foolish things is the most foolish thing of all. And besides, it usually takes more energy and time to force someone to stop talking, than to just let them say their peace and sit down voluntarily.

For example, sometimes people with mentally illnesses, personality disorders, dementia, or just persistently irritating rants, would come to neighborhood meetings, and their presence in Whittier has thankfully been welcomed and their words tolerated, because in the grand scheme of things, these people rarely take up that much time. At one board meeting during a discussion on how to get rid of a payphone on Nicollet because it drew "an unsavory lot … including prostitutes and drug dealers," one board member felt there should be more payphones, "like the internet only made libraries more viable, cells phones can make payphones more viable." Another board member took a deep breath and dramatically offered, "Well I'm going to drop a bomb here," and told a disorganized story about how police once filmed him talking on a payphone because they thought he was making a bomb threat, and he was fired from his work because of it.

Another longtime board member would often begin compulsive outbursts that no one could interrupt. At the board meeting after the big 2004 annual meeting, the chair applied for a paid staff position in the organization, which the majority of the board was clearly happy about and voted to end debate on the issue, and vote immediately on whether to hire her. This emotional board member however felt morally compelled to hold up the hiring of the ex-board chair, and launched into a passionate speech on how it gives the perception of cronyism. This speech was clearly out of order, but the chair was diplomatic, and after allowing him to speak for a minute reminded him that "the board voted [to end discussion] and the board would like to move on. The board doesn't want to discuss this anymore." In both cases above, the mature response was to either let the ranter finish, or if he or she appeared they would not do so anytime soon, to gently remind them that time was short and there was much work left on the agenda.

Although these difficulties are random, infrequent, and individual; I highlight them in part in order to show their inconsequentiality relative to a different kind of

phenomenon that has driven many more people from the organization, a phenomenon that was systemic, predictable, and collective. This was the continued behavior of a small group of activists that were the ruling faction. The chief personality of this center was Dave Hoban, and he has played prominently in this dissertation, as he is probably the most influential activist Whittier has ever had. One of his long time opponents told me that Dave had in fact been a great booster for Whittier over the years, and was a leader who had gotten a great deal done. I have highlighted a number of activists in this study, including the very prolific Joan, but while Joan has done so much and been so courageous, her acts, while inspiring, did not affect the whole tone and policies of Whittier organizations nearly as much as Dave's. And while Joan's loud and brash way about her has angered many, Dave's angering capacity was much broader, more hurtful, and strategic; he singlehandedly was the cause of a great deal of the polarization that I have documented throughout this dissertation. Polarization itself is not necessarily a barrier to participation, in fact, the histrionic, hyperbolic language that reproduces polarity very much drives many people *into* political activity.[cxciv] But what of those in the middle and those with more sensitive ears; they are the ones in danger of leaving civic forums in the face of extreme politics and noise.

In the fight against crime in urban neighborhoods, people often comment on how we need more people watching out for each other. In the late 1990s, when the battle at the Alliance to have more homeownership and less non-profits in the neighborhood was at a peak, a school for the blind proposed to buy one of the neighborhood's old, monstrous, stone mansions. At the next board meeting Dave Hoban argued that the school for the blind would be a detriment to the neighborhood because they were not going "to add any eyes on the street." One woman who hates his policies told me that when she sees him around town,

> He thinks we're good friends I guess, he's so crazy … He says things and I just look at him, do you have a clue what just came out of your mouth … everyone just looks at him like, what did you just say … He's got classic lines … They're classic Dave comments.

During my research many people told me various tales about Dave, and I began to think of them collectively as *Dave Dirt*. These stories are in and of themselves forces that make

things happen in Whittier. Regardless of their truth or exaggeration, the telling of these stories again and again among Whittier activists alters the shape of Whittier politics, programs, and participation. If words do things, Dave's words have done quite a bit, and deserve a closer inspection.

Dave Hoban's outbursts have been powerful factors in shaping the membership of the board. The Alliance used to give each board member a certificate every year for their service, signed by the chair. One year Dave had survived a vote of no confidence that was instigated by another board member, and at the end of that year, instead of signing his certificate he wrote "NO CONFIDENCE" on that member's certificate. That board member "saw that and flipped out," according to one person present. Sometimes incidents such as this can fire up an activist to fight harder for their causes, but this one left the board soon after. Just before this incident two longtime Whittier activists who had previously become fed up with Alliance politics, had been convinced to return on the promise that things were not as bad as they used to be. These activists were in the minority in terms of both ethnicity and Alliance politics, as they supported the interests of renters and the in-need. However, I heard from someone who was also on the board at that time that at a later meeting Dave "went off on" one of them because he felt that at a recent Alliance committee, she had tried to stack the meeting with renters that would vote for her renter friendly proposal. Dave yelled at her that these renters did not belong at that meeting, "so she left in tears, and it was an ugly, ugly occurrence … I felt bad for her." Ironically though, as the story goes, when she soon after announced she was resigning from the board and stood up to leave, Dave attempted to physically block her exit from the room, because he wanted to keep minorities on the board in order to not give the appearance that the Alliance was all white.

People leaving the board, the organization, or the staff after being berated by Dave Hoban was a common occurrence. Sooner or later almost all those traumatized by Dave's temper got fed up and found that it was not worth it to stick around to fight it out with him. And those who left in disgust were usually those who were against his "homeowner" policies. Dave however was an equal opportunity bully, and would often fly off the handle at like-minded activists who crossed him on any one vote or issue. It

seemed that eventually everyone felt his wrath, but it was those who were supporters of the non-profits in the neighborhood that would get particularly discouraged and begin to avoid Alliance matters. These were also people who were busy, and had other causes in other venues to spend their efforts on, and I imagine they weighed their options and decided that they could have a greater effect on matters that did not involve Dave. The *stories* about these events reach a much wider audience than just that person yelled at. I can only imagine the number of people who have heard these stories, or have heard negative things about the Alliance because of these stories.

I also heard about another fiery activist (who supposedly had punched a man at a community meeting years before) who had never been intimidated by Dave Hoban, and instead had had a long standing rivalry with him. One day this activist was meeting with an Alliance staff member at the Black Forest Inn, when

> Dave comes in and starts making … sarcastic comments and mean and nasty comments to him, and he got pissed off and poured a beer over Dave's head … And Dave got so pissed that he came over and jumped on his back, and he's literally walking out of the Black Forest and Dave is clinging on him like a little monkey, out of the Black Forest and out onto the street.

Dave was a regular at the Black Forest, and another story recalled how he told a local politician who was at the restaurant one night "to get the fuck out Whittier," because that man had supported a proposal to have a "needle exchange van" in Whittier that dispensed clean needles to addicts in order to prevent the spread of AIDS. "Dave thought he was the mayor of Whittier … And he went [home] and made picket signs and picketed in front of the Black Forest [that said his name and] go home get out of our community (laughs). Walking out on the sidewalk, then went inside screaming at him."

Many of these stories told to me second or third-hand, but the point is not that this "telephone game" muddles the truth of what actually happened, the point is that with each new hearing of these stories opinions are formed and reinforced, and these opinions influence not just individual behavior but eventually the state of the neighborhood. For another event Dave participated in,

> That whole meeting was so … ugly … Here's the worst part, it was so embarrassing because we'd have these free-for-alls at these community meetings,

> and there would be a developer there who are about to invest millions in your neighborhood and they would see these free for all's.

I was also told that Dave was once quoted in a local periodical for saying that the reason the Alliance did not want more housing co-ops in the neighborhood was because it did not want more poor blacks in Whittier. This bad press did not result in protests against the Alliance or Dave's ouster; on the contrary, it was a clear, public message to all those who found this offensive to stay away from the Alliance. One board member felt that "he says fucked up shit like that all the time, that's how he conducts himself and that's why the Alliance always got in trouble. We were always doing damage control trying to shut him up."

Usually this kind of behavior would make someone a detriment to their cause; by offending people one would lose support and the organization lose legitimacy and money. However, in this case I argue that he was helping his efforts, specifically by offending those who would take the most offense to screaming, to jokes at the expense of the disabled, to offhand comments about minorities, and to any number of hurtful behaviors. The people who did take offense abandoned the Alliance, and while some of them tried to take down the Alliance by forming the rival Whittier Neighbors, this effort was unsuccessful, leaving the Alliance in control of neighborhood politics, and run by the very person who was so offensive to so many.

The rival Whittier Neighbors had been created by activists angry at the board of the Alliance. They wanted to seize from the Alliance the city designation of official neighborhood group, in order to more "democratically" represent Whittier and gain control of the large city funds (imagine, for example, if in the future the Democratic party found they were not ever gaining the White House or majorities in Congress, so instead formed a new government of the USA with a similar constitution but without the undemocratic Electoral College and easier voter registration). In the first conversation I ever had with a member of the Neighbors, I asked him why he did not ever attend the meetings of the Alliance, "I usually don't go to Alliance meetings because I don't enjoy them." This was a man active in many organizations and causes; ordinary apathy had

nothing to do with him. He did go rarely when an issue was up for vote that involved something on his block or he was involved in through his other volunteer work, but he found the experience painful.

Another Whittier Neighbor who had long ago fought the "homeowners" on the Alliance board, does not ever attend any Alliance functions anymore. His spouse goes sometimes and will tell him "all your favorite people were there, and that is enough to make me not want to go … It's not what is talked about now, but what was talked about 10 years ago." In the mid-1990s he had been on the board, during a time when a man considered a "centrist" had been elected chair, but when the chair resigned,

> There was no compromise chair, and I quit too … I use my energies in other ways in the neighborhood, it was such a debilitating experience, both emotionally [and practically], we didn't accomplish anything, they were just picking at each other. They would sit and argue whether someone's sidewalk should be 2 feet from the curb or 3 feet, and someone would say that it was a racist thing … It was terrible … It was just a matter of who got to shout the loudest and who walked out of the room first.

Tthis point about who walks out of the room first, cannot be understated. If an organization loses people now and then, this is a shame but has no systematic or lasting effects, however, the Alliance resignations were patterned. For whatever reason it was the more progressive (pro-affordable housing) activists would get up first, leaving the pro-market rate/homeowner activists in charge. Dave Hoban screamed the loudest and had the strongest stomach for conflict and accusations. It was not that no one was screaming at him, on the contrary, I am sure he has been accused of being a raving, racist, asshole more times than he can remember; but this never drove him away, nor did it drive away most of his allies who also had to endure these accusations. It did however drive out their opponents. As a board member of seven years who was sick of the conflict told me, "in politics it is the squeaky wheel that gets the grease." In this case, Dave was the squeakiest wheel around, but it was not that he wore down people with whining until they gave in to him, it was by humiliating and infuriating his opponents until they fled. That there are bullies in the world is not an interesting academic finding, but the point I am making here (and I

suspect Dave's point as well), is that those that leave the room are no longer at the table.

5: Apathy is largely driven by the tedium of civic participation

While offensiveness and shouting drive many away, at least it is interesting; tedium however is another difficult barrier to get past. The triviality and monotony of evening community meetings competes with the flashy entertainment of evening television, with socializing with friends, with the reward of exercising, with the love of one's hobby, or with the value of being with your children between they short span when you get home from work and they go to bed. American adults average almost five hours of video time a day (Nielson 2012), and with that schedule to keep, who has time for a neighborhood meeting? It is neither anthropological nor civil to write all this, but I cannot describe how mind numbingly boring many neighborhood meetings have become to me, and compared to the general public I am very interested in neighborhood issues and minutia. Listening to pompous or ill-tempered people can be quite a turn off, but it is simple boredom, not laziness or disinterest, that is a very serious motivator to not attend.

I have sat at community meetings bored by the particular topic at hand, but in fascination of those around me who come to these meetings regularly for years on end. Incredulous, I watch them sitting there fully engaged, and wondering what they have that I do not. Are they impervious to triviality and inconsequentiality? Reading through my field notes years later, I was surprised to read the following only a year and a half into five years of fieldwork in the neighborhood, "I left after the announcements. The rest of the agenda looked boring and just development projects." Three months later, "I left the Community Issues meeting because another construction plan was next, I wanted to hear the transit presentation afterward, but didn't want to suffer through the development presentation." That same year, at a committee meeting of a different organization I had volunteered for, my notes read, "I mentioned that I needed to go soon, I was so bored and it was painful to be there, I had set a target time of six thirty for myself to end this torture. Finally, a little after 6:30 I left. Pheww."[cxcv] Six months later I penned this,

> it is interesting how torturous the Community Issues meetings have become for me. Meanwhile others here keep asking questions after the nine o'clock ending

> time, two and a half hours after we started. Maybe if the meetings were more user friendly or interesting more people would come. The scientist for the superfund site droned on and on about sucking chemicals from the ground. And still people kept asking him questions.

However, trying to salvage my sense of myself as civically minded, I have wondered if perhaps it is not me who lacks something, but those who are able to sit through long meetings. Their taste in evening activities are distinctly different from most, what if they are missing the boredom gene that keeps the rest of us from wasting too much time on things that will not significantly affect our lives? I joke, but only because I am serious about the political implications of *taste*. Those few who enjoy civic meetings and can also stomach the rage, sanctimoniousness, and backbiting, choose to be a part of it. One way of looking at this is that it is a grander person who has all these qualities. This is someone who would rather venture out to sit on metal folding chairs to watch a presentation on the redesign of Lake Street, than sit on their own cozy couch watching their favorite reality show. While community activists can sometimes be portrayed as ineffectual, frumpy goofballs who could not make it as real politicians or cops, they are also seen as doing something out of the good of their heart for the benefit of the rest of us; in a sense they are extraordinary.[cxcvi] [cxcvii]

However, what if the Alliance is simply the last resort for residents who are ignored everywhere else? These meetings are democratic in the sense that everyone can stand up and speak, and there are few repercussions for saying things others find ridiculous. Where else does this happen? Not at work sites where hierarchies, rigid roles, and narrowly defined tasks rule the day, and where performance is often closely surveilled, evaluated, and tied to rewards/punishments. And not among friends or families where you will be immediately ridiculed, nor in other public places where you are ignored, given nasty looks, or arrested. Neighborhood meetings are the refuge of the ostracized and discounted. This is obviously an insensitive over-simplification, but it points to the tragedy that there are so many in society who are not heard by anyone, and whose only resort is the Alliance Community Issues meeting.[cxcviii]

And what of the officers of neighborhood organizations, are they not supposed to be the more talented than the average resident? While any participant must merely show

up, the officers are elected from among the population. In the fifteenth century the political philosopher Guicciardini argued that the city/state of Florence should elect its public office holders instead of appoint them by lot, since "the fate of city shouldn't be left in the hands of those that are merely adequate" (Manin 1997:61). However, the difference between Florence and Whittier is that, except in exceptional years, there are no more candidates than open seats. And since many board members are appointed, almost anyone who hangs around Alliance events long enough can eventually get in on the board if they want to. On the neighborhood level at least, the electoral system does not guarantee above average talent.

But if the mayor or city council appointed the board, at least it would grow out of a fairly democratic system. As it is, attaining the board is not even a plurality system, but is a decision made by one person, the one who decides to join it. According to one long time board member,

> I don't think it's an intensely democratic institution. All these volunteer positions are self-selecting, and going to skew towards people with interest and time, and that's anti-democratic right out of the chute … Virtually no board members had children, no more than 5 out of 150. It tended to be single people or married people without children … Retired people engage more, single people engage more ... People with adequate income engage more, people that aren't exhausted, people that enjoy groups engage more, people that enjoy talking engage more, and people are, uh, there's all sort of things that go into that self-selection. I don't know how much you could do to get around that.

6: Inviting minorities to the table is not the same as truly welcoming them

It is lost on no one in Whittier that neither the Whittier Alliance nor the Whittier Neighbors ever had descriptive representation. Everyone laments that ethnic minorities are not well represented in neighborhood organizations.[cxcix] And yet in the face of desire and effort, year after year after year, few minorities come to the meetings of either group or run for their boards. To say that everyone wants more minorities to regularly show up at Alliance meetings, tells only part of the truth. While everyone *wants* them to participate in theory, everyone is not so willing to *have* them participate in practice. One reason is because few minorities own homes in Whittier, so getting minorities to the table means getting renters. Race in Whittier politics has a strong class component (could it be

any other way?). So even if the Alliance was color-blind in attitude and practice (and no one ever is, nor should they necessarily), the result of not treating renters the same as homeowners means de facto that fewer minorities come to the Alliance, and also means that minorities will feel less welcome. This is one example of why, while the Alliance has done much to *invite* ethnic minorities in, they have been regularly accused of not actually *welcoming* them.

There are two basic perceptions on the lack of minority participation at the Whittier Alliance. One was, that while activists have tried to get ethnic minorities more involved, these groups are not particularly interested. The counter argument is that while it can be difficult to recruit minorities, they have not been encouraged, or worse, have been actively discouraged (and for those who are not devotees of either view, their views seems to be a mixture of these two, theories of minority participation appear to be quite limited in scope). For the purposes of understanding the challenges of democracy, I will explore some of the theories that these white, middle-class activists in Whittier have on minority participation. I will not make any determinations about these theories because my research was not among minorities; I never asked any minorities why they do not come.

For perspective, I offer the words of someone who was never aligned with any faction and had sympathies with both, but active in the Alliance in the mid-1990s. She was telling me one day about the dangers of parochialism in neighborhood politics.

> The bad news is that neighbors think they control the frickin' world, and you know, you don't (laughs). You don't get to say who lives in your neighborhood, who has a business in your neighborhood. You don't get to say that … You can help other folks move in if you don't like the folks who live there [already], but you don't get to stand up at a meeting and say we don't want you. I have been at meetings at Whittier when people stood up and said that we have too many Asian businesses here. How dare you! You don't rule the world! Too many Asian businesses, so they kept them out of the process.

However, by the time I arrived on the scene in 2003, I never heard anything thing like this, and if someone had said it, I am confident that he or she would be rebuked. Public debates in Whittier today take on a different shape; they imply inclusion much more than

exclusion, but often place the blame for low minority participation on the minorities themselves.

In talking one day with an Alliance board chair about getting racial minorities to come to meetings, she stressed that the problem was not just about inviting them to participate, but "they have to *accept* the invitation." Gregg's argument however was that when they do accept, they are poorly treated. Regarding a meeting where Ahmed had been accused of abusing voting procedures by recruiting many Somalis to come and vote who were not from the neighborhood, Gregg later asked the board, "Since when is it abuse to invite people to a meeting and have them show up?"

The Alliance board and their critics have distinct understandings of what it means to "invite." For Gregg and most of the members of the Whittier Neighbors, an invitation to participate means strongly bringing your voice and interests, whatever those interests may be. It is a sincere solicitation to come to advocate, protect, and demand. For the "homeowners" however, it is an invitation to do your duty, act responsibly, and work for the common good. In this case, the common good is presumed to be that which strengthens market-rate homeownership, and not the "de-stabilizing" effects of the over-concentration of poor and the non-profits that serve them. If one accepts this invitation, it is one's duty to not only come to the meetings that directly and personally affect you, but come to have a say in all the matters that affect the neighborhood. For those individuals, or groups, such as Ahmed, his Somali tenants, or the Mexican Village employees, who attend only one part of one meeting every year or so, they are proving to the Alliance regulars how little they care for the neighborhood, and how little respect they hold for the organization. It is a personal snubbing to those who do regularly commit to volunteering their time and effort. It is also seen as a manipulation of a political process that was genuinely created to be fair, and as such a direct attack on democracy itself.

The difference between these two political philosophies is a matter of rights vs. responsibilities (reminiscent of long-standing debates over voting or driving being a right or a privilege). For Gregg it is one's *right* to come, participate and advocate for oneself, and every little piece of contribution, no matter how small, is a testament to democracy and to the power of community. For the "homeowners," it is one's *responsibility*, if one is

going to vote at all, to come regularly, participate according to the rules, and advocate for the health of the entire neighborhood. In this sense, contributing does not mean speaking up for one's personal pet projects, but speaking up for the neighborhood, in the face of assaults by profiteering developers, housing corporations, social services, city hall, fast food chains, drug dealers, thieves, or anyone else out to make a fast buck at the expense of a vulnerable neighborhood. Contribution is not to be done in a self serving, selective manner.

The criticisms of the Alliance board over the past few years paint a picture of the Alliance as engaging in what would be called covert, passive discrimination, because while no one today ever tells someone they cannot participate based on their identity, people are discouraged from participating based on characteristics and behavior that are not in and of themselves ethnic or based on class, do overlap with these categories. Just as critical parking does not name any ethnic or class group as barred from parking on 29th Street, it de facto bars many Somali people, by criticizing people for only coming to Alliance meetings that have to do with Karmel Properties. In this way, it is criticizing people who Somali.

Much of this dissertation has been an attempt to tease out the particulars, contexts, complexities, and holisms, of theories about minorities and the in-need in Whittier, but it took me until writing this latter part of this last chapter in 2013, to put my finger on an operative ideology that explains the "homeowner" approach to minority participation. Ideologies I have already analyzed, such as those revolving around "contribution," "stability," and "investment" are clearly crucial to understanding this issue, but they do not speak directly about Somalis or Latinos as a people. What does though, is talk I have heard that expounds on how these groups have not yet progressed to a level necessary to truly be able to *do* democracy.

At one of the many Alliance meetings where Ahmed was officially told he was out of order, he sarcastically referenced a slogan of the Whittier Alliance, saying that in an organization representing "The International Neighborhood, I see a lot of international people on the board." He wanted to know what the Alliance was doing to make the

organization more international. The board chair took a deep breath and presented a somewhat conciliatory, somewhat defensive pose, and began to explain her theory and vision of minority participation. She began by mentioning that her own grandparents were Italian immigrants, and "I appreciate your desire to see things more pluralistic, but you are not going to see it every day. But maybe your children will be on the board and have time to do it. Because it takes hours and hours every week to volunteer for the Whittier Alliance" (I half expected her to end with, 'and some of my best friends are Somali').[cc] I did not know what to make of this statement at first, but later it began to remind me of other statements I had heard around the Alliance, which together clearly suggested that immigrants from non-Western countries were a possible threat to democracy in the neighborhood.

Alliance regulars were always guarded when talking to me about issues of race, and that is why I very much appreciated that Aaron had the courage to be a bit more open with me on the issue, even though he is generally a shy person (I also appreciated that when I emailed out to the neighborhood listserve a rough draft of chapter one of my dissertation, he was the only one to give me any feedback). When I asked him about the Alliance's slogan, "Strength Through Diversity," he told me,

> It's important to me, um, important to the neighborhood, although we've really struggled with getting diversity on the board, and getting diversity at different meetings. We really struggle with it, almost, going to the extreme trying to get diversity on the board. It's seems like there's some cultural things that don't encourage a lot of that to go on … [stumbling over his words], Somalians, culturally they're not used to participating, especially outside their community, especially the women.

When listening to Alliance regulars talk about immigrant participation, I believe now that what I had been hearing in their anxious words was something akin to the outdated anthropological theory known as "unilinear cultural evolution," outlined by the 19th century American railroad lawyer and social theorist Henry Louis Morgan. Under his extremely influential paradigm, all societies, no matter where, follow the same general path of progress, advancing through various stages of "savagery" and "barbarism," to finally arrive at "civilization." For example, a group of people first develop culture about the time they start gesturing in order to communicate, and organize themselves into

families, then they will go on to develop the use of fire, then the bow and arrow, afterwards inventing horticulture, then domesticating animals, and on to farming, poetry, and popular assembly; becoming civilized, they develop an alphabet and commerce, then aristocracy, and finally such things as the steam engine, rule of law, and representative government. The hitch was that while all societies progress along the same path, they do so at different rates and at different times. The effect of this paradigm was that it placed America and northern Europe at the pinnacle of civilization, while all other cultures were somewhere behind them, catching up, but just somewhat slower at the whole process (and the southern Africans, like the hunter-gather Kung!, were the most egregiously sluggish of all). Morgan's schema found its way into the theories of, Marx, Darwin and Freud, and in a more progressive and charitable way, the Whittier Alliance.

The most evident theory in Whittier circles on why immigrants were not participating, was because they were too busy just trying to get by; it was understand that while white activists were meeting in the evenings, immigrants were working night jobs, taking care of children, and just attending to the consuming necessities of their own family and ethnic community. This is what the board chair was saying when she spoke of the huge time commitment that volunteering for the Alliance required. Explaining immigrant participation with lack of time works well for the whites, because whether or not they were attacking the Alliance for its lack of diversity or apologizing for it, it was a way of making sense of this lack without casting aspersions upon the immigrants themselves. Being busy is the ultimate excuse for everything in our society today, no one can fault you for it, because we are all very busy and all "know" how hard it is in "today's world" to juggle the demands of "modern life." It seems that every television commercial tells us this, making us not feel bad about how little time we spend reading books, playing with our kids, visiting our parents, or practicing yoga. Also, ascribing busy-ness to immigrants makes them appear hard working and responsible, instead of getting caught calling minorities lazy and untrustworthy. In fact, I can recall a number of times during Alliance meetings when one of the white regulars explicitly clarified how hard working the Latino, Somali, or Asian immigrants in the neighborhood were.

But while this is the most common characterization of immigrants in Whittier, it does not work against the illustration of them as politically immature, in fact it advances it. A popular way of thinking about people in third world economies, is as spending all their time scrabbling and scrapping to get by.[cci] Many activists feel that the Somalis in general in the neighborhood are good at working hard to develop a life for themselves here in America, but do not understand how democracy and the Alliance works. What I sense from these activists, is that they suspect that unlike themselves, the Somalis do not deeply value fairness, order, and the general principles of majority rule. But while this story about immigrants being too busy is the most common one told about their political participation, behind this explanation lays a fear that if they do participate, their political naiveté will subvert the entire democratic process. One reason is because of the fear recent immigrants are too easily controlled or swayed by others, such as Ahmed, who they see as using his influence and authority over them to force them to vote for his personal and selfish projects. Somalis are bent to his will because they have not yet developed the individualistic fortitude, the intellectual rigor, or the sense of liberty, required to be able to responsibly wield, and protect the fragile thing called democracy. Another reason though is that even if acting on their own, this is just the problem, without a strong sense of the common good, some immigrants will push for what is good for them alone, but damaging to the neighborhood as a whole (such as a liquor store where local panhandlers will get drunk, a mall that will provide no parking, or a soup kitchen that will breed crime).

When I spoke with one longtime Alliance regular about the proposal to require identification to vote at Alliance meetings, she told me that the undocumented immigrants in Whittier who lack proper IDs are not interested in neighborhood stuff anyway. She did not see any disenfranchisement because the people that would be scared off by ID requirements are the same ones who would not come regardless.[ccii] She told me about a local Latino celebration that was completely organized by Latinos, where few Latinos even showed up. “They are working two jobs already. They only come when herded by someone like Ahmed” (interested choice of the word “herded,” both for its

animalistic connotation, and because many of the Somalis are descended from semi-nomadic, cattle herders).

In her study of white communities in America, Pamela Perry (2001) found that one way that privilege is maintained is when whites link themselves "with orderliness, self-control, individualism, and rationality." As the very same ideals of the European Enlightenment and Anglican Protestantism, these values are seen as objectively just the best and most efficient way to be. Meanwhile, minorities are often "defined in terms of that which is passionate, chaotic, violent, lazy, irrational" (Perry 2001:81). [cciii] While whites generally in the Twin Cities do not tend to talk about immigrant groups as violent or lazy (except in the sense of their emotions being violently raucous, and being lazy in their commitment to order and selflessness), they do seem to find them passionate, chaotic and irrational, things I believe they attribute to their robust, perhaps even tribalistic, customs. This is opposed to the Western political traditions, which have been judiciously crafted over time by an almost scientific-like experimentation, and by philosophical rumination forged through rigorous debate. For example, America's founders are not seen as exercising parochial or selfish desires, but instead exercising their individual conscience as well as the political principles of the school of thought to which they have carefully chosen.

This perspective assumes that the natural path of America is for immigrant and/or minority groups over time to assimilate fully into the majority culture. Immigrants are welcome, and will be given all the freedoms and opportunities that past waves of immigrants have also been afforded, but, only with the promise that they will eventually lose their foreign ways for the more civilized, logical, efficient, and democratic ways of America's Founders and their descendants. One of the assumptions this perspective makes is that democracy can only be done one way, and this way is the way it is currently being done by *us*. The Alliance regulars assume that their methods and practices are the true democracy, and deviation from that would mean the degradation of democracy, and this would lead to the degradation of the whole neighborhood. The result of this is that protecting democracy is equated with being born in America (and owning an unsubsidized home?).

To question this assumption, is to wonder what democracy would look like if the board mirrored the populace, which would mean a third of the board members were immigrants of color, and almost all were renters (I am still searching for someone that supports a lot system). I do not know what it would be like, but neither do those currently running the board and protecting it from the unknown. I suspect they think it would look more like the board of the Phillips neighborhood to the East, which, before the neighborhood was split in four, had been factional and acrimonious; or the board of the Central neighborhood when it had been taken over by a new slate of candidates, or simply any of the fairly ineffectual, un-professionalized, and naïve boards that represent many of the neighborhoods in the city. The Alliance board members do have a large number of pretty scary examples to draw their assumptions from, but Whittier politics have always been unique, and immigrants have never been well-represented in any neighborhood board in the city.

The 'not yet ready' for democracy view in Whittier is reminiscent of the discourse that which claims that all immigrant groups throughout America's history had a hard time at first, and so it is incumbent upon new immigrants now to work their way up from the bottom, just like early Europeans did. Gallagher (2003) called this the "Everybody Goes Through It" narrative, where Americans deny contemporary discrimination by arguing that for the recent immigrants from the global South, "there's no difference between what they did now and what my grandparents did eighty, ninety, hundred years ago when they came to this country." According to one of Gallagher's white informants, "like, as far as I'm concerned, this affirmative action to me didn't make no sense, cause nobody gave my grandfather a break because he couldn't speak English" (151). However, this argument assumes that the immigrant experience of white ethnics a hundred or two hundred years ago is analogous to that of El Salvadorans or Liberians today; it ignores the impact of the differences in race, skin color, economy, and politics. While racial/ethnic discrimination today can be much less egregious than it was a century or two ago, European immigrants of prior generations were able to eventually "pass" as regular white folks, and don all the privileges that it affords.[cciv]

It appears that Alliance activists explain away the lack of diversity on the board, by attributing it to minorities being hard workers who are trying to support their families. This is a sort of underhanded compliment however, it is as if their sense of hard work and family obligation are being held against them. I argue that this view works to excuse the Alliance of any blame for the low minority participation, and excuse them from any responsibility for achieving higher minority participation in the near future. It is as if they are saying, 'it is not our problem, the problem lies with them, they just do not want to be part of the organization because they do not have the time.' This is similar to how many Americans say that affirmative action is unjust, because the reason minorities do not have good jobs lies with those minorities, not society at large. In previous eras of American politics, the lack of minorities in leadership positions in government, was mostly attributed to such things as low intelligence, low work-ethic, poor upbringing, poor values, or underdeveloped civic pride. Reversing this discourse by complimenting minorities today on their intelligence, skills, drive, traditions, history, or spirit, does not reverse the inequality and low levels of civic leadership.

The given knowledge about why inequality exists in America today has morphed into a form more amenable to the current political environment (especially since Democrats and Republicans today are becoming more and more aware of the growing power of the Latino vote). Instead of blaming biology or "blood" for the inequality, or blaming individuals themselves, the blame is placed on the strong cultural traditions of minorities ('not that we're saying there's anything wrong with their culture, we love their food and heritage').[ccv] [ccvi] "Race, suspended in the buffer zone, remains ready to reappear as an interpretive frame to justify racial disparities in American life and to legitimize, when necessary, the marginalization and the circumvention of African Americans" (Crenshaw 1997:103). [ccvii] What changes in Whittier politics is the explanation that legitimates the inequality, what stays the same is the inequality, and the hierarchy that explains and perpetuates it.

The shift from biological (essential) explanations of racial/ethnic/national difference to cultural ones has been well documented, but the way that it plays out in Whittier politics is different, it is actually multicultural. The culture of others is

somewhat suspected of having deficits, but this suspicion is tempered with a certain amount of respect (like the respect hunter/gatherers get for being able to survive and for living such a difficult existence, or the rural people get for living such simple, down to earth lives), and expressed in a "culturally sensitive" way. To accuse anyone in Whittier of showing contempt for another's culture would be a serious allegation that would be sure to be met with denial and backpedaling. But to define another's way of life as great at some things (business, occupational skills, school) but just not *yet* great at something else (voting), is understood as appropriate. [ccviii]

An Alliance's community organizer had once told me that when she was organizing a big fair on Nicollet Avenue, and had walked down this business corridor to talk to the business owners to promote it and get their support for closing the street for the day, while the white business owners were excited about it, the Asian ones had no interest. They had told her that it would not help their profits, since it was on a weekday and would be attended by a bunch of local people, and they get their business on the weekends from Asians who drive from across the metro to their shop. They were not happy that the fair would close off the street when customers might be trying to drive to their business, but according to the organizer, they said, "You're going to do it anyway so what can we do." I told this story to an Alliance board chair, who was a bit surprised by their response, and genuinely saddened that they felt so powerless. However, she could not have been too surprised because she also told me that she felt that the Asians in Whittier were not involved in neighborhood groups because it was "a cultural thing."

In America at large, Asians are often seen as the "model minority," given their stereotype as successful small businesses owners, dedicated students, and not prone to rioting in the streets. In Whittier, while it is highly appreciated that the Asian business owners helped turn Nicollet from a half empty street with prostitutes in the early 1990s, to a thriving business corridor today, Asians are also seen as lacking community ethic. They are the model minority because of their lack of participation in American national politics, but on the neighborhood level, this is a negative (unless you are a renter). The Asian property owners in Nicollet are seen as not caring about the quality of the buildings

or façades they erect, not picking up trash or shoveling snow, and not participating in neighborhood events.

While diversity in the abstract is an easy thing to love, like most community building ventures, it seems that the doing of it can be quite aggravating for some. When sociologists Bell and Hartmann interviewed community activists from across the nation on the value of diversity, one demonstrated this frustration well – "Like many respondents, Ryan has positive feelings about diverse individuals coming together as a group, and yet he experiences difficulty with group-level communication in settings where diverse individuals actually meet" (2007:903). Similarly, the Alliance board chair who felt that the Somalis were not yet ready for large scale neighborhood participation, very much liked the *idea* of working within a multicultural organization, but some of her actual interactions with immigrant groups were less than ideal. When I asked another young, progressive board member about the effort to make the Alliance more multicultural, he was stumped. "The Whittier Alliance doesn't have much of an impact on this, we should try to be accepting. The board is [racially] homogenous. But what role would the Alliance have in multiculturalism? What could we do?" What is so interesting about his multicultural stance, is how blind he appears to be to the huge number of changes that have been called for over many years by critics of the Alliance. He would simply have to ask any number of people in the neighborhood, who could instantly give him a list of ways they think the Alliance could be more multicultural in their eyes.

He might discount most of these suggestions as impractical or risky, but that would be his decision to not implement them, just as Alliance critics choose to not be a part of an organization which they find impractical and risky. If he asked me how to make the Alliance more multicultural, I might suggest the totally absurd idea of choosing the board by lot, but others would suggest assigning seats by quadrant so that the board would draw from the more minority southern portions, or having a standing committee called Building Diversity, or building more affordable housing, or welcoming the social services organizations, or mailing the annual Alliance ballot out to everyone in the neighborhood. Again, he might balk at these suggestions, but these are things others have suggested as things he could do. Instead, the board's position seems to be, since we do

not prevent anyone from joining our organization and occasionally reach out to them, that is enough, and if they fail to show up, then that is their problem and not ours. The multiculturalism that we are seeing from these activists is one mediated by frustration and blindness, because while their primary slogans are about promoting diversity, their actual primary goals are about promoting free-market homeownership, more handsome architecture, small business development, and the strength of these creeds within the Alliance.

To me, the real question then seems to be, not, "Do you want to be more multicultural," but, "Are you willing to accept whatever changes come out of an organization that does not put limits on voting rights and membership, and that continuously and sincerely courts minorities and renters?" If the fear of what might happen because of these changes is too great, then one has made a choice to not promote a more progressive multiculturalism. If one is not willing to jeopardize creating a Pedestrian Overlay District on Nicollet, or not willing to see another supportive housing project, then one will use strategies that allow the maintenance of a dominant position in the organization. Does reconfiguring an organization to be more welcoming to outsiders mean changing the organization's mission and goals? Yes, it probably does.

One can both want more participation from those different from oneself, and not be willing to accept its consequences. Vine Deloria has written about Whites wanting to help Indians and wanting to know more about them, but only if the Indian that whites face is the kind, wise, spiritually giving Indian one remembers from movies and books, the one who forgives the whites for all they have done and asks for nothing (1980:xv).

> The whites are sincere but they are only sincere about what they are interested in, not about Indians about whom they know very little. They get exceedingly angry if you try to tell them the truth and will only reject you and keep searching until they find the Indian of their fantasies.[ccix]

In Whittier there are many different kinds of multicultural fantasies among the diverse and competing organizations run by whites.

The Whittier Neighbors were a group of mostly white homeowners who split from the Alliance specifically because the Alliance was not nearly as diverse, multicultural or democratic as they wanted. And the Neighbors did in fact work

specifically with the Somali community on projects that the Somalis themselves wanted, but the Neighbors had the luxury of being obscure and without much influence or money, which meant that few minorities or renters wanted to be on their board. If they had gotten as many funds as the Alliance did, attracting *diverse* suitors and intruders, what would been the results – supporting Ahmed's development projects? Going bankrupt on wind energy ventures? Renovating the hated two and a half story walkup apartments? Subsidizing the rent of all the renters?

Or, what would have happened if the members of the alternative, environmentally friendly Neighbors, who were not bothered much by things like public urination and street prostitution, had elected a board that descriptively reflected the actual neighborhood with all its Catholic Latinos, African Muslims, disenfranchised blacks, Vietnamese, struggling students, corporate middle-class, working class, and others? Its vision and mission would be radically altered, and I cannot help but wonder, how would its founders feel about that?

7: Whittier Neighbors leaving the fate of the neighborhood to the Whittier Alliance

In 1992 the Whittier Alliance was culminating a massive campaign of putting together a ten year, $20 million proposal, to Minneapolis' new Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP). It was at this point when the present day Alliance regime, showcased prominently throughout this chapter as "homeowners," "Alliance regulars," "Alliance board majority," or "Friends of Whittier" party, first came into power in an extremely bitter board election. The polarization of Whittier politics that accelerated in 1992 did not simply end up creating two rival organizations and the enmity between them, more importantly and ironically, I will argue that it cleared the way for one particular set of policies to guide the path of the neighborhood.

This new slate of candidates, who at the time referred to themselves as promoting homeowner interests, were very concerned that the huge new influx of money would be used to fund "even more" affordable housing, especially the subsidized co-ops, which the

"homeowners" considered failing money pits, as well as a sources of neighborhood crime and instability. A newspaper article at the time of the revolution wrote,

> Those who are watching changes in Whittier generally see the many new faces as a healthy product of NRP. But they are wary of how the homeowner-renter politics will play out. "A good revolution is not bad every 20 years or so," said … the chairman of the NRP's implementation committee, paraphrasing Thomas Jefferson. "It's healthy, it just needs to play itself out." But he said the city will stick to the standing NRP commitments that came about through Whittier's NRP process [before the "homeowner takeover"], which involved more than 50 meetings with all types of residents. However, staff members of other neighborhood groups, particularly the well-established ones, are worried that newcomers lured into the NRP process by the prospect of millions of dollars will undermine the good work that they've been doing for years. Staff members in Phillips and Powderhorn Park, both NRP neighborhoods, already have been criticized like their colleagues in Whittier have (Leyden 1992c).

The NRP director was also quoted saying, "I think this is going to be a very interesting story to watch for the next year and a half" (Leden 1992c). Indeed, as that was the crux of Chapter 3, but it is much more interesting to watch over the next twenty years, my other chapters do, which ironically, is the interim the NRP chair imagined between revolutions. Twenty one years have gone by, and while every few years someone does make a concerted takeover bid, no one has come anywhere close since the old guard progressives abandoned the Alliance in 1996 to create the Neighbors. Today the original homeowner revolutionaries have moved out of the neighborhood or are confident enough in their regime's hold on power to retire from active duty. The majority of the current generation of board members is mostly people inducted by the original revolutionaries. According to one knowledgeable old-timer who was not allied with either of the two main factions, the inner-circle of the "homeowner" faction was,

> Like the 4 musketeers, whatever they wanted to do they did and whatever they didn't they shelved … that went on for years. And uh, um, I don't think it really has changed that much except that now that over the last two years, um, they've become more, the old controllers are gone more than anything else, and it's kind of a new day with new people who would like to do something and are well-meaning. The folks before were not well meaning, they were just mean spirited. You had slum-lords that got on the board …they didn't want to clean up the place, they got on the board and said we don't want to do that.

Even if the new generation of Alliance board regulars may not see themselves as part of the old "homeowner interests" contingent or philosophy, their views have been heavily influenced by the knowledge and arguments of those revolutionaries, who either recruited the new board members directly, or pulled them aside to let them in on their version of the history of Whittier. But what of the other versions of this history, from 1996 till the slow death of The Neighbors between 2008 and 2010, the main contenders of that history remained trapped within the small, insular confines of this splinter group.

To understand this process, we need to understand more about the Whittier Neighbors. Linguistics shows us that all things are defined according to what they are not (negatively), for example, "high" has meaning only because it is not "low," the two define each other even though they are opposites, and without each other they would be nothing. At one Neighbor's meeting where members were discussing what the organization was about, one member boldly asked, "Isn't this the, we hate Whittier Alliance group?" The others quietly ignored this, it was obvious they did not like this characterization of themselves; they saw themselves as doers not un-doers, as lovers not haters. However, there is truth to that member's question. Those in the Neighbors did expend a fair amount of energy denigrating the Alliance, and many were quite bitter about the way they had left the Alliance and then lost out to it when the city did not recognize the Neighbors application to displace the Alliance as the official community organization of Whittier. But while I am quite certain that the Alliance regulars bad-mouthed the Neighbors, I am also sure that they did not expend as much energy and breath on it as the Neighbors did. Why would they? They had won. They had the money, the numbers, the projects, and the office with a staff. Many of the Alliance regulars disliked the Neighbors very much, but the Neighbors were a trifling, a non-threat. So while the Neighbors very much defined itself as not being the Alliance, the Alliance was able to continue defining its voice as simply the voice of "the neighborhood." Just like the balance of power between the two neighborhood groups was highly unequal, the way that the meaning of each was crafted is also highly unequal; the meaning of the Alliance defines the Neighbors much more than vice versa.

However, the picture just painted on The Neighbors is not entirely fair, just like the “we hate the Alliance” question was also not entirely fair. Even after the Neighbors failed to supplant the Alliance, for a while at least, they forged ahead with valuable projects of their own, unrelated to the Alliance, and very much growing out of their values. Their showpiece was the successful video they made in Somali on the ins and outs of renting an apartment in America, as well as co-sponsoring events such as World of Whittier Fair and city council candidate forums.

But by the time I started research in 2003, even though they did not know it, the Neighbors were already on a downward trajectory. Summers in Minnesota are always a difficult time to get people to civic meetings, white, middle class Minnesotans traditionally are taking vacations, or are enjoying the long, warm nights. But in 2004 at the June and July Neighbors board meetings, quorum was not even reached. This became a common problem, and was especially debilitating because the board meeting was *the* meeting of the neighbors. While there was a struggling events committee and video committee, almost anyone who was involved in the organization was on the board. This was unlike the Community Issues meeting of the Alliance where people from across the neighborhood would come to hear and preach the physical and social developments of the day. By 2005, I was relieved one afternoon when the organization secretary sent out an email cancelling the board meeting that evening due to so many board members telling him they could not come.

In the fall of 2003 I began attending almost every meeting and event that the Neighbors had, and was even a little excited to help put on their 2004 fundraiser, which would collect the proceeds from one night of a Billie Holiday play that was running at a small, non-profit theater in the neighborhood. I was in charge of asking local restaurants to donate food for the event and called many a restaurant, but I cannot say everyone else on the fundraiser committee put much effort into it. At the next board meeting the results were in, we had a negative balance. You see, the Neighbors had to pay the theater to “rent out” the space for that night, and while all ticket proceeds went to The Neighbors, it was The Neighbors job to market and sell all the tickets for that night. The salesmanship and

sweat of The Neighbors as a whole turned out weak; we had not even sold enough tickets to cover the cost of the space.

At the next meeting of the Events Committee, excuses were made and morale was low, but ideas were generated for the next fundraiser. “A multicultural” event with a Mexican band, one suggested. But another added that the Muslims in the neighborhood might have a problem with a musical event. Another quipped that, “well, someone is going to be offended by anything, just do it.” At a future committee meeting at the Spy House coffee shop, a neighborhood minister suggested that we have a “big fat hag sale.” Surprised, I asked for clarification, and he had really said “tag sale” (I learned a tag sale is like a rummage or garage sale). A better idea to be sure, but being that I was one of the few Neighbors members who paid any attention to the Alliance, I mentioned that it was considering a garage sale fundraiser also, so perhaps we should ask them if they are still planning on doing one so as to not step on their toes. My suggestion received silence, and the plans just kept going ahead.

In one sense it turned out to be a fabulous success, it was in fact a very big fat tag sale. When we had put out requests for donations of used goods for the sale, the members of a large church in the area, who had developed a homeless shelter a couple years before that the Alliance had been voraciously against and the Neighbors had loudly spoken in favor of, generously emptied their closets and garages into our parking lot for the day of the sale. However, a bountiful supply does not necessarily equate into bountiful sales, and at the end of the day we ended up hauling huge amounts of clothes and other items over to the local non-profit thrift store. And while the costs for the fundraiser had been a box of price tags, our gross sales were pitifully low.

At a board meeting a few months later I mentioned that the Alliance’s recent annual meeting almost failed to get its fifty person quorum, and they were struggling to get board candidates. The others in the room took this as a sign that the Alliance was at its weakest, and someone suggested that this might be a good time to retake the Alliance (a few weeks later while talking to a founding Neighbors member he mentioned “striking” now at the Alliance). However, if, like the Alliance regulars, you control an organization by activating only a very small portion of the electorate, namely other like-

minded property owners, then you do not want broad participation or excitement about board elections, for this would endanger your hold. In normal years, it was good for those espousing “homeowner interests” to have apathy in the neighborhood. However, anytime that some group did come out strong to challenge the “homeowners,” the “homeowners” would rally their troops and meet the challenge, then fall back into a regular low attendance state of affairs until a few years later when another challenge was attempted. What the members of the Neighbors took as weakness was really a firmer control.

For example, while the 2004 annual at the mansion was large and with spirited debates and candidacies, the low attendance of the 2005 Alliance annual meeting translated into status quo for a board dominated by white homeowners who were against affordable housing. We saw how in 2006, the year that workers were successfully removed from the membership, had an equally apathetic showing, but did this apathy equal profound change in the form of worker disenfranchisement? Perhaps, but only if workers had ever enfranchised themselves in the first place. The fact is that workers almost never came to meetings anyway. Taking away their right to vote changed little, it just created a more unvarying status quo. Controversy, dispute and resistance were infrequent and cyclical, and I suspect that the board knew this long before I did, and counted on this. They know that every once and a while things may blow up, or consensus may go through a rough patch for a few months or even a few years, but in the end those that bring contention will move out of the neighborhood, move their fight to another venue, or move on with their lives. Dynamic activists like Ahmed and Gregg, who caused contention in the 2004 annual meeting, have very busy professional and personal lives and many other interests; they flash brightly upon the Alliance for a moment then fade away forever or until a much later date.

At The Neighbors board meeting where taking over the Alliance was suggested, the conversation turned next to what they considered the unfair voting procedures at the Alliance. Bthe board member who floated the idea of a takeover pointed out that “the real issue is not about who can vote, but just getting people to come to meetings at all, look at us here.” The “us here” were less than a handful of board members, significantly below quorum. The chair suggested that we could hold a board meeting as long as we just

pretended to have a quorum. Technically, as long as no one "called the question" of quorum, we could just go on with business. So a few funds were allocated, and things were wrapping up early when our city council member showed up. I felt a bit embarrassed for us, and him, because our attendance was so pitiful.

A few days later I interviewed one the these board members, Sophia, who rationalized the current state of Whittier politics this way – "Not being the official organization [of Whittier] gives us the freedom and flexibility" to do what we want, since the Neighbors do not have to abide by the rules of the NRP, unlike the Alliance who has a detailed contract with it. And besides, Sophia added, the Alliance is not getting enough NRP money these days to warrant taking it over (unlike ten years prior when there were hundreds of thousands of dollars coming in). She reasoned that the only reason to take it over would be if "they were doing serious damage, but they aren't." The Alliance had failed to block Lydia Apartments for the disabled homeless from coming to the neighborhood, and since had supported no lawsuits or big campaigns against social service organizations.

However, as I see it, the problem for social service organizations, for The Neighbors, and for other supporters in the neighborhood of subsidized housing, was that while people were being nicer to each other at the Alliance, the overall policies of marginalizing social services and making sure funds did not go for subsidized housing, was as robust as ever. I wondered again and again if the peace was just perpetuating the dominance of the dominant. Polarization and de-polarization were both just inequality in the making, in terms of the increasingly unequal relationship between the two organizations, and also in terms of the increasingly unequal power between "the homeowners" and the subsidized renters. Intentional or not, niceness was just another way of doing an old inequality. And when the Neighbors would tell me that they really do not hate the Alliance, and things are not so bad between the groups, this seemed to me to just feed into a lack of fire about fighting (what they considered) injustice, and a deteriorating desire to take down Dave. The problem was that Dave was no longer even on the board, let alone even going to Alliance meetings, so he was no longer a potent

symbol of "what is wrong with the Alliance." And without his flagrantly offensive comments and tactics, what was there to get fired up about?

As time went on, not only did the Alliance's money, influence, and numbers dwindle, but it became harder to hate the Alliance, what with the new generation of nicer, more moderate "homeowners" taking over, and with the Neighbors and the Alliance trying to get along and partner in certain minor ventures. After interviewing one of the old timers of The Neighbors, it occurred to me that in my quest to theorize polarization, perhaps I was trying too hard to collect all the dirt from those dark days in the 1990s. This was because instead of giving me solid innuendo, people were just vaguely telling me that it used to really be bad, but now things are not so bad. I began to wonder then if my study of polarization was not so much ethnographic, in the present, but instead a historical study of the previous decade.

Ultimately however, while I did do a lot of history that showed much about how polarization happens, the ethnography of the present was important in order to show the *long-term* effects of polarization. In particular, it exposed the way that "getting along better than before" can lull people into a kind of complacency. The Neighbors were still not fighting the Alliance the tooth and nail over issues, no longer doing much in the way of independent projects, and also their perspective, shared mission, and individual enterprise was fading away. At a board meeting a few months after the comments about retaking the Alliance, only five members showed up, and my entire set of field notes from the meeting consisted exactly of this – "Lots of gabbing between two members. Didn't do much else."

The recent big success of The Neighbors had been their video for Somalis on renting; The Neighbors had collected $45,000 in donations from local foundations to produce the video, had come in on budget, and had sold quite a few videos. So when I started coming to Neighbors meetings, motivation was high for producing another video for the Somali community. At one well-attended committee meeting that included representatives from the Somali community and the movie editor, a vote was taken on what the next video should be about; home-ownership won. To recreate the success of the first video, people threw out their impressions of its strengths – "not cheesy,"

"collaborative" between landlords and tenants, "didn't offend anyone," and "told a story." A grant writer in the neighborhood was hired craft a letter to elicit funds, and hopes were high. No money came in. A couple years later I asked someone about the fate of this project, and their theory was that the world had changed and now private funds go to life and death issues in the health fields, while money for everything else had dried up. Another board member put part of the blame on the fund-raising letter itself, but whatever the reason, it left the Neighbors without a project or purpose.

Things limped along for another year, until The Neighbors board called for a "Do or Die" meeting for everyone who had ever been interested in the organization, and this appeared to consist of thirteen souls, which compared to recent meetings, felt like a horde. The question put forward was whether or not to kill the organization, and if not, then what was it going to do, and more importantly, who was going to do it? It was pointed out that perhaps the organization was no longer needed, since, while the Whittier Alliance was no more racially diverse than the Neighbors, it had become more diverse recently in terms of class, with renters having made it on the board. But a founding member spoke up saying that he was surprised he had received an email with the drastic language of do or die, "the Whittier Neighbors was created to do what the Whittier Alliance didn't, and we still need those issues worked on. There is a homeless problem in the neighborhood." Plus, he said, the video had been converted to DVD and had recently sold fifty more copies, some even out of state. Others argued that this was all well and good, but anyone voting for do, must also be committing themselves to personally doing that do. As one person put it, "Maybe it's a chicken and the egg problem, if there is no one to lead the organization then …"

The do's won handedly, but at the next meeting of the reborn Neighbors only four people showed up besides me. There was a lot of what I considered empty talk, one person really pushed for the organization to do something substantial, someone even suggested I should be the next chair, and one last time, I mildly suggested that Neighbors members get back into the Alliance. We convened and did not meet again for two and a half years, and only then to decide who to give the organization's dormant $5,000.

8: The dogma of elected democracy gets in the way of equal representation

There is a dogma operating that assures us that, good public governing can only come from the election of representatives. This ideology can be seen when people insist that neighborhood boards are democratically elected, must always be so, even though neighborhood groups are private, non-profit, non-governmental, just like the Better Business Bureau or the March of Dimes. Like all neighborhood organizations in the Minneapolis, the Alliance has no power to do anything except beg the city's Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) for money (and the city has outlawed panhandling downtown), and the only influence it has with the city is based on its current reputation. The Alliance has been *recognized by* the city's NRP as the only private organization that may apply to it for funds to spend in Whittier, but the city recognizes many entities as having special privileges within the its borders. Private garbage haulers, restaurants, general contractors, real estate companies, parades and sporting events must all obtain certain recognitions from municipal panels to operate, so why aren't activists clamoring for the administrators or boards of these bodies to be elected by the public? These organizations all affect our lives and the health of our neighborhoods; what makes neighborhood groups so special that their leaders must be elected?" I am not arguing that they should not be, I am pointing out the blind assumption that they have to be.

One reason neighborhood groups are seen as emblematic of democracy is because they are equated with "the will of the people." Neighborhoods are good, right? Arguing against neighborhoods is like arguing against puppies. Neighborhood represents wholesomeness, neighborliness, families sitting on their porches drinking ice tea waving to their neighbors, kids with sidewalk chalk and bicycles, ice-cream trucks, and playgrounds. And if neighborhoods are the pinnacle of civility, then empowering neighborhoods is the apex of democratic participation. These *are* the people, the little people, advocating for what is needed on their very block, at the smallest geographical levels of society. What could be more fundamentally virtuous? If only we drained the power away from the fat cats on high, and let it flow down to those closer to the bottom, to individuals, families, and neighborhood organizations, then things would be done right, people would get what they actually wanted at the price they wanted to pay, instead

of politicians and bureaucrats ignorantly and selfishly deciding what people want. However, a great number of stories in this study scream out that democracy on the neighborhood level is shot through with grave and possibly unsolvable problems.

From the state's rights advocates to community activists, it is assumed the more policy making power that is given to the people actually impacted by the policies, the more efficient and just will be the policies. However, in possibly the most comprehensive neighborhood research ever done, a multi-faceted study of the Lower East Side neighborhood of Manhattan, Janet Abu-Lughod and her colleagues found that not by any means "are decentralization and empowerment the *deus ex machine"* of democracy that their proponents suggest (Abu-Lughod 1994a:198).

> In our analysis of the East Village we were forced to reject the concept of the singular embattled and "defended community" where *empowerment* could be simply defined as "giving the people what they want." Determining *who* they are and *what* they want (as well as what each player can get) is, indeed, the essential problematic of agency and local politics.

The problems inherent in laying justice, or even a bit of authority, in the hands of neighborhood groups are in legion. "Giving the people what they want" is not nearly as simple as it might sound, starting with determining who "the people" are (Abu-Lughod 1994a:198). The Alliance, the Neighbors, and all neighborhood groups like to claim that they represent "the neighborhood." They do this by exploiting the meaning and love of electoral democracy. And yet, they are not even government bodies, and the boards of neighborhood groups are elected by such a tiny minority of the electorate, that there is no way that they can be democratic, so why maintain the pretention?

The pretention partially lies in the falsehood that if a leadership body is elected, then it has the consent of the people to rule. This means that anyone elected is going to need to continually work to convince people that the current regime has their consent. However, what if it was the job of the people not to simply consent, but to rule? What if every citizen is transformed from a passive consenter, to an active administrator? Manin feels that this is essentially the difference between Athenian democracy and the kind of elected democracies that were being conceived centuries later in Europe and the Americas. [ccx] In the crafting of the United States and other democracies, "A new

conception of citizenship had emerged: citizens were now viewed primarily as the source of political legitimacy, rather than as persons who might desire to hold office themselves" (Manin 1997:92). Perhaps, in Whittier at least, it is time to reverse this transformation of the citizen into passive assenters.

If the complaint is that by choosing the Alliance board by lot this would result in a board that the lacks skills needed, I should think that increasing the board to, say, twenty five, should allow for at least a few people who would have the knowledge and skill to perform many technical tasks at hand, such as leadership, or drafting a budget or five year plan.[ccxi] Even so, a board is just the final decision maker and not responsible for all the important tasks; almost all boards, including the Alliance's, have professional full time staff who are hired specifically because they can and will do the day to day work. And when it does come down to the actual vote on issues, one's intelligence or experience seems to matter not a whit; people vote their conscience (and conscience is largely a matter of the environment in which people were raised).

Another argument against government being a microcosm of society, is that, for example, simply having a black person gain office does not mean he or she will vote "black." Political scientist Iris Young has felt that simply "having such a relation of identity or similarity with constituents says nothing about what the representative does" (1997:354, as quoted in Mansbridge 1999). According to one black member of Congress, "one of the advantages, and disadvantages, of representing blacks is their shameless loyalty to their incumbents. You can almost get away with raping babies and be forgiven. You don't have any vigilance about your performance" (Swain 1993:73, quoted from Mansbridge 1999). President Obama is a case in point; as the first Black president, in his first term many have commented that he appears no more sympathetic to minorities than previous Democratic presidents. While Obama sees himself as Black, he does not present himself as the Black President (it might helped energize the black vote, but it would cost him reelection).

However, choosing by lot does not demand that office holders exactly mirror the population, or that they even represent those they describe. It only sets up a configuration whereby on average, over time, almost every interest will be represented, and in

proportion to how many hold that interest. In Whittier for example, the political faction that came to power by advocating "homeowner interests," see themselves very much as both homeowners and as representing homeowners (and not surprisingly, they also see homeowner interests as in the best interests of the neighborhood as a whole). Their rivals in the Whittier Neighbors are also homeowners, but see their interests in advocating for poor and minority renters. The lot system would statistically select for the interests of those advocating for both "homeowners" and "affordable housing," and in proportion to their number in the neighborhood, instead of in proportion to the number who are able to and do show up at one particular meeting each year. The charm of choosing by lot is in its simplicity; it requires no extra rules, expensive outlays, or high-handed maneuvers to force government to be something in particular.

If the assembly chosen by lot is large enough, then it will enable diverse and crucial voices to be heard, and that is what is needed if democracy is actually going to be attempted. Jane Mansbridge argues that in a democracy, where deliberation over diverse and contrasting interests is key, while anyone can *in theory* present the viewpoint of any one group, actually having people from a group speak for their own interests, works much better in *practice*[ccxii] (Mansbridge 1999:636). Because of the tendency for minority groups to be essentialized (to be seen as all sharing the same qualities, which no other group has) (Mansbridge 1999:637), the more representatives there are from any one minority, the more opportunity for that group to have their diverse, complex, and contradictory interests heard, and therefore also be seen by the majority as a diverse, complex and contradictory identity. Even more importantly for Mansbridge than the immediate practical improvements that descriptive democracy would bring, is that it will transform the way that both minorities and majorities think about the legitimacy of those minorities to participate fully in government (1999:651).

While much has been made of how black leaders and other black role models are needed to improve the *psychology* of blacks, Mansbridge focusses on the larger *social meanings* that are crafted when there are a large number of minorities on representative bodies, and the *structural* effects on the whole society that these meanings engender (1999:652). The crucial meaning being created is legitimacy; something attained by

minorities when there is more than just one token representative that has been placed in a high profile position. Legitimacy is arrived at when many from one minority group show the public that they can perform well in the upper echelons of government. If "low percentages of Black and women representatives … create the meaning that Black and women cannot rule" (Mansbridge 1999:649), then the opposite will also be true.

I feel that the greatest advantage of random selection of government assemblies, from neighborhood boards to national congresses, would be to generate more participation throughout all of the general public. While the leading improvements would within those groups under-participating, under-represented, or historically disenfranchised (usually minorities experience all three, some notable exceptions being Jews, Mormons, and Cuban-Americans). If minorities were government representatives, then minority constituents would be more likely to interact with them. If minority residents of Whittier had a few board members who looked like them, they would feel more comfortable with the board. According to one study, Blacks are more likely to contact their representatives if they are black than white (Gay 1996, as discussed in Mansbridge 1999:641). "A history of dominance and subordination typically breeds inattention, even arrogance, on the part of the dominant group and distrust on the part of the subordinate group" (Mansbridge 1999:641). Having many minorities in office not only solves the obvious problem of them being historically shut out of government, but breeds interest and trust in a government. And trust is not such a bad thing, even in a flawed system, because if you imagine your representative can and will look out for you, then you are likely to demand that he or she actually does so. Being let inside an inner circle may mean getting coopted or corrupted, but more so it means getting what you need and deserve.

Choosing by lot does not simply allow for a few privileged minority individuals to attain power (like the state of black politics in America for the last few generations), but spread out influence and voice within any minority group. Citizens would rotate from being a leader to a follower to leader to follower, thereby giving all the opportunity to experience both duties. The Athenian system of rotation was designed so that all citizens would alternately experience both management and obeisance (Manin 1997).[ccxiii] Since

there were so many different positions in the government of Athens to hold, and no one was allowed to hold the same position twice, not only would every citizen theoretically be able to be a leader, but would do so in many different forms, thereby gaining many different civic talents and knowledges. In the parlay of neighborhood organizing, citizens who experience responsibility for the neighborhood would be likely to forever after be much more "invested" in the fortunes of the neighborhood. Also, if at any time one might be called up to serve, and serve any number of possible roles, then I imagine one would be much more motivated to regularly attend meetings, volunteer, and stay informed. This could be true regardless of many of the barriers anyone currently faces to participating in the Alliance. There are many today who unfortunately feel shut out, and regardless of the extent to which they actually are, a lot system would not only let them in but give them no excuse to not participate. Others I am sure do not participate because they feel like they are uninformed, lack leadership skills, or do not know enough English, however, if chosen to serve, it would be everyone's civic duty to do so, regardless.

All the citizens of Athens were trained to be both leaders and followers, hence forging a society where, ideally at least, citizens performed both duties well and in the interest of all. In Whittier, I believe this would create a higher level of all around civic responsibility. Aristotle desired a city where every citizen would be both "ruling and being ruled in turn" (Politics 1317b:28–30), and in Whittier this would alter the way all Whittier-ites perceive the skills and benefits that renters, undocumented Latinos, and Somali refugees have on the neighborhood.

In the chapter on the fight over opening Lydia, I told how one Whittier activist told me that even though those against the shelter lost the battle, the strategy of some of these protesters had been to hit the developers of shelters so hard that they would never try again. Similarly the offensiveness, viciousness, and aggressiveness of some of these same activists had driven almost everyone but themselves from the Alliance. Who is left at the table are either their supporters, a few random firebrand opponents who come and go, or uninformed newcomers who either do not know the history of the fights in Whittier, are too scattered, unskilled or uninterested to be a force.

Chapter 6 – Knowledge of Inequality is Common

1: Diversity Requires the Perspective of Critical Multiculturalism

A study of multiculturalism would be a shallow thing indeed without an examination of the potential causes of inequality. Accordingly, each chapter of this dissertation has examined how the talk, theories and practices, of multicultural organizations and activists in the Whittier neighborhood of Minneapolis have affected such things as, services for the in need, housing for the poor, the surveillance and punishment of the lowest classes, ethnic identities, and class hierarchies. This chapter takes a different tact; instead of looking at how particular activist movements and discourses have materially affected equality in Whittier, I will directly at what activists themselves "know" about inequality in general. In short, what are their theories on the causes of poverty and wealth, and do they personally feel privileged? Their answers to these questions are important because what one "knows" about inequality is very much related to what one is willing to do about it.

I will discuss an exciting new body of social science research that has theorized that what people know about privilege and about the causes of inequality, impacts the extent to which they are interested in maintaining or breaking down systems that re-produce inequality. The claim is that the reason why the white middle-class continue to dominate American society, is because they continue to deny the existence of unjust social structures in American society. These are structures that robustly and continually work to funnel money and influence to white middle-class families and away from others. To put this in context of talk of crime in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Caldeira (2000) found that those living in the middle-class neighborhoods did not know how to conceive of social problems in terms of the political economy. Instead, they blamed their own economic troubles on criminals and on the dark colored migrants from northeast Brazil who lived in the slums. The middle-class had not been taught how to talk about lower standards of living and gang violence as things connected to large-scale historical trends, and pervasive social systems. But they had learned quite well how to theorize how such things as gangs, drug sales, theft, murder, immigrants and slum dwellers, are what is causing the downward fortunes of the people in their circles. "It is crime … that provides

the language for expressing other experiences like inflation and social decay, and not the other way around" (2000:29). In other words, crime creates the big social problems, instead of social problems creating the crime.

When I posed questions of wealth creation and privilege to activists in Whittier, I found that they actually knew a great deal about social structural theories of inequality, but at the same time they had no problem also attributing a person's poverty and wealth to the qualities of particular individuals, instead of only the social system they inhabited. The trend in the sociological literature represents this mix of structural and individualistic notions, as "contradictory" or "incoherent." However, my ethnographic analysis revealed that the interviewees' seemingly contradictory answers, were actually coherent. And this discovery has led me to hypothesize that individuals' knowledge of society tends to be heterogeneous, integrated, and contextual, instead of inconsistent and confused. My analysis of the activists' interviews shows that individualistic answers more often came from activists who were critical of the subsidized housing in the neighborhood.

My interpretation of these interviews derives in part from the perspectives that I learned from the theoretical fields of Critical Multiculturalism and Whiteness Studies. By applying those abstract theories to activists' concrete positions and programs, I will show a different way of looking at the relationship between the activists' knowledge of social inequality, and the effects their activism has on it. This is the only chapter that does not revolve around particular neighborhood conflicts, but instead exploits abstract conversations that are national in scope. And while the national discourse on diversity is a major topic of chapter 4 and this one, this chapter is based on interview questions on *privilege* and *inequality*, while chapter 4 grew out activists' values of *diversity*. And while issues of diversity cannot be separated from the inequality that always exists within it, I place these two topics in different chapters because my arguments about each are made by going to two different places – parking spots vs. academic literature. While parking allowed me to argue how ethnicity and difference are manufactured, research on inequality will allow me to argue about the nature of knowledge on inequality. Unlike most of the other chapters in this study, this one will not focus heavily on particular

neighborhood conflicts. Instead, in this chapter I will connect neighborhood conversations with national ones.

It is useful at this point to pose the question – if this dissertation is about multiculturalism, is it de facto also about inequality? Similarly, if activism in Whittier is about promoting diversity, must this activism always say something about the hierarchical arrangement of that multiplicity? To answer these questions we need to clarify what multiculturalism encompasses. While Nathan Glazer (1997) declared that "We are all multiculturalists now," the literature on and practice of multiculturalism proposes a vast range of multiculturalisms (Gordon & Newfield 1996, Gerteis & Hartmann 2005). Indeed, all the chapters in this dissertation have shown that even a few groups of people in one neighborhood can display so many different forms of multiculturalism.

Does multiculturalism merely involve tolerance and the celebrating difference, or must it also include such pro-active movements as the African-American civil rights protests of the 1960s, the call to protect the civil liberties of Arabs post-911, voting for same-sex marriage, raising money to house those lacking homes, strengthening unions, amnesty for undocumented workers, etc. If it does not include these activities, then is it only a shallow multiculturalism? In contrast, if it does include all these movements, must every "multiculturalist" weigh in on every issue of social, economic, political, neighborhood and environmental justice? For example, are negative stereotypes about undocumented immigrants within the purview of multiculturalism? After all, as a group they do not represent a *culture*, since all immigrants do not have a common language or custom that needs respecting or protecting. Yet the undocumented almost invariably grew up in cultures that are different from a dominant one in the United States. Are these immigrant cultures in danger of eradication, and do they need to be celebrated in government sponsored parades and by public schools? Maybe not, since the most pressing need of recent immigrants is not that their lifestyle be feted by white people, but that they get a job, not get exploited by unscrupulous coyotes and employers, and not get noticed by the government. If this is the case, then are the practical needs of recent immigrants more the concern of multiculturalism? It would seem so because the concerns

involve power relations between majorities and minorities. Where there are people there is difference, where there is difference there is hierarchy, and where there is hierarchy there is prejudice and oppression. And aren't prejudice and oppression the exact ills that multiculturalism was formed to address? Although passing down their culture to their children is very important to many immigrants, there are many other issues that multiculturalism can and therefore should address in order to be taken seriously by those people who do experience prejudice and oppression.

This kind of broad undertaking has been described as "Critical Multiculturalism" (Chicago Group 1992), and it has been offered as a reformist alternative to what has derisively been called "mainstream multiculturalism" (Barnor 2000, Fraser 1997:27-8, Fraser 2003:75). The mainstream version is denigrated as something that "merely" celebrates diversity without acknowledging the power relations between the majority and the minorities. It is represented as a hollow, self-serving ideology ("smoke screen), used by the majority to pretend that they care about others, while not actually making any real sacrifices that would fully include historically despised groups into society (Fraser 1998). For example, while mainstream multiculturalism abhors individual racists, ethnic slurs, and overt racism, its critics have accused it of not acknowledging social structures that engender racial inequality; it is critiqued as shouting down racist *talk* while failing to acknowledge racist *structures*.

Critical Multiculturalism calls for change that is progressive, transformative, and anti-foundational. [ccxiv] It is suspicious of the status quo assimilationism of popular patriots like Arthur Schlesinger (1992) and Nathan Glazer (Gerstle 1997), and is eschews the efforts to "simply" give respect to minority identities in the form of ethnic celebrations, while making no substantial changes in how resources are distributed to those minorities (Fraser 1998). Further, a Critical effort would not merely make reforms, but seek to profoundly alter linguistic, ideological and material systems, by restructuring both personal identities and social resources (Fraser 1998). It would recognize differences between people by respecting the identities and affiliations people choose, while it would also continuously deconstruct fixed identities, challenge barriers between groups, and interrogate relations of power. It is based on creative choice, allowing people the full

freedom to affiliate with and create whatever hybrid identities they choose, and express those identities in ways that do not harm others. And it cultivates commonalities and alliances not just between majority and minority communities, but also across marginalized groups. Achieving this kind of transformation requires not only changing government policies but also battling the discourses and ideologies that perpetuate inequalities.

In terms of material resources, Critical Multiculturalism calls for a profound redistribution of wealth which requires not simply moving money around, but radically transforming the economic, political, social relations that do distribute money. The theory is that if more equitable changes are made to the ways that money and influence are created and allocated, then minority marginalization and poverty would bleed away. That prediction is based on the belief that there is nothing intrinsic to minority individuals, families or cultures, which leads minorities to be inferior or have less; instead Critical Multiculturalism holds that the low status of minorities results from structures in the political-economy that are extrinsic to those minorities. My research question was: do community activists know about and accept this kind of view of inequality?

Social scientists have become increasingly interested in what Americans do and do not "know" about how inequality is produced (Hartmann 2009, Croll 2012). Much research has concluded that the dominant way in America of talking about inequality is to deny the structural reasons, while embracing the individualistic ones (Ansell and Statman 1999, Bonilla-Silva 2000, Bobo & Smith 1998, Gallagher 2003). "White identity and culture is constructed in such a way that the values of individuality, personal responsibility, and a future-oriented self, create a cognitive inability to see things any other way" (Perry 2001:80). For example, a popular discourse tells of blacks being poor because they lack a work ethic and they cling to a culture of poverty, while whites are said to have more as a result of their hard work and skills instead of their privilege (Lamont 2000). The consensus in contemporary academia however is that inequality is the result of social institutions that are widespread and deeply imbedded into the

structures of the political-economy, as opposed to being individual, familial, ephemeral, superficial, or part of a sub-culture.

The concern is not simply that people are ignorant of how society works, but is based on the theory that if one "knows" that certain minority groups are more predisposed to crime and irresponsibility, then one will hardly be predisposed to support the recognition of those minorities as deserving of as much respect and wealth as the majority, and one will not likely support redistributing resources to people who would just squander them (similar to the notion that if you do not know about the science of climatology you are more likely to deny climate change and imperil everyone, or that believing in creationism is not simply a matter of religious preference, but impedes the understanding of human behavior). This sort of attitude is theorized as underlying much of the backlash against multicultural projects, such as affirmative action (Emerson & Smith 2000, Lipsitz 1998), Afrocentrism, multicultural education, welfare subsidies, national health care, progressive tax rates, earned income tax credits, same sex marriage, abolition of the death penalty, more open immigration, in-state college tuition for undocumented immigrants, and the United Nations.

More recently academic projects researching what Americans know about poverty, have shifted from not just being concerned with the effects of negative stereotypes on minorities, but also with the effects of overly positive stereotypes about the hard work and skills of whites. Heather Beth Johnson interviewed wealthy black and white families, to learn about the contradiction between American's faith in the American Dream and the distressing reality of lasting inequality. She was concerned that Americans have been taught that "inequality among us is simply the result of differences in individuals' achievements, that it is not patterned, organized, or structural" (Johnson 2006:2). She grew up believing what she had been told, that racial injustices had been mostly fixed, and things were only going to get better. While the field of Ethnic Studies has tried to correct for the centuries of damaging misinformation about peoples of color, the field of Whiteness Studies has tried to correct for misinformation about white success. Whiteness research understands inequality as not just the result of minorities being disadvantaged, but crucially also growing out of the lack of understanding (knowledge)

that whites have the privileges they are afforded. A Critical multiculturalism that seeks to alter the rules of the game would seek to make the majority aware of that which is hidden – the subtle but profound technologies through which the game remains stacked in the majority's favor. Croll (2012) explains,

> The realization that racial inequality produces advantages for whites has the potential to shift the nature of the discussion about remedies for racial disparities and racially-targeted programs such as affirmative action and racial preferences in college admissions. Without attention to white advantage, the boundaries of the discussion are disadvantaged minorities and "normal" whites … But if white advantage enters into the discussion, the context can shift to a discussion about disadvantaged minorities and advantaged whites, whether or not the advantage is conscious and/or deliberate. In this context, racial preferences for minorities are no longer the cause of unequal treatment based on race, but rather may be understood as a necessary action to offset the inherent privileges that whites experience every day in our society.

For the populace to see programs that give preferences to racial minorities, such as affirmative action, as the solution to deep historical problems, the populace would need to no longer misunderstand the role of such tropes as "individual responsibility" and "the culture of poverty." This is a complex challenge, because survey data appear to show a "gap" between the positive attitudes Americans have toward the *principle* of equality, and the negative attitudes Americans have towards implementing government *policies* that would actually create equality (Bobo & Smith 1998:194). While much of the resistance to change may be simply due to white's desire to maintain their privilege (Lipsitz 1998), the goal would be to teach people, 1) those specific structural mechanisms of the political-economy that create poverty, and 2) those ways that the social construction of individualism in Western society has blinded them to the long-term, enormously damaging and still present effects of the socially structural and culturally institutional. The theory is that if people replaced individualistic knowledge with a structural kind, then their moral dedication to equality would lead them to 1) wish to abolish the structures that cause inequality (e.g. corporate welfare, the large incarceration of African-Americans), and 2) enact policies that would actively reduce it (e.g. affirmative action, affordable housing, national health care).

The gap between the populace's support for equality and its support for policies of equality, could possibly be closed through education, and this dissertation is itself one educational tool for teaching people how community building activities can be complicit with the creation of inequality and equality. Johnson saw a nation that believed in equality, but that also justified "legacies of wealth inequality that grant opportunities to some groups over others" (Johnson 2006:4). She wanted to explore the relationships between these seemingly contradictory ideologies, because of the implications they had for what future generations of Americans will learn about inequality, and will be willing to do about it. This chapter will travel amongst the knowledges that community activists have of the strategies and mechanisms that produce inequality, toward the goal of understanding the relationship between knowledge about inequality and inequality itself.

To unearth the knowledge my informants had of the causes of inequality, I borrowed and adapted questions from the American Mosaic Project (AMP), a study of American's attitudes towards race, religion and society. What made this study different, useful for me, and an agent of Critical Multiculturalism, was the way it was designed to get at the extent to which American's saw inequality as arising out of individualistic and structural factors. For example, one AMP question asked respondents what they thought caused white success and black failure. Half of the respondents were asked,

> On average, white Americans have better jobs, income and housing than others. Please tell me if you think each of the following factors is very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not important at all in explaining whites' greater success? Prejudice and discrimination in favor of whites? Laws and institutions favor whites more than other groups? Effort and hard work? Differences in whites' family upbringing? Access to better schools and social connections?

The other half were asked the same set of questions, but regarding why "African Americans have worse jobs, income, and housing than white people" (AMP survey). In a much reduced, less scientific, and more qualitative way, my interview questions on inequality and privilege were an exploration of AMP questions such as these. [ccxv]

"Hardly ever do social scientists ask: 'Why are the rich wealthy?' in the same way we often ask why the poor are poor" (Conley 2003:2). However, in an article analyzing

results of the AMP inequality questions, Paul Croll (2012) explained how the whiteness turn in the social sciences extolled researchers to examine a foundation of inequality that had not been examined before – what causes white privilege. "From the perspective of whiteness studies, it becomes clear that racial attitudes research has historically only examined racial attitudes about minority disadvantage, most often specifically looking at African American disadvantage" (Croll 2012:1). AMP however examined the way that whites view their own success, and how this outlook, in and of itself, can contribute to the reproduction of their privileges. Croll argues that if we want to understand "the entire racial system" we need to not simply know what whites think causes black poverty, but also what they see as causing their own wealth (Croll 2012:1). "While racial advantage and disadvantage are two sides of the same coin, … the coin looks different on each side" (Croll 2012:26). If, as whiteness theory alleges, privilege is hidden from view, then exactly what aspects of it are most hidden?

Empirically testing the conclusions of the literature on whiteness, AMP researchers hypothesized that whites would be "less likely to accept structural or interpersonal explanations for racial inequality" than minorities and "more likely to adopt individualistic explanations of racial inequality" (Hartmann 2009:408). They also tested the hypothesis that – "Whites are even less likely to accept structural or interpersonal explanations for racial inequality when framed as questions about white advantage rather than in terms of African American disadvantage" (Hartmann 2009:408). In other words, instead of seeing inequality as caused by large, impersonal mechanism embedded deeply and pervasively into the social fabric of society, whites will attribute it to their own individual effort and family work ethic, while blaming black poverty for black lack of effort and work ethic.[ccxvi] And in fact they found that, "white respondents were consistently less likely than minorities to accept explanations involving direct racial preferences, either interpersonal ("prejudice and discrimination") or institutional ("laws and institutions")" (Hartmann 2009:414). However, "whites are [only] slightly more likely [than blacks] to say that effort and hard work explains white advantage … (89 percent to 81 percent)" (Hartmann 2009:414).

The most impressive results however were logged when respondents were asked to what extent they felt laws and institutions in America explained why blacks have less. "Whereas 45 percent of all Americans believe that laws and institutions are an important explanation … this number drops to 38 percent for whites and jumps all the way up to 82 percent for African Americans" (Croll 2012:13). Taking into account the answers regarding both black disadvantage and white advantage, on average "African Americans are almost five times more likely than whites to believe that laws and institutions are important in explaining racial inequality" (Croll 2012:19). Croll also found that (17),

> African Americans are 140 percent … more likely than whites to see prejudice and discrimination as important. Hispanics are almost 50 percent … more likely than whites to believe that prejudice and discrimination are important in explaining racial inequality. These findings … showed whites are less likely than others to see structural explanations as important in explaining white advantage. This also confirms the idea from whiteness studies that people of color are more aware than whites of race and its effects in our society.

However, not all factors of inequality were viewed so disproportionately between racial groups. When it came to schools and social connections, both whites (82%) and blacks (93%) overwhelmingly saw the advantage to whites and the disadvantage to blacks. Also, both whites and blacks believed that blacks did not work hard enough and whites did. And Americans of all racial identities were more or less equally likely to "believe that differences in family upbringing are important in explaining both sides of racial inequality" (Croll 2012:10). The question for me was, how did the knowledge that my interviewees have compare to those of the AMP survey, and what did this mean? From what I learned, I wanted to know the implications for: multicultural policies in Whittier, knowledge of inequality in America in general, and social science methodology.

2: Each Individual Activist Held a Trove of Structural Theories, but also Agglomerated a Very Diverse Set of Theories About Inequality

Out of the seventy activists I interviewed for my dissertation, about half were asked questions specifically on causes of inequality in America, and twenty of those interviews included answers that were broad enough to get a picture of what they "knew" about the causes of poverty and racial inequality. The lens through which I analyzed this

knowledge, was the extent to which they knew inequality was caused by phenomena beyond the scope of the individual, and to what extent inequality was caused by individuals themselves (or by individuals because of the way they were shaped by their family upbringing or supposed "sub-culture"). Did they think that inequality resulted from structures built into the underlying framework of society, or from qualities intrinsic to people? Were whites richer because of hard work or privilege? Were blacks poorer because of laziness or discrimination?

When I evaluated the answers from each interviewee according to structural vs. individualistic content, I found that out of the twenty, only one gave answers that were not on the whole clearly either societal or individualistic (and unlike almost everyone else, she had not been a long-time neighborhood activist). When asked specifically why blacks have less, fifteen activists' answers leaned heavily towards the structural, while only four toward the individualistic. When asked why whites have more, all ten of those whose answers had leaned on the structural side had also done the same when asked why blacks have less. And all three people who stressed the individual when theorizing on why whites have more, had done similarly regarding why blacks have less (six of the informants who had analyzable answers to the black poverty questions, did not for white wealth). While these were only twenty of the many hundreds of people who have been involved in Whittier issues over the past decade, and were from a non-random sample, from years of field research in Whittier my impression is that this spread and these answers are relatively representative of the views of Whittier activists.

Two initial conclusions rose out of this structural/individualistic analysis – answers are mostly structural, and answers are largely consistent by individual (almost all of the responses by each person either fall into the structural or the individualistic). From these conclusions I will make three arguments, 1) activists were very "knowledgeable" of structural inequality, 2) but activists were also collectors of many different kinds of structural and individualistic perspectives, and 3) what divides the structural thinkers from the individualistic is their position on subsidized housing in the neighborhood.

In America there is no scarcity of allusions to minority groups being deficient, to individuals being to blame for their poverty, and to the culture of poverty, I was surprised

by how often these were *not* referenced by my informants. This was especially surprising since of the all activists analyzed here, all but one was white (and all had college degrees, and all but a one or two were home owners). I was also surprised by how often activists who saw themselves as enemies in the context of neighborhood conflicts over diversity, poverty and race, would all reference discrimination, low wages, lack of access to resources, or the poor economy, when discussing the problems faced by minorities in Whittier. Among those who attend neighborhood meetings and belong to neighborhood organizations, there is a great treasure trove of knowledge on the ways that individuals face the barriers that have been put in their way by society.

Wyatt, whom I described in Chapter 2 as a very vocal opponent of the opening of Lydia Apartments for the disabled homeless, was himself a trove of theories about large-scale social ills. For instance, when I asked him what caused poverty, he theorized that "the city council condemned neighborhoods to poverty by … ripping the city apart," such as when they built the 35W freeway (which is Whittier's eastern border).

> We built superhighways, and found neighborhoods not worthwhile, and so there was white flight, housing went down … and supportive housing went in. It's about how you treat neighborhoods. We did a lot to create poverty. There was not investment in the neighborhoods.

He went on to rant that as a "nation we have a federal government that has a tax that encourages the wealthy … The poor get taxed more. The immigrants have had a raw deal; they worked their butts off and pay their taxes, and a lot of the benefits they don't get." For example, the proposal to abolish the "estate tax is an outrage, … you are going to allow transfers of money to the rich." He wanted me know that "I'm to the left of Democrats. We need a peace dividend, and not support the military-industrial complex." Returning to the neighborhood level, he called for city government to do more graffiti removal, and felt that we "shouldn't rely on private citizens to feed the people on the street."

Another activist I interviewed told me that poverty was primarily caused by the "rising costs of housing, and wages not keeping pace," as well as racism and the lack of equal access to quality education. Yet another activist felt that African Americans were not getting enough welfare, then told me that there are "more white people on welfare

than black people." [ccxvii] Four of those activists specifically brought up low wages as a cause of poverty, one of whom also blamed it on the "bias against immigrants," and blamed whites for having more on "racism and failures of the whole society." Yet another told me point blank that "racism exists." When I prompted him about the influence of laws and institutions on racial inequality, he felt that the war on drugs had used laws against minorities, and blacks had been unfairly imprisoned. When I asked about the influence of family upbringing, he reminded me that "family drive is not just in whites." [ccxviii] I highlight these answers because they are so representative of the hundreds I received, including this one that summed it up so well – "poverty does not make you a rapist or drug dealer or crack head, or whatever, poverty makes you poor. And to a great extent poverty is inflicted on somebody … not something they choose because it is a good life."

Of all my interviewees, Claire (who in chapter 2, was most able to understand both points of view on Lydia), produced the deepest and quickest responses to my questions on inequality. "White privilege," she said right off the bat when I asked about why whites had more. I was curious where she learned about white privilege, and she said she had read The Wages of Whiteness for a University of Minnesota political science class on race, class and ethnicity (a classic work of whiteness by a professor who had been at the University of Minnesota for many years). Claire had obviously paid attention in class; with each question she piled on the tropes of structural racism, complete with local examples. I asked about prejudice as a factor of white wealth – "yes, but not overtly or intentional." Laws? – "yes … The city council has only one non-white … People in power are white and middle to upper class." Connections? – "yes … Cronyism." Effort? – "there are lazy and hardworking whites, but lazy whites have a leg up on others … Whites need to keep the doors open for those who come behind them."

Clearly my results that showed knowledge of racial inequality and its structural causes, differed dramatically from the body of ethnographic and survey research on whiteness over the past few decades, including the AMP results. Had I discovered some recent monumental shift in knowledge of poverty (like many seem to think happened with gay rights in 2012), most likely not. My small sample was very unrepresentative of

Americans, being multicultural activists in a particularly progressive neighborhood of a very liberal city in a blue state. However, my results do still mean something. That this level of knowledge exists among white middle-class homeowners in an American neighborhood (and many of whom have decidedly anti-academic sentiments), suggests that the dissemination of knowledge about structural inequality may not be as arrested or as difficult as it has been portrayed in academic literature. These results are also interesting within the context of such a polarized local polity, which fights over small-scale, provincial, and seemingly senseless issues as keeping out housing for full-time, lower-wage workers, or blocking a mini-mart from selling alcohol. Among people who consider themselves to be as far apart as they come on issues of poverty and race, they still mostly share a structural outlook.

When Bell and Hartmann asked 166 people who were engaged in community activities about their thoughts on diversity, they found that while they could talk easily about *diversity*, they could not about *inequality* between these diverse groups (Bell & Hartmann 2007:910).

> If colorblind racism reproduces racial inequalities by disavowing race, the diversity discourse allows Americans to engage race on the surface but disavow and disguise its deeper structural roots and consequences. Indeed, what makes this diversity discourse so potent and problematic is precisely the way in which it appears to engage and even celebrate differences, yet does not grasp the social inequities that accompany them.

And yet, this blinded discourse came from people involved in "neighborhood organizations, interfaith religious initiatives, and ethnic cultural festivals," the very same kind of people I interviewed, and at about the same time. So while community activists who are actively engaged in issues of difference may not all be genuinely engaging with the gloomy problem of inequality, I argue that white self-interest in maintaining control, and the value of individual responsibility, do not have the stranglehold on the American psyche that much of the research implies.

While most of my activists' answers were largely social structural, many of them at times strayed into individualistic explanations; and while not pointedly blaming individuals for their poverty, they did make forays into the cultural or familial. What

became apparent to me was that their discourses mined wealths of knowledge from multiple sources, sources that while I often found contradictory, to them were often sophisticated.[ccxix] When I asked one interviewee if whites have advantages, she cited a variety of factors – blacks "don't have access to education" because their "schools are bad, parents don't work and don't have books in the house, someone has asthma and can't get care, … structural racism stuff." While a lack of access to quality education and medical care for minorities are central to theories of structural racism, "parents not working" struck me as possibly blaming blacks for not getting jobs, and not having books in the house definitely seemed to lay blame with the parents who did not value reading.[ccxx] Her interpretation of structural racism was similar to the one I had learned as a graduate student, but less grounded in distinguishing between (social) structure and (individual/cultural) pathology.

This duality is similar to aspects of the interview research of sociologist Heather Beth Johnson, whose 2006 book documented that when wealthy Americans were pointedly asked about wealth inequality and the American Dream, they would often affirm the reality and power of structured wealth inequality, while at the same time were adamant that America was fundamentally a meritocracy. For example, one of her interviewees legitimized this contradiction by admitting that while she got a "leg up" by being able to borrow the down payment from her parents to buy her first house, it was her initiative that propelled her to go from having no money of her own, to taking the profit from that house and turning it into the greater wealth she now enjoys (Johnson 2006:148).

One of my interviewees drew her ideas from a multiplicity of liberal sources, including her courses at the University of Minnesota, her church, her reading of Myron Orfield's book "Metropolitics," and also David Shipler's "The Working Poor."

> My guess is both you and I came from families that when things go bad somebody steps in and gives you a hand, a lot of people don't have any hand to go to. That slide into extreme poverty is pretty fast, and once you're in it is pretty hard to get out. I mean one car repair doesn't trip me into a major crisis.[ccxxi]

However, she lectured to me that poverty "needs a complex solution, its societal and personal responsibility. There are always people in poverty who can be pointed to as

making it out." Compare this to Shipler's own words I found in his book – "relief will come, if at all, in an amalgam that recognizes both the society's obligation through government and business, and the individual's obligation through labor and family (300)." It seemed to me that Shipler's book had reoriented Kendra towards viewing poverty as something caused not only by large-scale factors that overwhelm people, but also by individual failure (Shipler himself actually informally agreed with my analysis when I emailed it to him).

Shipler had concretized in her mind the importance of "personal responsibility," which is the value in which everyone living in the United States has been steeped. I suspect that since Shipler was a fellow liberal, and his book was about helping the poor, it had for her legitimized talking about individuals as influencing their own poverty. This idea of the obligation of the individual is so much a part of cultural common sense, that the American mind welcomes the opportunity to integrate it onto its pile of explanations of poverty are welcomed by. However, Kendra's main point about poverty was clear – "We can live out our moral convictions [of personal responsibility], or we can spend some money and give people support and save millions, instead of [just] giving support and then dropping it when they do well." While in the end she described a solution that was less ideological and more pragmatic, her knowledge of inequality was accretive none the less; it added a few layers of individualistic tropes in between the thicker societal ones.

The flipside of Kendra was Jason, an activist who while mostly dismissive of structural explanations for racial inequality, sprinkled his responses with references to different sorts of structural racism. His toolkit of theories about poverty was as diverse as Kendra's – the lack of black role models, prejudice ("but not much" of a factor), "good upbringing," social connections, and "a lack of solutions." But he was no reactionary ideologue; he knew there was prejudice and knew the hardship of poverty – "Blacks don't have a lot of money, and so it is hard to get ahead and succeed." Unlike Kendra however, he had not decided on any specific policies or programs for battling black poverty.

What was so frustrating for him and many other informants, was acknowledging that there was a huge problem and also that they did not exactly know how to solve it.[ccxxii] Everyone knows that as a group African Americans experience serious problems, but not everyone knows that these problems are worth solving. For those who see black poverty as erupting entirely out of black people's lack of responsibility, their problems are not the responsibility of society at large, and therefore not worth trying to figure out how to solve. The people who hold this attitude are not among my informants; activists in Whittier not only love living in a neighborhood that is racially diverse, but they do care about finding solutions to the problems of those less fortunate. They however are generally not federal policy wonks, and so do not have comprehensive, coherent sounding plans at the tip of their tongue. Inner-city activists however work on very local problems, ones they walk past every day.

When I asked Grace, a lifelong Republican, why whites had more, she flat out told me, "I don't know, I know the pat answers, it's because of cultural biases … I honestly don't know why." Then I explicitly asked her if it was because of prejudice. "Maybe I'm very naive, but I'd be surprised if that was still taking place in the … Microsofts … and larger global corporations, [but perhaps just at] Joe's accounting firm down the street." To her, prejudice was about single acts of overt discrimination. She also felt that government programs such as affirmative action cannot solve this discrimination. "I think that there was a time and a place for that," but like Jason, it "is something that doesn't sit well in my gut." However, she was not ready to discount it. Grace was willing to add affirmative action to the pile of possible solutions, but it violated her values of non-discrimination. Besides, if discrimination is only a minor problem, as Jason and Grace believed, and it only occurs on a small scale at small businesses, then it is probably not a problem worth putting a great deal of resources into.

Her discounting of discrimination as a larger problem, and her discounting of larger solutions like affirmative action, also discount the immanent need for any profound societal changes. From the perspective of critical multiculturalism, Jason and Grace help to maintain a status quo, and they would be tainted as mainstream multiculturalists who desire more equality and less discrimination, but are not quite willing to support the

difficult projects that more radical multiculturalists insist are required to actually achieve these goals. Both activists purposely bought homes in a diverse, poor neighborhood because they appreciated that diversity, and are not scared off by the talk of crime in this area (plus they hate the suburbs). They espouse multicultural goals, but do not champion any radical re-structuring of society. They volunteer their time to try to solve neighborhood problems, would love to see more color on the board of the Whittier Alliance, and earnestly respect the cultural/religious differences between them and their neighbors, and as such they have many ideas about how to improve the neighborhood, but are stumped when it comes to the larger problem of society-wide inequality.

This chapter breaks new ground by asking about awareness of privilege among neighborhood activists, who are trying to build community between people of many different races and classes. I ask the question, what role does knowledge of one's privilege play in a person's activism? (an activism that is changing the local systems of privilege in which they are enmeshed). An interview with one man in particular will show how complex and intriguing can be one person's understanding of the connection between his own privilege and his neighborhood activism. When I had asked Landon if he had ever been discriminated against for being gay, he went off on a rant about the prevalence of white privilege in the courts, in Minneapolis businesses, and in Western colonialism, but then segued right into talking about his own personal struggle with privilege.

> And I'm always puzzled on how I can feel so justified getting so angry [at people on the street causing trouble] … Two years ago I wouldn't have used the world nigger to save my life. And now, I called one once. "Hey guy, give me twenty bucks" [a guy said to me]. I said I haven't got twenty bucks … I said you get out of here nigger, you get out of here now … And it bothers me a great deal that it came, that it comes so naturally now to me. However there's also a sense of freedom I have for saying that, cause now, my anger isn't repressed, I'm focusing it on what's really making me angry, it's those people I see every day out here, dealing drugs, and acting the way they act. I don't want them to act white, I want them to not deal drugs, and cruise cars, and whore.

He went on to complain about how arresting black kids on the street is just victimizing the victims, and admitted to being perplexed by the scale of the issue, "the problem is much bigger, but I don't know what to do about that."

Landon is bothered by his calling the petty criminals in front of his home niggers, and also by the exploitation of these people by criminal kingpins, and by the discrimination they face in court. His quandary is this – should he personalize the problem of drug dealers, prostitutes, and pan-handlers on his block by treating these individuals as essentially bad people who are messing up his life, or should he empathize with them, by understanding them as victims of institutional racism, the drug industry, and a society that rejects them. In addition to this, he also is trying hard to work through his own anger. It is a challenge to live in an era of crime fighting, multiculturalism and pop psychology. Americans are impelled today to fight in all three of these arenas. In negotiating the difficult issues of race and inequality, one is also supposed to also attend to their own feelings on the matter, and take care that this process does not damage their own mental health.

When I asked another activist about causes of poverty, I specifically contextualized it within the neighborhood, wanting to access her knowledge of neighborhood level problems (the ones she had firsthand knowledge of, rather than more abstract attitudes towards "ethnic inequality"). At first she seemed perplexed by my question, but then easily pulled out an answer – "Economic opportunities … There are not many jobs in Whittier." Enticing living wage jobs to Whittier had been a (mostly failed) goal for those who wanted to increase residents' ability to pay for higher priced housing. She was tired of what she saw as the overabundance of cheap, run-down rental buildings, housing people who did not have the income to support neighborhood businesses or the time to support neighborhood efforts. Her second explanation for poverty in the neighborhood surprised me at first – "We simply have more poverty because we have more affordable housing." While this is technically true, it does not address the underlying reasons that her first answer did, in fact, it worked against identifying tangible causes of poverty. What I latter realized was that she was interpreting poverty through the lens of what was most important to her – which was reversing what she saw as the over-concentration of affordable housing in Whittier. Her interesting mix

of answers was more the result of a philosophy on neighborhood health than on social inequality, but contained strains of both.

In hind sight, it makes sense that all these activists' answers would draw from diverse bodies of knowledge. Unlike me, they are not social science graduate students who had been rigorously trained to unlearn "folk" (or reactionary, neoliberal, colorblind or mainstream liberal) tropes of race and poverty, and to replace them with more recent theories coming out of the social sciences and social justice. Activists are the sponges of their parents' knowledge, consumers at the buffet of media representations, past students of college social science courses, ideologues adopting the theories of their like-minded peers, and lively listeners in their community organizations. While many tell stories of unlearning the overt racism of their forbearers, I find them to be less knowledge replacers, as knowledge *agglomerators*. They have a larger and much more diverse warehouse of knowledge about society than most. Their explanations of social phenomena often appear inconsistent to me, but like the woman in the previous paragraph, do make sense within the context of their goals for the neighborhood.[ccxxiii]

The exception that proves the rule was my interviewee who had spent the most amount of time working among academics. Much more than any other informants he gave the most consistent answers on the structural/individualistic scale. When I asked him what caused inequality, and if he thought discrimination played a part, he listed: how non-whites had been prevented from owning homes, the decline in manufacturing because of government policy, and the white flight to the suburbs made possible by freeway construction. These three examples of structural racism are perhaps the most commonly cited in social science circles of the last generation. Each complexly takes into account political economy, and can by themselves contain a comprehensive explanation of race/poverty in the United States since World War II. They have become tropes that in academic and progressive circles need only be mentioned with the slightest of verbiage, for all to know exactly what is meant. This mantra had not been lost on this interviewee, and he has been transformed by academia into a knowledge replacer.

3: Theories on Subsidized Housing, Not on Poverty, Explains the Difference between Activists

While my interviewees were agglomerators of both individual and structural theories of inequality, all but one leaned toward one perspective or the other. Patterns beg explanation, and being an anthropologist I placed this pattern within the context of my field of study, Whittier politics. When I started hanging out at neighborhood meetings in 2003 it did not take me long to realize that the most contentious issues in Whittier revolved around housing. While sociological arguments over whether it is society or individuals that are to blame for inequalities, do not often spontaneously spring up often around the neighborhood (or perhaps, indirectly, they do), quarrels over housing do. The political camps in Whittier had formed according to how activists felt about supportive and affordable housing in the neighborhood; so using the twenty interviews showcased in this chapter, I cross-referenced their answers on inequality with their position on subsidized housing.

I had initially presumed that the supporters of subsidized housing would blame inequality on social structures (such as institutional racism and the political-economy), while those who had been vocally critical of subsidized housing and the social service organizations in the neighborhood, would skew towards individualist/sub-cultural explanations of racial inequality (such as personal psychology, family background, and work ethic). Upon analyzing their answers I found myself surprised that two of the activists that were most rabidly angry about subsidized housing in Whittier, spoke very structurally about inequality in America in general. While my assumption was validated when it came to supporters of housing for the poor, it turned out that the opponents did not blame the poor or minorities for their disadvantage, but instead often attributed it to such factors as inner-city disinvestment and a lack of jobs. And Wyatt, who saw the non-profit housing corporations as practically the minions of the devil, wanted more non-profit and government funding for large-scale programs that attended to the troubles of both home-owners and the homeless.

Of these twenty interviewees, I knew that ten of them were solid supporters of non-profits and subsidized housing in the neighborhood. Nine of these supporters gave

largely structural answers, and only one gave mostly individualistic answers. Five of the twenty were solid detractors of local subsidized housing, and while three gave individualistic answers, two gave structural answers. Another four interviewees were activists who I knew as being either critical of a subsidized housing project or had some criticism of subsidized housing in general, but unlike the last five, were not highly agitated on the issue. All four gave structural answers (the one interviewee who had no history or strong language on the issue gave mixed answers).

Table 6: Informant Positions on Subsidized Housing

Answers	Structural (15)	Individualistic (4)	Both (1)
Position on Subsidized Housing			
Pro (10)	9	1	
Strongly Anti (5)	2	3	
Moderately Anti (4)	4		
None (1)			1

My initial suspicions about the knowledge held by pro and anti-subsidized housing activists, had been born from spending two years hearing them talk about social problems. The proponents complained a great deal about such structural dynamics as institutional racism, the growing gap between rich and power, and the widespread lack of affordable health care (as well as Republican tax cuts, Christian fundamentalist intolerance, exploitation by the rich, racism by whites, and corporate greed), but their opponents did not seem visibly upset about these same issues. While I had assumed that the activists in Whittier were almost universally liberal (something I later questioned), my notion must have been that those not so accepting of subsidized housing were "merely" *mainstream* liberals, who while accepting of such popular causes as gay rights and saving the environment, did not accept deeply structural explanations for inequality that "true" progressives did. Acknowledging structural factors for inequality is radical because it means there are flaws deep within the nature of American society, defects that

would require major and expensive solutions to fix (and as we all know from taking our car into the shop, no one likes to hear the words "major and expensive"). As Johnson (2006:2) put it,

> To learn that race and class inequality is still happening systematically, and that in fact an historic cleavage such as racial wealth gap is getting deeper, is to realize that significant sociostructural problems have yet to be solved, and to suspect that there is something wrong with the system.

While assuming all were left of center, I had however also assumed that activists against homeless shelters in Whittier were generally further to the right of their opponents in the context of American politics, and so I assumed that they did not put much priority into costly government ventures of caring for the needy. However, my reasoning was a logic based on stereotypes in the *American* political consciousness of liberal and conservative, progressive and moderate. Using this logic, it appeared contradictory to me that someone who opposed the expansion of any social services in the neighborhood, and called for replacing subsidized housing with a market rate version, would also believe that the poor where not largely to blame for their poverty. If one "knew" that the unfortunate were mostly not personally responsible for their predicament, then wouldn't they not mind giving the less fortunate direct help? Whereas if one knew that individuals were to blame for their unfortunate situation, then *pragmatically*, giving them direct assistance would be throwing money down a hole (since they may spend it on drugs and gold chains instead of college and healthy food), and *morally*, the poor would be undeserving of the money anyway.

My faulty logic was cobbled together out of not just a popular reading of American politics in all its essentialization, but also my reading of quality social science studies on whiteness and poverty. A study that was highly influential on me was an ethnography in Spanish Harlem by Phillipe Bourgois, who felt that "mainstream society" perpetuates images of minority slums as fundamentally violent and criminal, in order to label the residents as undeserving of public support (1995:34). Middle-class America "unconsciously uses images of … terror to dehumanize the victims and perpetrators [of ghetto violence] and to justify its unwillingness to confront segregation, economic marginalization, and public sector breakdown" (1995:34). Bourgois paints a picture of

Americans that repeat stories about the deplorable conditions in slums, and tell them in order to represent these conditions as the direct result of irresponsible, vicious tenants, and where any middle-class white person would be instantly brutalized if they accidentally wandered in. Bourgois and other authors portray Americans as not understanding that ghettos are *produced* by structural factors such as deindustrialization and government neglect, as opposed to ghetto-ites as largely lawful, caring people leading productive lives. Similarly, sociologist Michelle Lamont found that working-class white men in New Jersey talk about their black counterparts as lacking work ethic, straightforwardness, and personal responsibility (2000:93), and this leads to disgust with programs attempting to remedy inequality, such as affirmative action and welfare for minorities. From studies like this I had assumed that this attitude was representative of whites in general, and that whites as a whole did not want government projects that distributed money to poor minority families.

I once heard someone on the radio suggest that the 230,000 victims of the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami had received so many donations from Westerners, as compared to many other disasters, because the Tsunami was a "morally unambiguous" disaster. The victims of the Tsunami were seen as in no way responsible for their plight because it was unforeseeable, instantaneous, and caused by nature, whereas African nations suffering from pandemic starvation were viewed as pathetically responsible for their ongoing plight. Due to the perceived cultural deviancies, Africans were seen as creating *their* starvation (in Bourgois' terms, Westerners used images of African indolence and violence in order to dehumanize them, and to justify their own unwillingness to confront Western foreign policy, the unequal effects of globalization, and the legacy of colonialism). An underlying message I received from sources such as these is the white middle-class play up cultural and local explanations and play down global and structural ones, and this allows them to avoid responsibility for improving the lives of those in trouble abroad or in their own neighborhood.

But if true, then why would my white middle-class informants (who were against taking on "the burden" of homeless shelters and affordable housing), also be believers in structural theories of poverty? If they did not blame the unfortunate and destitute for their

condition, why would they not want to help them? Understanding this apparent inconsistency requires contextualizing their knowledge within the neighborhood, and not within national ideologies.[ccxxiv] The reason that their positions are not contradictory in the context of Whittier, is because none of these activists are actually against substantial social support of the in need; they just have a problem with it being done "so much" in Whittier.

Protesters against subsidized housing in Whittier mostly support the non-profit and government funding of the less fortunate, just not the way they see it as being done in their neighborhood. For one activist who was critical of Salem Church developing "workforce" housing on her block, I asked her if she thought it would contribute to poverty. She immediately discussed the generations of discrimination against minorities who experience "barriers," and also discussed how neighborhoods become "ghetto-ized" when society concentrates the poor. Both of these factors take into account the political-economy, and both can also be used as arguments against constructing more subsidized housing in her neighborhood – minorities are discriminated against by being warehoused in ghettos, where even more barriers to success are placed in their way. Rather than contradict it, these examples of institutional racism supported her negative attitude toward the homeless in Whittier and shelters for them. Further, she was not sympathetic to individualistic explanations of poverty (such as hard work), and was well aware of the social structures contributing to the advantages whites like her experience.

4: Privilege Was Very Much on Activists Minds

The social science research shows that white, middle-class America's denial that they have privilege, is complicit with reproducing privilege and systems of racial domination, which are normalized and hidden (Cacho 2000, Gallagher 2003, Hartigan 2000, Perry 2001, Pierce 2003, Waters 1990). Based on the literature on race, the AMP researchers hypothesized that few white Americans would say that their whiteness had afforded them privileges. However, what Croll (2012:14) found was that,

> Almost two-thirds of white Americans (63 percent) believe that prejudice and discrimination in favor of whites is important in explaining whites' greater success. This form of white privilege, that prejudice and discrimination operate to

> provide a racial advantage to whites, is something I did not think most whites would view as important in explaining whites' greater success. Whites may see the negative effects of prejudice and discrimination toward non-whites, but a central idea from whiteness studies is that whites do not see themselves as benefiting from the racial system or gaining privilege based on their race.

Like Croll, I also ended up being surprised by my data; of the twenty informants whose discourse I analyzed on inequality, almost all indicated that they were privileged in some way. In 1981 Robert Terry put it well, "To be white in America is not to have to think about it" (120), and while this may be historically true, and while color blindness is theorized as the prevailing way that Americans still to this day engage race, neighborhood activists in Whittier are apparently not typical people.

The most surprising result from the my set of questions on inequality was that no one I discounted privilege, in fact, almost all embraced it. White community-builders in Whittier are relatively cognizant of the continuing significance of institutional racism, and acknowledgements of their privilege were particularly commonplace for the supporters of subsidized housing. After listening to one activist talk about his passion – getting more bikes on the road and fewer cars – I asked if he felt privileged. "As a white person, I realize that when I'm talking about race I'm from the privileged class." Another very straightforward answer to my questions on inequality and privilege came from Jameson, an elderly white man who despised the subsidized housing protesters. "Thank god I'm white. Now, would I have said that to a black interviewer?" While he did talk off the cuff by attributing some inequality to such non-structural factors as "the psychology of the black woman" and the culture of "Somali women," he definitely felt that just as our sexist society had advantaged men, and had also afforded many "opportunities" to whites. "But we've seen a tremendous change … You [being younger] are going to have to put up with a lot more, I have been pretty privileged."

But what of those against supportive housing, the activists who felt that their own presence in Whittier was contributing to its health, who attributed the neighborhood's "turn around" to their own hard work as volunteers, and to their middle-class incomes contributing to the health of neighborhood businesses and projects? And who also viewed those who were so poor or so disabled as to require supportive housing, as a burden on them? These were the activists who their rivals labeled as racist, classist, and eminently

selfish. Surprisingly, among these individuals that I would have most suspected to deny that they were privileged (or at least not discuss it), most not only accepted it but went on to unreservedly documented it, some without any prompting about the topic at all.[ccxxv]

Of the five serious critics of subsidized housing in Whittier whose answers I analyzed for content on privilege, four admitted their own privilege and/or advantages, as did all four of the more mildly critical. For Wyatt, whose attacks against supportive housing programs for the chemically addicted had verged on the maniacal – "Sure I've been advantaged, I've been terrifically advantaged going to good schools, good business school, that I wouldn't have had if I was black." Some supportive housing critics even brought up their own privilege when I asked them about poverty. When I asked one woman about her hatred of the (largely black) subsidized housing coops that had been in the neighborhood, she launched into a lecture on how advantaged whites are, telling me that "you have to understand that as a white person you are already in the advantage." Similarly, Hartmann (Hartmann, Gerteis and Croll 2009) found that,

> In terms of understandings of white privilege, we find whites are less likely to see and fully grasp racial inequalities in general and white advantages in particular than people of color as anticipated by theories of whiteness and white privilege, but at the same time a substantial proportion of whites actually do see the structural ways that they have been advantaged by their race, and the differences in magnitude [between whites and minorities] of many of these results are far less significant than we might have anticipated previously.

I found the awareness of privilege surprising because I had naively reasoned that if someone did not want Loaves and Fishes soup kitchen to give out free dinners in Whittier, then they must not also see themselves as ever themselves having (figuratively) gotten a free meal. If they felt burdened by the hungry in their neighborhood and resented hundreds of them amassing every night at five on the corner of 22nd and Clinton, then I assumed they would not feel they personally had ever been helped by society. While privilege came up often in my interviews, but it rarely did in other contexts of my field work. At neighborhood events and in conversation the pro-affordable housing activists spontaneously invoked their own privileges as often as their opponents, almost never. But I suspected that beneath the proponents' frequent and passionate talk of the hardships facing minorities, lay a dormant discourse that would explicitly summon up their own

privilege – I was correct. Likewise, after listening to their opponents' lack of discourse about racism and social justice (except when specifically arguing against the "warehousing of the poor" in Whittier), I did not sense in them much acceptance in the enduring advantages of white Americans – I assumed wrongly.

My assumptions about awareness of privilege, like Hartmann's, Gerteis' and Croll's research hypothesis, was bred out of the same literature on whiteness by which they had been influenced. This literature argued that in general whites in America did not believe that their racial/ethnic background had afforded them much privilege. But more than that, popular authors like George Lipsitz (1998) seemed to me to be saying that those whites who were more conservative in their positions on the rights and entitlements for minorities, were much less likely to see themselves as privileged. While whites of both liberal and conservative leaning alike have been scolded by color-conscious, civil rights proponents for adhering to color-blind values, those against such policies as affirmative action, multicultural school curriculums, Afrocentrism, hate crime legislation, or legal protections for any specific minority group, have been portrayed as particularly unaware of the pervasive social structures that maintain white wealth. I had artlessly placed the dichotomy of left/right in American national politics, onto the dichotomy of pro-affordable housing/anti-affordable housing in Whittier politics. And while it was the Whittier activists themselves that tried so hard to convince me of the differences between them, still, I had bought into their categories. For example, Whittier Neighbors board members were fond of calling the dominant faction of the Whittier Alliance, "Republicans," "Neocons," "classists," or worse.

A major reason I picked Whittier as my field of study is because of the wide polarity of views in neighborhood politics over issues revolving around poverty; so after my first two years of participant-observation of this polarity, when I started actual interviews, I had guessed I would find many activists who considered themselves privileged and many who did not. That I did not find this *diversity,* might not be so surprising considering that all my informants were part of community building organizations that espoused multicultural goals. However, in this day and age, especially

in inner-city Minneapolis, adhering to a multiculturalism does not necessarily mean a whole lot; everyone is doing it. But just because almost all said yes to valuing diversity, preferring equality, and being privileged, does not mean that what came out of their mouth afterwards was the same, and does not mean that having privilege means the same things to all; here lies the rub.

It is no secret that interviews and open ended questions have the advantage over multiple choice surveys of being able to hear the complexity in how people feel. But interviews that are conversational, that have a back and forth instead of just question/answer question/answer, have the ability of hearing what comes after the initial answer. When Mary Heather Johnson specifically confronted wealthy whites about the structured inequality that they personally had benefited from, informants often acknowledged it, but what I find more interesting is where their speech turned to after (Johnson 2006:130).

> Families did not require any questions whatsoever to bring the American value of meritocracy to the forefront of their discussion [by defending it]; they often initiated the subject themselves and brought it up repeatedly. It seemed as though they knew at some level that by talking so openly about structured wealth inequality, they were somehow compromising the culturally sacred tenants of the American Dream that they believed in so strongly, and felt compelled to defend their beliefs.

While her informants moved towards lauding the system of meritocratic individualism, my informants often defended their successes in life, as having resulted from their good upbringing. Unlike her informants, mine did not try to ultimately argue that structural inequality "did not really matter" (Johnson 2006:134). While both of our interviewees admitted advantages they had received such as inheritances and college tuition, mine did not find it necessary to counter this by bragging about how resourceful they personally were in gaining wealth, or how incredibly hard they had to work for what they got (Johnson 2006:133-4). Instead of focusing on the individual, their theory of wealth causation was moved up a level to the family; but this is still not up to the level of social structure. Following Johnson's logic, my interviewees who redirected the conversation to the positive characteristics of their families, were diminishing the clout of social structure upon a person's place in the hierarchy.

To give an example of these two main discourses I encountered, while Ashley was "acutely aware" of her *white* privilege, Ronald felt privileged because of his "good upbringing." These are two very, very different things. While one implies the existence of enduring patterns operating deeply within and across the whole of a society, the other implies something exclusive to only one family. Ashley outright blamed racial discrimination for her privilege, "I can do things people of color can't." Her white privilege had become conscious to her when as a teenager she and a friend were pulled over for a fairly major infraction, and the cop just sent them home. "If we were two black men we would have gone to jail … I'm aware of it all the time." But for Ronald, after admitting to being privileged, he told me he "got very little from family," and only inherited $2,000 from an aunt. Also, he felt that being from a rural background disadvantaged him, while his family upbringing helped him to get beyond those disadvantages. Ronald neither affirmed nor discounted *white* privilege specifically, but for him advantage/disadvantage most saliently came in the form of urban/rural, big/small inheritance, and good/bad upbringing.

More often than not, when I asked activists who were critical of subsidized housing programs if they had been privileged, they synthesized the familial and societal. A Pakistani man told me about how the home he had grown up in was loving, financially comfortable, and educated, and where he and his mother did not have to work. But being in America he felt it was difficult often being "the only olived-skinned" person around. Another activist melded the structural and the personal – "People are born to privilege, and don't see how they are privileged … I was born on second base, but have worked hard and am proud of my accomplishments." Yet another white activist succinctly summed up a common response, "Yes. I've had good schools and family." But for him a person of any race or background would be equally as privileged as him had they gone to the same schools and had a nice family. What his analysis did not include was the unequal playing field that results in certain groups able to find themselves in good schools, and did not include how someone from a disadvantaged background who went to his school might still face challenges later that he would not. It was as if a privilege could

be determined by a snapshot at one point in time (*snapshot privilege*, I should coin that), while ignoring historical contexts and their influence upon the present and future.

What is most striking in all of my informants' answers is the total absence of any stereotypes about minorities or whites. While they felt it was safe to attribute their own success to their particular family upbringing, making generalizations about minorities appeared to be taboo. But does blaming your good family for your success, imply that those who have not succeeded as much came from bad families? And since on average, blacks in Whittier have much less than these activists, would not this suggest that blacks are poor at raising children? Of course my informants would never say such a thing, or at least not overtly or to me. But neither would they recant the essential goodness of their family and the solid nurturing of their parents; it was a matter of *pride*. In all my discussions on inequality, minorities, religion, politics, and privilege, only one of my white informants ever mentioned their ethnic or racial identity, instead their identities were much more tied to their immediate kin.

While some informants would spontaneously concede the advantage they derived from being white, most would make a connection to privilege only after specifically asked. One of the more interesting responses to my questions on inequality came from Grace, who was very suspicious of the non-profits in the neighborhood.

> We started with nothing and had our kids on economic assistance in rural South Dakota … but I feel privileged because we always had a safety net, we knew our families were there and if things really, really got bad our families would catch us if we fell … It gave us courage to do things that um, that would have been a lot harder at that point in our life … We were fortunate, it worked out … We had a family network.

She had made no mention of her race affording her this privileged, so I asked her about it point blank.

> Hmm, I don't see I've benefited at all from being a white woman, but I've benefited from being married to a white man … If he was black … it would have been a lot harder for him to get where he is now, I do think that. Because I know our society does definitely make some assumptions about … young black parents. So yea, we've been privileged in that respect I guess. He would probably be really annoyed with me saying that.

When I asked another activist, Randall, why whites have more, he attributed it to "good schools and families, its cultural, there's a lot of history there. And I'm a Norwegian Lutheran and that has helped me … From day one, my parents have been working toward making sure I had a decent life." Asked if effort and hard work could explain why whites have more, Randall again answered the question with his own family, "I didn't bootstrap myself, don't get me wrong I worked hard, but I had a lifetime of help." I at first assumed he meant the lifetime of help came from white privilege, but much later when re-reading my notes of Randall's interview in order to write this chapter; it looked more like the help was purely from his family, and by dint of them being Norwegian Lutheran. So I emailed him, asking if his upbringing helped him out more than most people's.

> I grew up in middle class, but both my parents are extremely smart and well educated. My mother stayed at home. After I left the house my mother decided to write books, and they were so good they were picked up a major university press. Think about that. She was pouring all her time and energy into my health, happiness and future. She unquestionably could have been very successful in business or whatever. But she decided to give all she had to me and my siblings. As a result, I probably got a better upbringing than people with one parent, or parents who were focused on work or their own pursuits. And it wasn't just giving to me. She played the organ at church, volunteered for this and that, and generally pitched in in innumerable ways. Religion played a big role in volunteerism too. Like so many Minnesotans, I grew up Lutheran. I've heard the story of the feeding of the five thousand about five thousand times. There are two stories there: Jesus' miracle of course is the first. But the back story is that a little boy volunteered to give up his loaves and fish for the good of the cause. The lesson is that when you selflessly give up what's yours you usually get it back, and everyone else benefits too. As for why my parents worked so hard, the answer is that their parents gave to them in the same way they gave me their children.

His answer was very interesting, but still there was no definitive result regarding white privilege. So I asked him straight out if he had benefited from being white – "Yes." That he wrote so much about his family and religion but only one word about race (and nothing on social structures), speaks volumes. It is obvious where his pride, identity, and social theories lie. It is just as obvious what he does not feel comfortable talking about white privilege. Throughout all my interviews, the activists that did not spontaneously discuss white privilege, would not talk much about it when prodded. While they did not

deny the privilege, they were uninterested in it, found it not terribly important, knew little about it, and/or found the idea distasteful.

When Bell and Hartmann asked interviewees about diversity, after initially describing diversity in glowing terms, many would then segue into the problems of diversity, such as people taking it too far, and it getting in the way of national unity. The authors referred to this as the "yes, but" response (Bell & Hartmann 2007:900). The response that I identified in my interviewees is not so much one of "yes I accept privilege, but I'm now going to negate what I just said," as a "yes, but now I'm going to describe privilege in a different way than you understand privilege." The effect of understanding privilege as originating from good parenting and not race, is to define it as something admirable that gives individuals helpful personal qualities, instead of something problematic within the nature of society that profits at the expense of others. Randall's "yes" means – yes, there absolutely is white privilege, and it is not as important as the family and religion.

5: Heterogeneity Within Individuals is customary and not Contradictory

The recent findings of Johnson, AMP, and others shows that middle-class, white Americans are moving away from seeing inequality as simply the result of individual effort and skills. This finding flies in the face of the outdated consensuses (Johnson 2006:152) that held that Americans either do not believe in structured inequality, or believe solely in either the role of the individual, or society, in creating the hierarchical world we live in (but not both) (Johnson 2006:150). Lately "research has begun to document that Americans in fact buy into both individualist and structuralist explanations for poverty" (Johnson 2006:151). This newer set of research shows is that acceptance of these explanations varies according to racial identity, but more interesting to me is that along with Johnson, "other researchers have documented that all Americans (not just disadvantaged groups) hold ambivalent and contradictory beliefs simultaneously" (Johnson 2006:151, 151) regarding causes of poverty.

The folk and academic knowledge on this topic has been in a state of high flux and politicization for at least a few generations, but unfortunately in both sets of

knowledge, it is understood as a dichotomy, pitting individualistic explanations vs. social structural ones. And while the findings of Johnson (2006:152) and others I will highlight are very interesting and valuable, in this section of this chapter I want to use them as a foil to critique first their naivety of the complexity of the human mind, and second their condescension of interviewees. This dualism in Johnson is most highly evident and problematic in her presentation of two, and only two, incontrovertibly opposite ways of explaining inequality. The way this plays out in her paradigm, is in her theorizing that Americans are very "inconsistent" in their commitment to either social or individualistic explanations. She refers to Americans having a "dual consciousness," being "ambivalent," and "upholding the contradiction."

But Johnson is just one of the more recent theorists to represent the American mind as essentially incongruous. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (1997) found the dominant way of engaging race in America to be "color-blindness," and that this perspective was itself a "rhetorical maze" of contradictions. He found that a common way of stating racial views without opening oneself to the charge of racism, was by appearing to consider all the sides of an issue, regardless of how inconsistent they were (154). White Americans commonly make inane statements such as "I am not prejudiced, but …," or "some of my best friends are black, but" (155); these were examples of the rhetorical incoherence that he termed as the ""Yes, and no, but …" (after making racist statements, respondents would "soften the blow" by adding something about the equality of all people and the positive qualities of African-Americans (156)). Ruth Frankenberg (1993) identified America as in a racial era of "color and power evasion" (142), which is full of "contradiction" (156). Colorblindness comes out of "a mode of thinking about race organized around an effort to not "see … race differences," or "a selective engagement with difference" (142). Colorblindness is marked by euphemisms that distract from the harsh reality of inequality and the unpopular solutions to it, and that rhetorically distance oneself from injustice. Americans create "nonsense" (155) out of the racial realities, in order to avoid white complicity with racial problems, and while colorblindness pretends to be anti-racist but "ultimately has had reactionary results" (142). This is similar to how Bonilla-Silva found his informants to bumble into "rhetorical incoherence" and "become

almost incomprehensible" when discussing racially sensitive issues (2001:155). And in Teresa Caldeira's influential ethnography of crime in Sao Paulo (2000), "in more or less elaborate forms, residents I interviewed in all neighborhoods employed … paradoxical modes of expression with regards to the poor" and the darker-colored Brazilians "invading" from the north (89). What Caldeira heard was that in the same breath, people would show their prejudices and then "contradicted" (84) themselves in trying to distance themselves from their prejudices (88), by citing examples of white criminals and appeals to the common humanity of everyone. However, I wonder if perhaps the informants of Frankenberg, Bonilla-Silva, and Johnson were creating new meanings that these researchers failed to detect? The informants might not have been babbling at all, but agonizingly and profoundly, creating new ways of talking that genuinely tried to incorporate many and complex feelings and interests.

In the last half century the field of anthropology has made a turn towards representing communities as heterogeneous, as opposed to monoliths where everyone believes or does the same things. "The effort to produce general ethnographic descriptions of people's beliefs or actions tends to smooth over contradictions, conflicts of interest, and doubts and arguments, not to mention changing motivations and circumstances (Abu-Lughod 1991). The anthropology of yore was accused of looking for the essences of a society and of exaggerating the power of culture to direct the mind. Today however, resistance, conflict, and divergence are seen by anthropologists as the norm, and this dissertation is a part of that trend. And while there has been a great deal of ink spilt on the heterogeneity within *communities*, what about within *individuals*? I argue that on any topic, everyone is contradictory, ambivalent, dual, complex, and meta, most of the time; you just have to listen to them long enough.

When individuals are seen to as holding conflicting beliefs that exhibit inconsistent practices, they are often referred to offhandedly as "schizophrenic." Perhaps they confuse schizophrenia with split personality, another massively misunderstood psychological term abused by psychological thrillers of the 1970s and 80s; schizophrenia however is consistent with delusions (I'm Jesus) or hallucinations (hearing voices). While the literature does seem to portray Americans as being deluded into thinking that wealth

does not flow from privilege, and hallucinate a vision of the massive role of individual merit, this association with mental illness makes it easy to write off this apparent duality as atypical or senseless.

Johnson found it surprising that the typical way to be American is to believe in both structured inequality and meritocracy, but I find it to be naïve to be surprised that Americans hold both social and individualistic explanations for inequality. Not only is it normal to believe in both structure and merit, but to represent this as fundamentally and at all times "contradictory," risks being inaccurate and condescending. Johnson says that while other sociologists besides her have shown that Americans use both structure and individuals for explaining poverty and wealth, she was the first to do so in non-quantitative research (2006:153). And while I applaud Johnson for going in depth far enough to recognize multiple perspectives within her interviewees, I suspect that if she had gone *deeper*, and been more *open* to they were trying to tell her, the interviewees would not have appeared so egregiously inconsistent. [ccxxvi]

Johnson's aims are noble, when on page three she tells the reader that she will problematize this contradiction between Americans' belief in the American dream and their acceptance that inequality is structured. Unlike previous research, she will ask how Americans actually make sense of the inconsistency. And while she did work hard to actually fathom different individuals' views on both inequality and the dream, she only made sense of these two views separately, not entirely in conjunction. The book's favorite phrase was that Americans "uphold the contradiction," but from the design of her research to its conclusions, I suspect that she *assumed* the contradiction. This contradiction was not only her central argument, but suffused her entire research from top to bottom. No doubt the interviews she did "reflect the power of ideology" (153), but all talk does this, any bus ride or evening at a bar can be an opportunity to overhear any number of conversations that drip with ideology. The real challenge is not ferreting out ideology, anyone can do this, but understanding all the ins and outs of how people understand their own ideology. This is where Johnson's research became confused; she conflated understanding ideology from an analytic point of view, with understanding it from the owner's. The reason that understanding people on their own terms is important,

is because it allows an understanding of not just what ideology does in the world, but also how people resourcefully modify their own versions of it. Johnson has much to teach about the former, but not as much on the later.

In her chapter on "Inequality and Ideology," the Johnson finds that in the talk of her informants, "the American Dream and the power of wealth were not presented as dichotomous, but rather were woven together complexly in parents' worldviews and perspectives, in the way they explained and described their experiences" (2006:147). These are fancy Geertzian words, but do not pan out. While she did study the Dream and the power in conjunction, the reader is left not quite understanding *how* someone could have both. "Ultimately, no reconciliation is usually made … The … families interviewed … completed their discussions without any resolution" (Johnson 2006:146). While working at a treatment center for schizophrenics, I found that if I listened to them talk long enough about their delusions, they began to make sense. One client who insisted that the United Nations owed him millions for coming up with the Bosnian peace plan, also explained to me over the course of a week the complex military tactics he had so proudly invented. At first blush they did not make much sense, but once I tried to actually understand what the strategies were, they transformed into being just kind of boring. By discussing it more with him, I began to understand how it made sense to him, and with this, how it made sense period. His plans were no longer crazy, just not quite as brilliant as he thought they were. I had reconciled his insanity. The way that Johnson's interviewees reconciled their beliefs may not have been logical, neat, or palatable to Johnson, but I am sure the interviewees did not consider themselves to be illogical and ideologically deluded. "They disclosed complexities not only in terms of the logic of our system, but in how fluid and contradictory the act of sense making can be" (Johnson 2006:149). Complex, coming from a logic, systemic, and fluid, yes, but contradictory, not necessarily.[ccxxvii]

I would like to contrast Johnson's reliance on ideology, in all its corruption and dissonance, with how Michelle Lamont (2000) took seriously what whites told her about race and poverty. When hearing them denigrate the work ethic and morals of black men, she did not come from a place that interpreted their talk as pathological or self-interested.

She did not discount their values as primarily a convenient justification for a hidden agenda of continued racial dominance. At heart, it was not hatred or selfishness that led white working-class men to resent and debase black workers; it was their deep commitment to a "world view" (Lamont 2000:68); this worldview valued discipline, work ethic, straightforwardness, and personal responsibility, combined with their *sincere* belief that collectively they themselves embodied these qualities and blacks lacked them (Lamont 2000:93). Lamont made sense of false, offensive beliefs bread out of ignorance and fear, and allowed the reader to understand how and why these white men conjoined their morals, worldviews and work.

The context within which research is grounded allows for its interpretations and conclusions, and the more the research knows about the lives of its informants and their communities, the more broad, useful, and complex those interpretations and conclusions will be. But research, like any endeavor, has limited time and resources, and the researcher faces trade-offs. For example, while phone surveys can gather information from thousands of people on many different topics that can be correlated, making the data more representative of the sample group and also easily and qualitatively analyzable on many levels, the information about each person is limited and abstract. On the other end of the scale, ethnographic research trades numbers of informants and numerical data for greater depth about each of person and hermeneutic analysis, and is sometimes limited to just a single community.

Johnson's study fell in between these poles, gathering personal, in depth information about families in the context of one set of topics, but detached from the communities and everyday lives (the things anthropologists love), in which the families and subjects live. While Johnson's interview methodology and tight focus allowed her to reveal complexities she may not have been able to identify with pure survey or ethnographic investigation, I believe that the broad participant-observation I did allowed me to make better sense of the informants ideologies. Johnson's study is as interesting as it is because she did not simply ask abstract questions about the American Dream, but couched it within what informants thought about their own wealth, their kids' chances of getting into particular schools, and their personal dreams and fears. This gave her study

traction for understanding why they believed what they did about wealth and privilege – their words *make more sense* when we know about their goals and finances. However, there are other levels of context that can be added in order to provide clues and ultimately explanations to questions.[ccxxviii]

It initially had appeared contradictory to me that an activist would have a sophisticated knowledge of institutional racism and of privilege, while also fighting housing for the poor and disabled. The abstract questions on black poverty and white wealth that I had asked had only given me only one piece of one puzzle; it was because of participant-observation of neighborhood politics that I knew the interviewees' positions on multiple and diverse issues, and also knew the ins and outs of how subsidized housing was such a crucial issue within the frame of Whittier politics. But it was only because of research specifically on one issue, the battle over the opening of Lydia House, that I came to know their world-view, and how their worldviews and activisms made sense together. It was all this data that I needed in order to understand that their opposition to affordable housing in Whittier was not at all incompatible with their support for a welfare government. They were not against subsidized housing, they were against the "over-concentration" of it in a neighborhood whose health was "unstable," and where any more "burden" could push it over the "tipping point." These positions made sense in light of the odd housing set within the neighborhood, and the particular set of ideologies about neighborhood health that many Whittier Alliance activists had adopted. I am not saying that their positions were right; I am saying they were logical and understandable.

6: Contributing to the Neighborhood

Much of this dissertation has been explaining why a group of activists in Whittier are working to gentrify the neighborhood, and while I have intricately detailed many of the complexities, ambiguities, and resistances within their small movement, I would now like to try to explain their activism with one key symbol that they hold, *contribution*. We have seen how they push particular policies, espouse particular ideologies, and exploit particular discourses in the service of their goals, but in understanding a community, anthropologists often yearn to "discover" some operational mechanism, whether the

anthropologist locates it in the realm of the cognitive, behavioral, social, environmental, cultural, physiological, or genetic.[ccxxix] So while contemporary anthropologists are drilled to beware of the dangers of essentializing people, we are also vigilant for the epiphany that will "explain" something or some group.

I had been regularly attending community meetings for over two years when I began doing frequent interviews with the people I met at meetings, and it did not take long for me to notice common discourses and feelings. Among activists against "even more" subsidized housing in the neighborhood, the words that regularly popped out at me were ones such as stability, health, over-concentration, burden, diversity, investment, suburbs, urban, and choice. While these words went far in explaining their views and actions, the word contribution, while not appearing in even a majority of these interviews, particularly popped out. Then, not until many years later, and only with my advisors help, did I consider its relation to privilege.

I found that one important way that gentrificationists in Whittier evaluate everything in the neighborhood is through the lens of how it will *contribute* to the neighborhood; this primarily includes the people in it, but is also important for construction developments, as well businesses, organizations, laws, and zoning policies. Renters, and particularly those who receive housing subsidies, are as a group not seen as contributors. Contributors are those investing their money and effort into the neighborhood. Property owners are seen as helping the neighborhood by having invested more money into the real estate of the neighborhood, and since homeowners on average have much higher incomes than the renters, they are assumed to be spending more at neighborhood businesses. This influx of cash will not only help the businesses, but help fill the empty storefronts on Eat Street, and bring in classier businesses.

Those who have invested money into their homes are also seen as much more likely to become emotionally "invested" in the neighborhood, and feel like "stakeholders" in its fate. Homeowners call 911 when they see a drug deal, pick up trash on their block, spruce up their home when it needs attention, come to neighborhood meetings, volunteer for the Alliance, join the citizen walking patrol, and help stem the tide against the "scourge" of affordable housing. Market rate renters do not necessarily

contribute much of anything; while they may be decent neighbors and spend money at local businesses, they are simply existing in the neighborhood for a time, before moving out, leaving no legacy or property behind. Since they are not monetarily invested they do not feel Whittier as their true home. And for those living in housing that is subsidized (affordable or supportive), not only do not contribute to the neighborhood, but may be contributing negatively.

During one interview with Grace, I wondered, what if a responsible, steadily employed, high income earner buys a home in Whittier, but does not go to community meetings or events, and does not spend money in any neighborhood businesses; are they part of the problem? I asked her.

> I'm trying to think, because, if I'm a law abiding citizen, but I'm a recluse, so I'm not contributing – I'm paying my property taxes but that's all I'm doing does that make me marginal, no, in point of fact it doesn't make me marginal, but in point of perception it would because it would raise people's perception of me, why doesn't she ever leave her home? So I guess, can you really factualize what it means to be marginal, does it all just come down to perception. For me personally, a marginal person has done something in their past to compromise their character or their integrity, and, um, as such, that person is gonna have a really, really hard time ever getting below my radar. So if you have somebody who's living in a transitional housing of some sort, or drug rehab, um, then you know for me, they're marginal. But then I think, what about the homeless people I see shuffling out of Simpson's or Stevens, oddly enough I feel less threatened by those people then someone who's actually part of a, that's really not fair, … but you don't know why they are there. Are they there because they were in Vietnam and they got messed up in the head and they've never been able to recover, … if I see a homeless person on the street that's kind of where I go, emotionally that's where I go, … even take the pedophile, who studies have shown was probably abused as a child themselves, I don't know … I see them as being marginal because they aren't contributing to our community, … but I don't view them with the same degree of suspicion as the half-way house down the street.

Through the gentrificationist lens, there is a hierarchy of residents based on contribution to the neighborhood; at the top are those who own *and* live in the mansions built during the logging and milling era of Minneapolis around the turn of the 19th century. Extra points are given to those in the Washburn-Fair Oaks Mansion District, and those who have personally restored their mansion. Next come the more numerous homeowners of regular single family houses, followed by duplex and townhome

homeowners. Condo owners fall a fair ways down, because they do not have a façade or front yard that they are personally responsible for. They also are not as in touch with the street, or as intimately impacted by such things on the street such as drug dealing. Plus, it has been noticed that condo owners are much less likely to get involved in neighborhood organizations and efforts. From here market rate renters are a very long ways down. Theoretically high-end rental tenants would of course be above the rest, but until fairly recently, there were no luxury rentals. Next would come tenants of the old brick buildings that had been well kept, then a few apartment buildings that had something, anything, architecturally interesting about them, and then, of course, the reams of hated, 1970s, 2 ½ story walkups.

> The Whittier neighborhood has a number of homes that are in foreclosure. The City is offering the Minneapolis Advantage Program to help potential buyers purchase a foreclosed home. If you know someone who would like to live in Whittier, is looking for a "deal", and is willing to invest some effort in a home that possibly needs some repair, let them know about this program. The ideal candidate/home buyer would be a couple or family who are interested in living in the home and supporting the Whittier neighborhood, businesses and school.

At the bottom are those whose housing has been subsidized, split into three groups, affordable rental, lease hold co-ops, and supportive. Affordable housing includes privately owned buildings that take a lot of section 8 vouchers, and buildings owned and run by various non-profit development corporation; but either way government funds are being channeled in different ways to pay for much of their rent. The lease hold co-ops are almost totally defunct now, but in the past were buildings where the tenants as a whole, would lease the whole building from a non-profit owner, and manage the building themselves; and sometimes with the tenants actually having an equity stake in the building or their unit, but always publically subsidized in some way to make it affordable to the fairly poor residents, who were also mostly black.

Supportive housing is where the occupants have on or off site social services available to them to meet their particular challenges. This could be anything from a social worker meeting with them once a month, to a worker in the building office helping tenants navigate health, employment, and/or financial obstacles, to a team of twenty-four hour staff meeting all the daily needs of the developmentally delayed. Other facilities in

the neighborhood include residential treatment programs for the severely mentally ill (e.g. bipolar, schizophrenic) or chemically dependent, nightly homeless shelters, long-term homeless shelters, abused women shelters, and transitional housing for homeless families, sex offenders, paroled felons, and immigrant refugees.

Consider two ways of looking at the on-site support offered to these people, either as something that some require because they lack what it takes to take care of themselves on their own, or as something offered to those who could use some extra help (kind of like debates over whether something is a right or privilege). Are they people who ended up in this housing because they do not have the ability to be responsible for themselves, or people who through no fault of their own, are temporarily experiencing a crisis for which they are accepting some help. A flyer I saw one day advertising a support service a few blocks down from me read,

> Our organization is made up of people in recovery. We feel that one major reason why people do not get help for various social problems is due to lack of information about services available … By organizing this day, we are giving back to our community the valuable knowledge we have learned through our trials and tribulations. … We are offering answers.

Obviously contribution is not a word that those suspicious of social services have a monopoly on, and the flyer made me wonder if perhaps it was in direct response to those in the neighborhood who would rather see them leave.

It is hard to say whether the tenants of affordable housing are above or below the supportive housing ones, because while those needing social support are seen as at risk to buy drugs on the streets of Whittier, the ones selling the drugs come from among the renters needing financial support. And while the seriously disabled and ill residents are seen as having so much less ability to give back to their neighborhood than the subsidized renters, it is those renters who are seen as much more likely to commit serious crimes. Either way, like picking the best player for your team, you want best team players living next door. With more abilities, money and self-sufficiency, renters have much more opportunity to cause direct harm than the disabled or ill. The guy with Down's Syndrome that lives in the house down the street with three other developmentally disabled men and their care takers, is probably not running for the board of the Alliance, testifying in front

of the city council, buying tickets to the Alliance fundraiser, or a ordering a three course shrimp curry dinner at Azia, but he is also not throwing women to the ground for their purse, throwing his trash in your alley, or throwing late night drunken parties on the front lawn. Shelly, who gripes about the shelters in the neighborhood, told me that she allows homeless people to sleep on her back deck (as long as they clean up after themselves), and "I don't worry about it, and I don't worry about my safety when I go out the back in the morning." She admitted that the homeless possibly cause livability problems by peeing in her bushes and such, but did not find them to be as much of an invading force as the many shelters that serve them.

Another strike against those in homes for the mentally disabled or chemically addicted are that they stand out. Not only are they seen as not at a place in life where they are able to productively participate in the neighborhood, but by their very presence, the sight of them shambling to McDonald's for coffee or slouching on their stoop smoking, they can be suspected of creating a compromised and high-risk environment. Many activists told me that vulnerable adults attract predators, so while the disabled, recovering alcoholic going to Loaves and Fishes for the free dinner is not hurting anyone, his presence invites drug dealers and muggers into the area to exploit and/or steal from him.

In spelling out this hierarchy, one cannot help but notice how well it corresponds to the general hierarchy of American society. Are those who are seen as contributors by the gentrificationists, the exact same people who are the privileged? And if so, then is contribution, a benign sounding idea, working to replace other words that have developed a negative connotation, such as high-class, rich, connected, or privileged? And if the more expensive homes being built in the neighborhood are *materially* reordering the built world, then is the use of contribution symbolically reordering the conceptual world? If so, both would work to increase the ratio of privileged people to Whittier.

While in some ways it could be seen as just the latest way for the wealthy to justify their privilege, "contribution" is different. Unlike claims of racial superiority, it does not rely on essentializing biology; unlike theories of a culture of poverty, it does not disparage whole communities or their ways of life; unlike accusations of irresponsibility against the poor, it does not assume individuals are inherently pathological; unlike

viewing the lower-classes as just always less informed and refined, contribution makes no overt judgments about the skills of those with less money, and unlike blaming parents for not being good enough parents it does not label their grown children as permanently undeveloped (also, unlike neoliberal doctrines of the free market it does leave the disadvantaged to fend for themselves). One way of looking at contribution is that it does not assume anything about the ultimate nature any one person, only about how much *potential* time, money, health, and energy they *currently* have to expend on their neighborhood. The drug addict or mentally ill person in the residential treatment home on the corner may very well "turn their life around," and become a contributing member of their community in the near future, but for now, they lack the means to help turn the neighborhood around.

The concept of contribution, opens a discursive space for gentrificationists to imagine and talk about the kinds of people, buildings, and operations that they want to discourage from being in Whittier, by not naming categories of people who in contemporary America are the ones most taboo to talk about in a negative way, namely, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, language, and disability. At the same time the concept also opened up a space for them to accurately represent their passionate outlooks on making their corner of the world a better place, and in a way that revealed their own identity as valuable, helpful, urbanites. They make no overt claims to being higher class, superior, more deserving, or more moral; they claim that through their resources they currently happen to have, and the actual actions they currently perform, they do in fact contribute more.

Wanting to test the bounds of the contribution paradigm, I ran the word by activists who were supportive of new affordable housing in Whittier. When I asked Sophia if she thought there were any groups in the neighborhood that contribute more than others, I assumed she would take the high road and tell me that no one contributes any more than others. What was interesting was how she misinterpreted my question; instead of naming *types of people* who help build the *economy*, she named *organizations* she thought might help build *connections*.

> I suspect the churches are still a gathering place and activity center … where they have the after school programs. The difference in focus between a church and

> Republicans, churches are concerned about the welfare of people, they get involved. We have the park, but the park building is not a neighborhood gathering place. For a group of people probably The Spy coffee house is.

The word "contribution" had not been part of her lexicon on neighborhoods, so instead of a clear answer on the subject, which many of her rivals on the Alliance board had, she scrambled to come up an answer from scratch. However, when she did, it highlighted those who care "about the welfare of people," as defined in opposition to "Republicans" (who Sophia associated with the Alliance). I then asked her if the supportive housing in the neighborhood presented a burden of any kind, "there's a group home right over there, there's a[nother] group home right on the corner, [and] there used to be one over there, they were quite disturbed. But they had never bothered me as much as loud music from the apartment next door." What she did not know about was the set of theories that the gentrificationists espoused on the indirect negative effects of the disabled and ill. She had "failed" to see the connection between these people, and the health of the economy, crime, and solidarity of the neighborhood. It would not occur to her to talk about herself, a fully-employed, fully-abled person with no criminal history, as contributing to Whittier by living in a nicer than average home, or accepting the "burden" of living intimately among so many of those who were in housing that the government or non-profits were helping to pay for.

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Appendix 1: A Study of the Studies of the Whittier Neighborhood

After beginning research in the neighborhood, I was very pleasantly surprised to find that this one neighborhood (out of eighty-one in Minneapolis alone) has over the years been the subject of an extraordinary number and diversity of studies. And this goldmine of neighborhood research offered a valuable opportunity for me to evaluate how helpful this research had been to the neighborhood over the decades. Seizing the opportunity, I applied for a research grant from The Center for Urban and Regional Affairs to study the studies of Whittier, and received funding for twenty hours a week for the summer. While this study is definitely about Whittier politics, unlike the rest of the dissertation, it does not directly explore polarization, inequality, multiculturalism, and gentrification, and so it is placed as an appendix. However, it is very valuable in understanding the creation of knowledge, research, and neighborhood.

Of the forty-five documents which took an aspect of Whittier as their principal object of study, sixteen came directly or indirectly out of a the Whittier Alliance, a long-running neighborhood organization, and another fifteen from the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), an applied research center at the University of Minnesota that serves local community organizations (and provided the funding for this study). Reports on housing and general neighborhood development were tied at fifteen each. Many of the housing studies were on supportive, subsidized or affordable housing, this being the most contentious issue in Whittier. Meanwhile, the neighborhood development reports are often master plans originating out of large influxes of funds, such as the one million dollar that the Dayton-Hudson Foundation provided in 1977 that formed the Whittier Alliance, and the Neighborhood Revitalization Plan of Minneapolis in the 1990s. There were also four reports on Nicollet Ave. alone, two on business growth, two organizational assessments of the Alliance organization, and many others.[ccxxx]

My original, central question for this particular research project was: *which aspects of reports on Whittier have positively changed organizations or life in the neighborhood?* I wanted to learn from activists themselves what studies had been most useful to them. The basic method of my research was to be interviewing neighborhood people who could speak to the legacy of the studies. Interviewees would be chosen based

on who had worked with researchers, had used their findings, or had simply been in a position to comment on them. What was important to me was not how the reports were *intended* to be used by the (often) outside researchers, but the opinions of the Whittier people who would be implementing the studies' recommendations or benefiting from them.

Selecting a handful of past studies of Whittier, I came around to some of the activists I had already come to know through my dissertation field-work, and asked what they thought of each of these studies. However, I soon discovered that it was difficult if not impossible to find the original audiences and participants for these studies; most were no longer even in the neighborhood. And those who were around during the time of any particular study rarely remembered much about it, after all, they were often technical reports anywhere from four to twenty years old. But one long-time activist put it to me this way, "There is no memory of past studies … [The neighborhood] has no institutional memory; no one has looked at what has occurred."

In the face of this, I was forced to quickly retool my entire study. Instead of conducting the research through the lens of specific studies, I changed tack and came at the problem by finding *anyone* at all who could speak to studies of Whittier *in general*.[ccxxxi] Then, instead of interpreting my data only in terms of how it fit into my research paradigms, I looked to what residents wanted to talk to me about (the data) to guide me towards what I should be interested in. Instead of taking the complex stories of diverse activists and reducing them to either evidence for or against my hypotheses, I asked myself: what are the activists trying to tell me about what was important to them about their activism in the neighborhood. What I came to find meaningful was not the studies themselves, but the larger battles to solve actual neighborhood problems, of which the studies had only been but one part.

Figure 3: Author with stacks of studies about Whittier

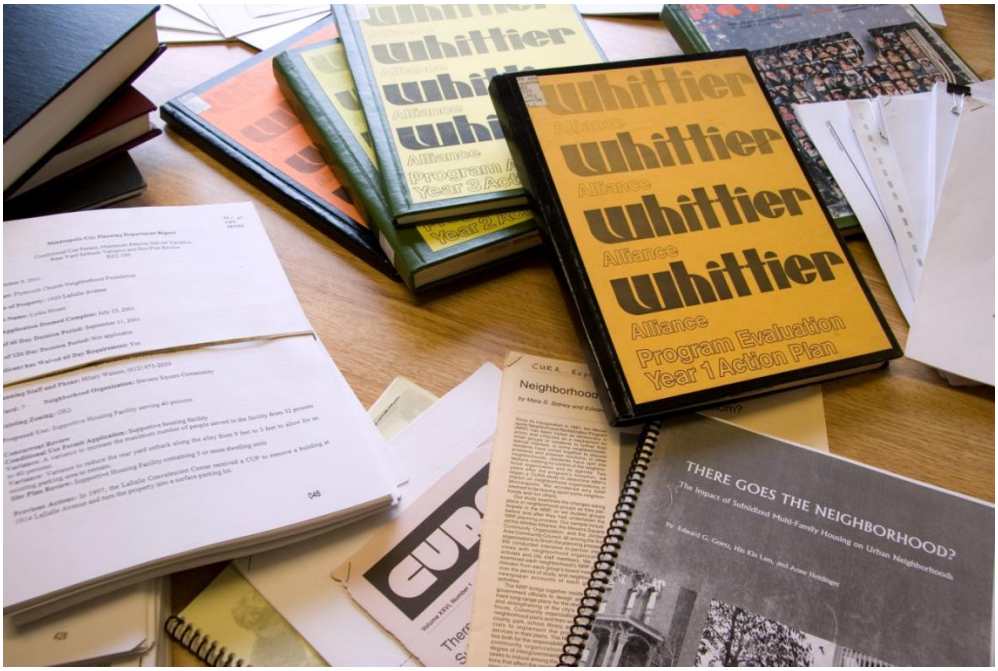

Figure 4: Various studies of Whittier

Many activists told me that what they needed from research were precise statistics on Whittier in order to determine the neighborhood's needs, such as a food shelf or a bilingual organizer. But an even more crucial product that activists wanted from research was money. Many were only interested in studies that came along with funds or other resources for implementing the suggestions in the reports. According to Shelly, as far back as the 1970s residents were already sick of studies being done on them. "That's why they rejected Dayton-Hudson originally [when it offered a large amount to study Whittier's problems and make suggestions]. If you are just going to do a study forget it … nothing ever happens is the language I heard from people [about earlier studies]. If you think you want to do a study here, … put your money where your mouth is, we want some money to implement it." And in Shelly's experience, since the Dayton-Hudson project, "We've had many studies that, um, show the same thing that we've always known in a way."

When I asked an organizer named Theresa, "Is there any research you would have liked, just to know something for the sake of knowing it," she replied, "No, not really. I can't imagine a research project for Whittier that would be useful, that doesn't mean it wouldn't be interesting." In reference to research that analyzes such immediate problems as crime in the inner-city, Theresa provided this example – "People know that the Phillips neighborhood has high crime, is in trouble, I don't know how much more we need to know about that." When I pointedly asked her, "What do you think of Academic research in neighborhoods," she replied,

> John, I would answer this question by saying that the kind of research that's important to us, is what gets funding. Foundations today have specific funding criteria. They want real viable results. If we get money to do 20 business starts, they will want to know the names of the business, what kind of products they sell, their numbers, quotes from the business person.

When I asked her what studies of Whittier she remembered, she turned the question around and gave a much more interesting answer,

> I don't remember any studies, but what is valuable, useful, from a funding standpoint, anything that will help funding proposals, and that's stats about ethnic breakdown in neighborhoods. It's valuable to know the population of Somalis or

> Hmong refugees, because that's what foundations find the popular thing to fund, poverty, low-income, at-risk youth, immigrant influx. Whittier has been lucky because they've had a lot of immigrants, so it can be leveraged to get funding.

Statistics are helpful for Whittier groups to realize on whom, on what, and where they should be spending their income, but statistics are even more helpful for *realizing* that income. According to Eric, who worked for a neighborhood organization,

> In order for any development group to be able to procure either funding from a private institution or from a public body, you have to be able to statistically and accurately provide that information to describe a need or problem. … Without the research and data and a statistical analysis, those of us who direct programs have nothing to base that on rather than a gut hunch. And when you go to a funding source and when you are trying to implement a program you need to have some type of research to support your conclusion.

The next best thing to actually receiving money for a project was receiving a professional looking document, authored by a licensed expert, which could be used to procure funding for that project. For example, 1st Avenue was a two-lane, one-way boulevard that shuttled commuters from farther south through the neighborhood to downtown, and many residents living on 1st Ave wanted to turn it into a slower, more "neighborhood-friendly," two-way street. To accomplish this they needed to come to the city planning office with a traffic study, and this required hiring an engineering firm to do rigorous, scientific studies of traffic flows.

Ed, a neighborhood activist who had been trained as an urban planner, had been involved in the successful fight to turn 1st Ave. two-way. When I asked him if the traffic study was useful – which they paid thousands of dollars for – he told me that "you can't do anything without a traffic study." The engineering firm hired to conduct the study "was great, we would tell them that we wanted them to find that the sky would fall if 1st didn't go two-way." "They seemed like they got it more than other firms we interviewed, they cared about quality of life" in the neighborhood.

In regard to the request for a proposal for how a prospective firm would do a traffic study and how much they would charge for it, Ed reported,

> It was written to pretty much, tell them what we wanted: a document that had some substance to it, some weight to it, to present to the city. A strong and long desire was to, of the neighborhood was to revert 1st Ave to a one-way street. …

> And I think that that [their traffic study] probably helped and gave some weight to the neighborhood's opinion. Ahh, often time I think that the city itself, regards neighborhood groups as kind of flighty or something. … They were really reluctant to listen to what neighborhood groups had to say. … That document helped sway them.

For Ed the kind of depictions that swayed municipal officials were the "circles and arrows" that are customary for architectural type blueprints. "I always remember that from planning school, just throw some circles and arrows on."

It appeared to me that what activists often wanted were glossy, professionally-compiled reports that essentially said the same thing that they had been saying all along, but in a format that looked impressive to the politicians and bureaucrats downtown. To persuade them to release funds, the reports attempt to demonstrate that the activists have taken the necessary steps to move further ahead with their project, and demonstrate that the project proposed is legitimate.

An example of this is the 2001, seventy-page Lydia House Task Force Report, which argued against opening up a proposed supportive housing program for the homeless and disabled. A volunteer on the task force felt that this report "made a difference, people thought we were taking it seriously, I felt that it was important." And his evidence that the report was consequential was that the foundation proposing the housing was doing "all they could to kill it, so it must have been important." He never cited to me any evidence that someone read the report and was so swayed by the raw strength of the facts that they joined the fight. What was meaningful to him was that he helped produced a document that signaled the authenticity of his campaign.

Getting one organization to donate money, one city council member to cast a vote for a motion, or one judge to rule in their favor is all some are expecting. Shelly observed that "these studies don't necessarily change city, county, state policy. All they ask is that when their issue comes before the decision making body, someone takes the half second to say aye."

After hearing all these observations detailed above, I began to think about the difference in the way that neighborhood activists talk and official documents are written. The Whittier Alliance's Phase II Action Plan submitted to the city's Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP), is an incredibly detailed, 74-page document that requested two and half million dollars. In a section detailing how 9.62% of the funds will be spent on safety, it documents that "Key survey data related to safety shows that over half the survey respondents felt unsafe on Whittier streets at night (58%)." Neighborhood meetings in Whittier never seem complete, without a testimonial from a resident about how he or she was personally victimized by crime, without some complaining about the state of crime in the neighborhood, and without a haranguing of the police to do a better job. It does not take a scientific survey (or an anthropologist) to determine that many residents are afraid of crime, but it does take a 74-page treatise to secure funds to fight it.

It appeared to me that activists felt that in order to get things done, one needs to talk to officials in their *language* and use what they recognize as the legitimate "props" of that trade. Urban planners, engineers and architects use statistics, diagrams, and their respective jargons, while practicing their work with the methodology of science and quantitative exactness. Community activists often need these external, credentialed professionals to front for their needs. Recognized experts can act as useful intermediaries in talking to the government agencies, foundations and corporations that respect the way those specialists communicate.

An example is a glossy booklet documenting the successful use of NRP Phase I funds, composed for the Alliance by a professional consultant, and released a year before the Alliance submitted their Phase II fund request. It gracefully reports that "The Whittier Housing Corporation was created in 1994, but, due to financial issues that could not be overcome, the Housing Corporation dissolved in 2000." However, leaders from the Alliance opposed to subsidized housing in Whittier have told me that the corporation died and ugly death due to incompetence and thievery by the staff. Regardless of the veracity of this charge his however is not the stuff that attracts more money for housing in the neighborhood.

The implication I draw from Whittier activists is that specialists are sometimes needed for rendering professional-looking, publishable representations of the problems and suggestions that activists typically express at neighborhood meetings. And the people that produce these reports, whether they are from a hired firm, university students, a task force of neighborhood volunteers, or employees of the Whittier Alliance, are translators.

It is not that technical expertise is unfamiliar to all activists or beyond any of them; many Whittier activists are trained in such fields as architecture, urban planning, finance, law, or public policy. It is that reports normally hold little interest for them beyond their concrete and present usefulness to pinpoint a need and obtain funding for it. Ed revealed that for the 1st Ave. traffic study, "we took it as a tool that got things done. … I never saw the final draft of it. … I don't even remember what the study said, and I guess that speaks for itself."

However, eventually I came to realize that the activists I know do have substantial memories of these past studies, but in a way that made more sense to them than it did to me when I first began this research. For example, one man told me stories from a decade ago about "slumlords" who mismanaged their apartment buildings. What were particularly useful to him were the small-scale housing or crime reports that detailed the exact location of "problem buildings." These reports assisted residents and police in fighting "absentee" landlords and "crack houses." While he could not specify what these reports were, he "remembered" them within the context of his work when he had used them. Many activists talked to me not so much about studies as street-level battles in which these reports were but one aspect.

Few residents today may be able to recall the details of the 1992 study producing Phase I of Whittier's NRP plan, but that does not mean that at the time it was released it did not have a substantial effect on their exploits. Joan, a long-time activist told me,

> I have seen all the NRP related reports regarding [Whittier's] Phase I and Phase II of NRP. Those were helpful in truly shaping the direction the neighborhood headed in terms of the commercial development pieces and in defining and directing the housing projects the neighborhood engaged in. It also re-directed the neighborhood park direction.

Eric felt that while the Alliance's Redevelopment Task Force studies on the southwest section of the neighborhood in the 1990s had been lost, they had been and continue to be influential on neighborhood development.

> We do not have hard copies of those, those are gone, they are four directors ago in the Whittier Alliance, and so those studies have long since vanished. But we still have memories, we know what the general ideas are and we continue to work on those." "I'm not so sure that it's true that people don't remember [studies], so much as the turnover in staff has been so frequent, that while a study has been conducted and was very useful for the specific purpose, the staff that was involved … has left.

The drive to get something done in Whittier has never come out of a study; it comes from the anger of a relative few who are willing to expend the blood, sweat, and tears to try make a change where they live. While reports might reflect, articulate, shape, and/or attract funds for the needs that emerge out of that anger, these needs and their solutions never reside primarily in those reports; they only temporarily rent space there.

In five years of hanging out among Whittier activists I have only once heard a research finding referred to (except in my interviews). In 2003 an undergraduate from the University of Minnesota researched "Affordable Housing in the Whittier Neighborhood" for the Alliance. His report had a dual conclusion. In comparison to the metro area, much of the housing in Whittier was affordable, because rents were significantly below the metro average. However, when compared to the people who lived in Whittier itself, because their incomes were significantly lower than metro average, the rents were not affordable for them. Three years later a neighborhood church proposed building apartments that would be "affordable" to lower-salaried working families. It was at a neighborhood meeting on this project that Frank, an opponent, announced that Whittier did not need more affordable housing because a 2003 study had concluded that there was already a great deal.

Jessica, an activist who had worked with the author on this study, did recall the dual finding of this report, but had little to say about the research. What she did express to me was that she did not want affordable housing built in Whittier, as it would bring in residents who would probably not have the money to support struggling local businesses, and probably not come to neighborhood meetings. Also, the conclusion she had come

away with from the study was not that Whittier needed lower rents, but “we need better jobs” so that the current residents could afford the current rents. What was meaningful to Jessica about the housing study was not its actual findings, methods, or impact, but what it meant in the context of her theories on how to improve the neighborhood. Neighborhood stability would be achieved by bringing in more money, and higher quality housing to a neighborhood already “over-concentrated” with supportive housing and shoddy two-and-a-half story walkup apartments.

I suspect that the memories of many of these past reports had combined with activists’ understanding of the issues involved. Studies did not exist as discrete entities, but instead, by being discussed and wielded during particular community struggles, they had helped produce the way that past current struggles are understood. For Jake these studies were generative of his recollections of fighting slumlords. While for Jessica and Frank, housing studies had become part of their knowledge that Whittier was currently “burdened” with cheap housing. The studies had become inseparable from the activism they emerged from and merged back into.

Appendix 2: One Woman Explains Her Activism

One of the more vehement opponents of co-ops in the neighborhood is a woman who let me write extensively about her life, activism, and views. She will provide the reader with a fascinating, in-depth look at the activities, perspectives, and theories of one of Whittier's most prolific activists. While this analysis of one woman is fascinating and goes far in explaining the perspectives and battles in Whittier politics, it was too long and descriptive to fit well into the arguments of any of the chapters.

Her stories are fantastic in the way that they 1) help explain how a neighborhood activist is born; 2) interweave a complex and surprising perspective on race and poverty; 3) show the heterogeneity within supposed ideological camps; and 4) represent the feelings of many activists. Allison is both a force for polarity and against it; her cantankerousness and offensive words can ruffle many feathers, but her activist energy and political skills can create common community. Allison's words are so useful at presenting perspectives common to many because she was the most forthcoming of all my informants. All the information in this section comes directly from her (except where it is obviously my opinion or analysis). While she, like we all do, must have edited herself in many ways while I interviewed her, she had much less anxiety than most of my informants about saying the wrong thing or telling embarrassing stories about herself. Also, I am sure that while many others share Allison's controversial views, they do not reveal them in public or to me for fear that I will use their words against them to paint them as insensitive, prejudicial, or devious.

In 1991 Allison and her husband bought a house in the lower-rent, southern section of Whittier; next door was a thin clapboard house. "Within the first week of moving here I was met at the end of my driveway by a man with a sawed-off shotgun in his hand under a raincoat, pointed at me, asking me not to drive down my driveway, because they needed it for their *customers*." I was interviewing her in her living room, and as she talked she pointed at different homes on her block,

> There were Crips in this house, Vice Lords in that house … I had five crack houses around me, where the new house is across the street there was a four-plex and that guy rented to prostitutes, and he would collect the rent and basically

> come over once a month, and he would actually fuck them out in the yard. And um, um, it was beyond my wildest imagination. I was freaked.

She called the crime program at the Whittier Alliance for advice, and they suggested that she simply close her curtains so wouldn't see any of it; eventually the drug dealers would move out. "My family said, abandoned my mortgage and leave." Eventually "the ones with the shotgun did leave … And … it was boarded and vacant. We thought it was coming down, it was an ugly piece of crap house." However, instead the woman who moved in turned it over to crack dealers. And she was "renting a blanket on the floor for a $100 a month for whoever wanted to take advantage of that." She had a toddler –

> So here's little Raymond, 18 months old, his house is full of crack heads, his mom is drinking, getting angry crazy, and I met her because she came over to ask for a knife so she could cut the toes off of Raymond's shoes because they were too small for him. So of course I immediately felt horrified, went to Kmart, quickly bought him shoes, and then that night she was sitting on her porch with a case of malt liquor. And I'm thinking, wait a minute, that case costs more than the shoes I had just bought. So it was a quick reality check for me about what this was all about. You know, she was a crack head and a hopeless alcoholic.

She "would crack up all night" while her son would find a corner somewhere in the house to sleep in. She did not buy diapers for him, so in the morning Allison would bring him in, give him a bath, and be "doing the Sesame Street thing with him. He was basically with us." The night before the mother was being evicted,

> I looked outside, it was one in the morning, September, it's cold out. She had already screwed up with the shelter downtown, so she couldn't go there, so I knew she was basically going to be dragging Raymond from crack house to crack house, and I just couldn't stand it. I couldn't get to sleep. I looked out on the lawn and the bright light shone down on him from the street lamp, and he's out there with little shorts, no shirt, no shoes playing in the dirt, it's cold, he's shaking, but he's playing in the dirt, and I just said, Kevin, I can't, I just can't, I can't just let this go, can't do that. But before I can go over there and ask her to leave Raymond with us, you know, we have to make a commitment, if we were going to enter this kid's life it has to be for the long run … So unless you're willing to make this long term commitment, regardless of where this roller coaster take us. My husband was right there with me. I went over the next morning and I said Mary, you can do what you want with your life, but I can't watch you do this to your kid, would you leave him with us until you get your shit together, until you find a place to live (sniffles). And she did that.

Allison however had no legal authority, and she thinks that the new neighbors next door called child protection to report the child as illegally living with Allison. So right before Christmas, they took Raymond away as legally abandoned. He eventually found his way back to his mom, but two years later she was arrested. Allison had a good working relationship with the community crime prevention officer in the precinct, who had tipped Allison off that tomorrow the police were going to arrest the mom who was living in a crack house that the police were raiding for drugs and prostitution. Allison just happened to show up outside the crack house as the mom was being carted off, "so I just took her son with me." By then the neighbors who had reported Allison were gone, "so we just kept the boy."

Years later the mom was in a public care facility waiting to die from cirrhosis. "We had him over there all the time so that he could have a quality relationship with his mom, because we thought that would help him. And it has." This was especially important because we had learned that the man Raymond thought was his father, was not, so "he lost both his parents." Allison and her husband did not at the time think that Raymond could handle being officially adopted away from his dying mother. Fortunately though, she obtained a lawyer who drew up papers that legally willed Raymond to Allison and her husband upon the mother's death. "It was the easiest way, and plus now he qualifies better for student grants than if we had adopted him."

When the mother had been evicted from next door, she was replaced by "the family from hell." This family's previous five homes had been condemned, and when they moved next door,

> They set up Sanford And Sons in this yard here. They brought broken refrigerators, boats, the old man would kind of sell parts of them for people for a little extra cash, or try to fix them, and an ugly old rickety garage back there. The daughters were all in relationships with gang bangers. They were shooting up the street and doing drugs, and made the old couple leave at night to sleep in their van while they deal drugs all night. We managed to get them kicked out five months later.

At the time Allison had moved onto the block, she had just sold her business to a large corporation and had taken a position with it. While I suspect Allison had always been a force to be dealt with, she had not been a neighborhood activist. Now however she was talking to the police every day, and they were on her block all the time. "There was a guy across the street who was lowering crack out of a bucket from the second story. And when we told that landlord that he was a drug dealer," the landlord did not believe that his nice sweet tenant would do such a thing. But when the cops came and blew down the front door, all the copper tubing had been pulled out, he got evicted, and the landlord lost the building. And "all the houses behind it, dilapidated dens of criminal inequity back there." But one by one they either burned down or the Whittier Alliance bought and rehabbed them.

> I initiated those buy outs. I worked on our Neighborhood Revitalization Plan, and implemented it. We had these enormous vats of housing dollars, and that's what we did with them. The projects that the Whittier Alliance did were the ones that neighbors initiated, people who lived around them by people who were part of the Alliance.

In reference to her activism in general, Allison told me,

> It isn't that I go out and seek it; I'm not Mother Theresa. It lives on your door step and you're given a choice to say no or help in some meaningful and I've done both. I could write a novel on all the crap I've done with people and for people on this block. I've started it several times, my child is a product of that work.

"This completely changed who I am." Before I moved here "I was such a different person in what I thought and where my values lie. I wouldn't trade this for the world. I'm so much happier where I am now. It's so diverse." Allison grew up not too terribly far away in Minneapolis, but it was an almost all white area populated by single family homes. And while she had lived for a time in India, her main residential and work experience was in white Minnesota. While neighborhood activism is no less important in white middle-class single-family neighborhoods, for Allison it took the particular context of her block to bring out the activist in her. If no one else in Whittier had cared so deeply about crime it is unlikely that she would have become so active; if the violence had reached a point where people on the block were actually being killed, even she might

have fled. It took a block that was diverse in terms of class, legal/illegal professions, attitudes towards police, and tolerance of street crime, to bring out the activist in her.

Beside the sheer quantity and audacity of her activism in the neighborhood, there two are two more aspects to her activity I find very interesting. The first feature is that while she has fought very successfully and very aggressively along with the interests of the home-owner, anti-supportive housing interests faction, she was never an insider. The second aspect is that while her views on race and inequality are quite progressive, she spews amazing venom at those very non-profits in the neighborhood that are most traditionally associated with progressive policies.

> We've never allowed black people to own or invest in anything for hundreds of years, holy shit, civil rights just came about fifty years ago, and just because it was signed on the dotted line then doesn't mean it's happened. I mean black people, Indian people, I said black, but I'm throwing them all in there, any minority group or immigrant group is marginalized and has been for years in this country, it is getting better, but only because the sheer numbers other than white people that live in the United States … In neighborhoods like mine they have no reason to feel vested here, they don't feel vested in taking care of property because they are never in an ownership position. And there hope to be in an ownership position is limited. By sheer percentages, most of those people never own anything. And Native Americans are the worst … Their percentage of homeownership is abysmal … They've never been allowed to go about it

In regard to those who are critical of immigration and immigrants, Allison theorized that

> those rich white people are scared of being taken over by the Mexicans. They want to preserve America as the nice white group that we've always known and loved. And been the advantaged population. We won't be in 20 years … And I can't wait, I hope I'm alive when it happens.

Allison negatively defines herself against those rich whites who she sees as parochial, selfish, and ignorant of history. A bit surprised by the reproach of her fellow white countrymen, I asked her why she would take pleasure in the downfall of white advantage,

> I guess I've always seen myself as a citizen of the world. I lived in Asia when I was 21 … I was in love with a rich Asian man, but he just wanted to have a white woman … My family is very interesting, my niece is married to a guy that's from

> Bulgaria, my nephew married a girl from Spain, my other nephew married a girl from Egypt, my brother in law married a girl from Greece, I have a black son, my brother and sister in law have a black daughter, so I just think we are just kind of the new millennia family.

But while Allison explains her multicultural position as coming from a family of people who choose to live intimately with difference, she differentiates herself from her cousin – "a right wing wacko" who asks why black people do not just "get a job and pull themselves up by their bootstraps." For Allison, while someone like her brother might say – "Hey we gave them freedom, now you can do whatever you want" – this ignores that while blacks might have theoretically been given the opportunity to own their own homes, generations of not being allowed to own anything had deprived them of skills needed to succeed in competition with whites.

> We wonder why so few African Americans go on to college or even graduate from high school … Because that's never been an expectation placed on them by their family because there's been no generations before them that were allowed to do that. Some of them did, I'm not going to say some of them didn't break the mold and succeed, but a majority of them didn't. If you come from a family background that doesn't value education, why are you gonna'. What's your reason, you [John] only value it because your mom nagged you to do your fuckin' homework when you were a little kid. That doesn't happen in some of these families. Or they're all working and the kids are raising themselves.
>
> I think well-intended white people think yeah, they should own homes. But they didn't come from a family of people who own homes, and watch their dad fix the plumbing or watch their dad fix the toilet, or their dad has a really nice job and can afford to hire someone to fix the toilet. Because the other side of the coin is, because of the way these people have been treated for so many years, the playing field is not level … Black kids aren't going as well in school as the white kids, it's generational … We do learn things from our parents, we do learn things from how we were brought up.

I find Allison's motivation to intervene to be a mixture of empathy for those who have been mistreated, and a palpable aversion to those whites who (largely) are responsible for making decisions in society.

> I would like to see how they [whites] operated in a field that isn't level for them. And so maybe I understand that prejudice [against minorities] because I was incredibly short all my life … I experienced it every day in my life … Unless you understand that as a white person you are already in the advantage, …

Distrust of and disgust for upper-class and do-gooder whites runs through all of Allison's positions on society. It seems that to her the problems in our communities are caused by the haves who think they know what is best for the have-nots. Allison renders a working-class persona – a no nonsense, forget the fancy stuff, go out there and work hard to get things done – sort of attitude.

Perhaps one reason Allison is so willing to take on problems on her block, is because she is so cynical about the ability of larger institutions to solve them. While she obviously loves all the hard work that the local police precinct has done on the block, and she now works for a government agency, she has very little respect for the abilities and will of most helping bodies to get anything done correctly. Her words are full of the successes she has personally had helping others, and the contemptible failures of organizations.

When telling me about the failure of whites to include blacks into middle class America, Allison characterized the welfare system (as set up by whites) as inept "institutional slavery." For example, she explained that people in need are punished for being married, because a mother on welfare risks losing her support if she gets married. But at the same time black mothers are denigrated for not being married. And if mothers receiving welfare get a job, they risk losing the day care they need. "We don't make it easy for them to get off of welfare;" instead "we" keep them either dependent on it or poor without it.

While she finds many government agencies counter-productive, she holds a more passionate judgment of many of the local, non-profit housing corporations. Project for Pride in Living (PPL) in is a Twin Cities non-profit that owns three low-income rental buildings in Whittier, and more in Whittier's poorer, blacker, neighbor across the freeway (Philips). According to PPL's website, their official aim is to "work with lower-income individuals and families to achieve greater self-sufficiency through housing, employment training, support services, and education." However, for Allison and some friends,

> We thought there were a lot of agencies that made their money off the backs of the poor. My name to this day for PPL is *Pimping the Poor for a Living*. And I call Urban Ventures, *Urban Vultures*. They [both] make large, non-profit

> paychecks off the backs of the poor people … And I'm not seeing the lives of these poor people improving … The county did a study somewhere in the nineties that showed that for every philanthropic dollar that went into the Philips neighborhood, each kid in Philips could have gotten ten thousand dollars a year. Do you know what ten thousand dollars a year could have done for each family in Philips? They could have gone to private schools, or bought a home. So I'm saying that philanthropy is great, but the pass through mechanism leaves a lot to be desired. A lot of people are making money off that dollar as it makes it way down to the poor.

Allison's suspicion of social service organizations did not only come from seeing so much money being passed around so inefficiently, but from outright fraud and false accusations. The Whittier Alliance neighborhood organization periodically puts out requests for proposals (RFP) for programs to mentor kids in the neighborhood, and people would make up youth programs just to get the funds.

> I'll give you an example of one. It was a couple, they lived in public housing, they said they had this huge youth program [in their house] where they worked with youth and computers and taught them this and that. There was a cyber café coffee shop, and they [said they] were working with them and all the computers in the coffee shop, and the kids were going to go in the afternoon and do this and that. We investigated it and the coffee shop had never heard of them … They had a PO box, and we found out where they lived in public housing, so how were they going to have the kids come over to their house? It was a total lie, but we didn't want to call them out publicly, so we just turned down their funding. But they called us racists [for rejecting their proposal].

Some programs even took the Alliance to court because the Alliance was not paying them for their services, but that was because they were not submitting the required paperwork along with their bills. One program run by African-Americans accused (the all-white board and staff of) the Alliance of not paying the bill because it was for black kids. However, "the black judge sided with us, and he lectured them for using the issue of race, when it was because of their own irresponsibility. We were completely vindicated by that, but I'm pretty leathered by that."

What was even worse for Allison than being called racist by the blacks who were running programs for inner-city youth, was being called names by nuns. St. Anne's shelter for the homeless proposed moving to Whittier, and Allison was on the board of

the Alliance when it passed a motion opposing the move. The nuns that ran the shelter told

> us that we were devils, we were going to go to hell, we were heathens, we were lesbians. The name calling, we were racists, we were bigots. … The discussion always disintegrated into the value of the program, not the zoning issue about whether it was healthy to continue to do this.

Allison did not question the merits of having a homeless shelter, what she questioned was having *yet another here*.

> I try to be a good person every day and help people when I'm called to help people. Most of my philanthropic work I do right here on my block, taking people to the food shelter. When people see stuff they call me instead of calling the police, some aren't comfortable about that. It felt terrible that the nuns thought I was just a heathen. I'm not going to diss a nun, but will diss the parishioners from St. Stephens who don't live here [but set up a men's homeless shelter next door]. We could bus people to St. Patrick's [Catholic Church] in Edina, we could end homelessness here. I appreciate your advocacy for the poor, but do it where they live.

Allison joked that she and another activist friend used laugh about how they were going to make T-shirts that said "Whittier Volunteer" on the front with a big bulls-eye on the back, because they felt like everyone was gunning for them.

> We used to get beat up so bad, either by the poverty pimps, or by people in the neighborhood, you know. That was back when being an Alliance board member was contentious. Now that it's kind of easy breezy … And the neighborhood [now] has changed economically, improved, we don't have the crime rate we had here, and it's different. Nicollet is revitalized beyond any of our imaginations. There was huge contention over Whittier park when we did that as a project. The people near the park didn't want us to enlarge the park, [they thought] that was only going to increase the drug dealing … That was the largest drop depot in Minneapolis. This was a hell hole, oh god. We worked on getting the crack dealers out of these houses. And that's when we started on [trying to open] the school. The NRP money was used to buy up the whole block [where the school now sits], many of those houses burned down. We deserved a school, shouldn't have lost it [in effect, to the effort to desegregate schools]. But we lost it because the city needed to bus the people of color here to fifty-nine different schools in Minneapolis. We just bused their kids all over hell's half acre. Next door, Stacy had five kids that were in four different schools, in all corners of Minneapolis. She couldn't be an engaged parent. I led the effort on the park issue, and I got the shit beat out of me a couple times. I was willing to take the beating, for the neighborhood. I was raised this way. My father was engaged in politics … It was hammered into me as a kid that you were given breaks, you have an obligation to

> give back, and that's what I do. I'm patriotic in the sense that this is a government of the people by the people, well honey, that means you. I believe people should vote … I am patriotic in that way. And I believe participating in your community is a responsibility.

While Allison's described her activism as done out of a sense of civic duty,

> People in this neighborhood think I get paid to work in this neighborhood. The most I ever got from the Whittier Alliance was fifty dollars. I got paid fifty dollars when I took an entire week off of my own job time, to organize the Whittier Housing Director's office because he was such a slob we couldn't find nothing there.

And while she was working for free,

> We saw tons and tons of social services getting huge grants [to serve youth in Whittier, by] basically passing the same thirty kids around from program to program and all claiming them. It was standard fair around here when they needed to take a picture for an annual report, they would herd all the little neighbor kids, I helped herd them … They would come and take pictures of ten little black kids and they'd take off and never hear from them again.

Allison was opposed to the opening of Lydia House supportive housing for disabled homeless (which was covered in chapter 2).

> I think that was self-serving. Plymouth Church got a half million dollars in developer fees for that … They made money for their congregation. Yes it was a philanthropic reason to help the poor, but to me, that's symptomatic of a problem in this in neighborhood, … We have all these gigantic church buildings that used to be filled to the brim with people who lived by them.

However, now the congregants mostly live in outlying, wealthier neighborhoods and suburbs, and Allison feels they do not want to live near the poor they want to help.

> It's an industry. Yea, you might start out thinking you're going to help someone, but is this the best way to deliver help? For white people who live in [the white suburb of] Burnsville to come in and think they know what's best for this poor black family? Because most of the people who work in these non-profits don't live in the neighborhoods. And I feel the same about the church thing … They converge on the city to help poor people under their white suburban paradigm of life, and go back out to their nice little suburb and tell all their neighbors they were helping the *poor*. I don't have a lot of respect for them … I'm not saying I know a different way.

However, she does *know* that whites who serve the in need are attempting to concentrate the poor further into poorer, inner-city neighborhoods like her own. "I think

the poor should be able to choose to live along the river. The notion that there are areas of this city dedicated for rich white people just doesn't play. I'm sorry, I don't agree with that." Unlike Minneapolis, she applauds St. Paul for spreading their public housing out, "it's much healthier." One reason is because when the unfortunate and in need become concentrated, they lack resources (such as disposable income to paint their house) to help their blighted neighborhood, and also lack enough individuals like herself that fight drug dealers.

> There's not enough of people like me in this neighborhood to help everybody else who needs the help. There are none of those people [Plymouth Church congregants] coming down here [to live]. They're writing their check maybe but that's about all they're doing … [Meanwhile] I come out of my house and work with my neighbors … It seemed like every three months we [Whittier] were getting proposals for … service related housing, and it quickly became apparent to me that we were becoming or had become … the receptacle geography for anybody who had any kind of emotional or behavior problems

In a five state region, "we had an inordinately high percentage of treatment facilities … We had statistics that thirty-five percent" of the supportive housing was for "either mentally ill or mentally retarded."

To Allison it seemed like the injustice of this was so obvious, but she had theories as to those outside the inner-city listened to them. "We educated people about" the over-concentration of the in-need in Whittier, "and gave them the statistics that I just said to you, but it didn't help." She felt one reason was that among affluent whites it was just not considered polite to discuss the over-concentration of the poor. It's not "Minnesota nice;" instead suburbanite church goers like to discuss how much they themselves are helping the poor. Plus, "they don't want" the poor in their neighborhoods, so it is easier to just ignore any requests by non-nice people to stop ware-housing the poor in certain areas. Her second theory for why you cannot educate middle-class whites about the injustice of over-concentration is because

> they believe that there is such a thing as a lower class neighborhood and a higher class neighborhood. There is a class thing here, so I don't want to say it's not all about race, it is about race, they are never going to admit that. It's also about class and I believe that there are people who just simply believe that their neighborhoods are exempt [from housing the poor]. This because they are not appropriate places for sharing the wealth with people who need assistance.

[i] "Before the late 1950s, these boundaries were merely customary and it was only in 1959 that neighborhoods were officially recognized by the City of Minneapolis" (Jacobson 2004:4) Portland Avenue was the original eastern boundary of the neighborhood, since the freeway was not built until 1967.
[ii] In the present era of anthropology where heterogeneity, transnationality, and contestation are the focus, one could say that almost all ethnographies are about multi-culture. However, I have heard a few voices in anthropology calling for greater involvement in multiculturalism explicitly, and the theme of this quiet campaign is that anthropology is uniquely qualified for this task. Richard Perry (1992) felt that anthropologists have been doing culture longer and better than others, while other disciplines have just discovered it.
[iii] "Many of us are taken aback by our empty dance cards." Perry guesses that anthropology has been left out because the "newcomer" fields to inter-cultural studies do not want to acknowledge thahet anthropologists were there before them, and also because some see anthropologists as "the handmaidens of colonialism" (Perry 1992:A52)
[iv] "When I hear the word culture, I reach for my pistol," Herman Goring is quoted as saying in the years after Germany's defeat in WWI. He felt that enemies of Germany were trying to keep Germany down by using the word culture to argue that Germany adopt a culture of internationalism and pacifism. A more recent variant is, "when I hear the word culture, I reach for my checkbook." For the anthropologist it could be, "when I hear the word culture I reach for my theory."
[v] I feel it only fair though, to inform the reader that in Aby-Lugod's massive study of a Manhattan neighborhood, "In the final analysis, we found that although social actors in the East Village were remarkably vigorous in defending their neighborhood from outside designs, the eventual outcomes in the area were ultimately determined by more powerful forces originating in larger systems" (Abu-Lughod 1994a:198). However, this does not mean that Abu-Lugod felt at any time that individuals were not important. "In this new conceptualization, people are seen as active makers of their social lives, and not passive recipients of determining ecological factors" (Abu-Lughod 1994a:186). While I do not disagree with Abu-Lugod, I feel that by separating actors from larger systems is problematic, as larger systems are largely made up of individuals actors. And in the case of Whittier, a relatively small number of actors have in fact made large impacts on the politics, architecture, and lives in Whittier.
[vi] And what would it even mean to study "White people," which groups exactly would be studied, and which would not. While African Americans or Africans are not a homogenous or unambiguous group, who has been considered white or not over the years is very messy business. A course on the Irish experience in America would make much more sense than on white people in general (I once was a teaching assistant for a course entitled, Jewish Women in America, a somewhat manageable and definable topic that made sense to teach). And if a college was to develop a department of White Studies, for the study of white people, I would not necessarily have a problem with that, however, I would be willing to bet that anyone who would do such a thing would be doing it for all the wrong reasons. The reason would probably be to whitewash history, and take out all the adverse effects that people of European decent have perpetrated upon minorities, similar to particular conservative, educational movements in places like Texas that assign history textbooks in public schools that are specifically written to promote nationalism, to ignore oppression, and to suppress critical thinking.
[vii] "Applicants must: Be a single adult who is homeless. Have special needs including mental illness, chemical dependency and/or HIV/AID. Be very low income (less than $16,110/year). Be committed to a sober lifestyle with 60 days of verifiable sobriety prior to moving in" (Lydia Apartments brochure 2006).
[viii] I learned of this perspective through the many interviews conducted with opponents of Lydia, five years after the Godzilla went up.
[ix] Minnesotans define the city of Minneapolis as "very liberal," and within Minneapolis, those living in and around Whittier are known for being even more so. This area is so left leaning that during caucus time, while the Democratic party holds multiple caucuses within the neighborhood, there is only one Republican caucus for almost the entirety of south Minneapolis (I went to it during the 2008 presidential campaign, and finding the sub group for my neighborhood, marveled at the five people attending. Libertarian leaning Ron Paul was the hands down winner, as Minneapolis Republicans tend toward intellectual, secular Conservatives). Liberal in this sense is probably akin to what some have referred to as "mainstream liberal" – people who are generally for such things as programs of race and wealth equality, protecting the

environment, gay rights, legal abortion, universal health care, a smaller military, and diplomatic solutions to international conflicts. In my experience, this would refer to almost everyone I met in the neighborhood (later in the dissertation I will discuss the diversity I found in Whittier within this broad label, including progressivism and Republicanism).

[x] "The efficiency apartments average 360 square feet each" and have individual bathrooms and kitchenettes. … Lydia Apartments is a Section 8 building. So "tenants will pay 30 percent of their income for rent. Spectrum Community Mental Health Services will provide on-site support services. CommonBond will manage the property" (Russell 5/29/03). "Lydia Apartments has an annual budget of $300,000 for supportive services … or an average of $7,500 per tenant" (Russell 2/10/03).

[xi] Steven's Square is much smaller than Whittier but the only neighborhood in Minneapolis that is denser. Steven's square shares many of the attributes and demographics with Whittier, it however has the misfortune of having not one but two sides bordered by freeways.

[xii] This is similar to what many would be familiar with among the Unitarian Universalists; Plymouth Congregational's focus is much more on the new than the Old Testament, and in particular on the compassionate and politically active Jesus rather than a strict God.

[xiii] It also included two other requests: "Because the proposed location was within an Office Residence 2 zoning district, the Foundation was required to obtain relief from certain zoning ordinances before proceeding … Supportive housing is allowed in an Office Residence 2 zoning district as a conditional use, which requires a permit from the city … [Also], the Foundation must obtain a variance from Minneapolis because Lydia House would be serving more than 32 residents" (Citizens for a Balanced Community, state of Minnesota In Court Appeals A03-190).

[xiv] While the definition of "supportive" housing became a point of contention in the Lydia debate, supportive often means that the facility has on-site staff, sometimes around the clock, who provide counseling services for such things as mental health, employment, transportation, recreation, day-to-day living, chemical dependency, hygiene, medical appointments, and connections to whatever other services they require. "A study by a task force of the Stevens Square and Whittier neighborhood associations found 18 other supportive-housing facilities within a quarter mile of Lydia House, among the highest densities in the city. The city disputes the neighborhood numbers, however. A city Planning Department study presented to the Planning Commission found only seven supportive-housing facilities in the area. The difference in the numbers comes primarily from the fact the city does not count nursing homes or board-and-care facilities -- a type of residential facility for people with mental illness or developmental disabilities -- in its spacing requirement, said Hilary Watson, the study's author" (Russell 10/22/08).

[xv] A member of the Whittier Neighbors told me that "we were ready to counter-protest when opponents of Lydia Apartments were picketing and leafleting during church sermons. But the Foundation requested we not do that, to not draw more attention to it."

[xvi] "The legal contest is expected to revolve around the issue of whether the federal Fair Housing Act requires the city to accommodate Lydia House to avoid discriminating against people with disabilities. The city and foundation assert that it does; opponents disagree. Michael Freeman, a lawyer for opponents, argues that such accommodation is not required. The law requires that such an accommodation be reasonable and necessary; Freeman argues that it is neither. The suit counts 18 residential facilities already within a quarter-mile that serve people covered by the federal law. The city said only seven are covered by the spacing requirement. Opponents said that if Lydia House goes ahead, the number of people in facilities offering services to their residents will constitute more than 30 percent of the population within a quarter-mile radius of the Lydia House site. The suit said Lydia House should more properly go in one of the 38 Minneapolis neighborhoods that don't have such facilities" (Brandt 12/29/2001).

[xvii] A reporter observed that, "the relationship between the Stevens Square Community Organization [SSCO] and the church foundation wasn't supposed to go like this. The two-year-old foundation and the neighborhood have been planning neighborhood improvements together. The foundation has helped preserve or renovate several smaller properties as affordable housing. It is working with the neighborhood on a redevelopment on 3rd Avenue S. that would produce 33 loft-style owner-occupied units, with 23 priced for people making less than half the region's median income. But the foundation signed a purchase agreement for Lydia House before bringing the proposal to the neighborhood group's housing committee, and it closed on the deal despite initial opposition from that group" (Brandt 9/17/01).

[xviii] "The majority on the Stevens Square Community Organization board said it wanted to separate Lydia House from other projects where it could collaborate with the church. The meal is being billed as a way for neighbors to meet each other, make new friends and "linger over coffee while your kids play" (Russell 1/14/2002).

[xix] Lucas, a long-time member of both the Alliance and the Neighbors, was the lone dissenting voice on the board. Four years later he told me, "I'm always on the side of the poor people." The executive board of the Alliance had called an emergency meeting of the board a week earlier and all present voted for to support the lawsuit, but Lucas said he did not get the notice, and so was not there to cast his vote against the lawsuit. Unfortunately for Lucas he had also missed the previous two regular board meetings, and the organization bylaws state that when a board member misses three meetings in a row they are automatically dropped from the board. Lucas said that others on the board tried to use this clause to kick him off. However, when he requested to be re-instated, they voted to do so (in my experience it was the usual practice of the board to re-instate members guilty of missing three meetings). Regardless of this generosity, the issue was still a particularly sore point for Lucas, particularly because after this episode, the Lydia opponents on the board would often remark that the board had voted unanimously against Lydia. Lucas had felt much disrespected by this claim each time it was uttered in his presence, and in frustration he would retort that he in fact had voted against their measure. After he had repeatedly spoken up on this, Lucas felt that "it got better" and they stopped disrespecting him in this way.

[xx] According to one activist – "So they wanted to really emphasize that this was individual people living in individual apartments and not a group home situation in a group home sense. To really emphasize a rental apartment building first and foremost with some outside support services. Which if they had lost the lawsuit, my understanding was that they would have simply moved the support services across the street to Plymouth Church, and have the building itself be apartments, and then it wouldn't have come under the supportive housing rubric."

[xxi] "A federal judge has sent a lawsuit challenging a proposed 40-bed supportive housing facility in the Stevens Square area of Minneapolis back to the court where it originated. U.S. District Judge James Rosenbaum said his court lacks jurisdiction because the residents and businesses that filed the suit didn't base their challenge on federal law" (Brandt 9/7/02). "The case started in District Court, then was shifted to federal court at the request of the foundation. But it ended up back in the court where it originated after a federal judge ruled that the plaintiffs raised no question of federal law" (Brandt 12/6/02).

[xxii] "Federal law makes it illegal to deny a dwelling to a buyer or renter due to a handicap, defined as a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. Refusing to adapt local practices to provide such people equal opportunity is discriminatory under the law. The council granted the waiver to the spacing rules as a "reasonable accommodation" required by the law. McShane ruled that the spacing ordinance would be discriminatory if it were used to deny the disabled access to a particular dwelling. He rejected opponents' arguments that the law merely is intended to keep a city from zoning out such facilities. McShane argued that the council's accommodation was necessary under federal law. He said it also was reasonable because there are so many similar facilities in the area that Lydia House won't fundamentally alter the area's character. He also found that allowing Lydia House to open won't undermine the spacing law because Lydia differs fundamentally from other facilities such as emergency housing or shelters for battered people that are covered by the spacing rule. The key difference is that Lydia House is basically an apartment aimed at long-term tenants with services available, he said" (Brandt 1/30/03).

[xxiii] This reminds me of a phrase oft used in the US during the Cuban Missile Crisis, "Cuba is only ninety miles off our coast." It is as if nuclear missiles are like the needy, you want to keep them far away. Just as you want to keep nuclear weapons out of the hands of totalitarian communist regimes, you want to keep the needy out of the hands of greedy non-profits; both cannot be trusted. And it is as if supportive housing programs are like communism, you have to contain them or they spread uncontrolled.

[xxiv] "The elimination of discriminatory, subsidized housing-siting practices, which enjoys significant political consensus, will not, by itself, lead to deconcentration of poverty. The more direct steps needed to facilitate deconcentration, through integrating the poor into more affluent communities, simply do not possess that same level of consensus" (Goetz 2003:86).

[xxv] In the late 1990s, "regional action on affordable housing once again picked up only when the severity of the housing crisis overshadowed the deconcentration issue" (Goetz 2003:112).

[xxvi] "County Commissioner Gail Dorfman supports county funding of Lydia House, she said. Minneapolis shouldn't have too high of a concentration of supportive housing, she said, and then qualified her answer. 'Something about it bothers me -- that somehow these people are different,' she said" (Russell 3/25/2002). "Plaintiffs said Lydia House would hurt property values and make the area less desirable for development. The ruling said Lydia Apartments was 'likely to have a beneficial effect on the area'." (Russell 2/10/03).
[xxvii] At least the words "Republican" or "Democrat" harken way back to a particular political viewpoint connected to those words, even though those original meanings have been lost in time. Even Green Party has a natural connection to those it signifies (even though the letters that come together to form "green" itself is a totally arbitrary and conventional signifier with no natural connection to the hue it refers to). And Libertarian, at least refers to an older meaning of Liberal that advocates for freedom from government intervention.
[xxviii] also, see Goetz 1996:6.
[xxix] "True choice in the housing market means more than providing a poor household with a rent subsidy … Such a voucher does not put a bus line in front of the building, relocate the community college or affordable day care nearby" (Goetz 2003:8).
[xxx] "Though overall employment for the [Twin Cities] metro area has remained consistently low, … core areas of Minneapolis experienced 18 percent unemployment in190 – a rate two and a one-half times the rest of the region. Lack of transportation and low wages in newly created jobs continue to prevent central-city residents from taking advantage of the growing labor shortage regionally" (Goetz 2003:91).
[xxxi] The cost of demolishing the building alone could never be recouped by the meager profit from one house. That is why almost no a single houses or even duplexes have been built in the area for decades. Demolition costs could be recouped by a multistory condominium, but that would be tearing down a usable multistory building to build another. Renovation into non-profit housing would be cheaper than demolition and construction, and the funding required for this would come from various government grants and tax breaks, free money to which for-profit construction would not have access.
[xxxii] In contemporary American politics it is perhaps most often used by reactionary whites decrying their victimhood at the hands of "reverse discrimination. Whites reacting against the civil rights movement make the claim that today, they, and no longer ethnic minorities, are suffering at the hands of racial discrimination. Many whites feel that affirmative action is a prejudiced policy that unfairly gives ethnic minorities (or women or homosexuals) jobs and college scholarships over more qualified whites. The problem in their view, is that racial disadvantages against minorities like blacks have been redressed in the modern era, and we live today on a racial "level playing field." On this two-dimensional surface, government and corporate policies giving minorities preferences unfairly turns them into the advantaged ones. And discrimination on behalf of a group deeply offends their beliefs in individual rights, where everyone should be judged according to their personal attributes. This ideology though is not so much that any person should have just as much chance of success as any other, as there should be no (official) policies that give advantages to anyone. Another example of discursive reversal exploited by the majority is by the Christian conservatives at savewalmart.com. They claim that the "radical homosexual agenda" is blackmailing businesses like Wal-Mart, by threatening boycotts and political action against them if they do not join the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce. Their flyer calls for Christians to "come out of the closet" to fight for what they believe. In the fight against the war in Iraq, the left tries to break the right's monopoly on support for the military, with the popular bumper sticker, "Support our troops, Bring them Home." And when President George W. Bush attempted to remake America in the image of privatization using his slogan of the "ownership society," a critic joked that this ownership society meant that people won't own anything but they will be on their own.
[xxxiii] The neoliberal compromise seemed to have been made at the expense of inner cities, "What emerged .. were renewed emphasis on local discretion, as seen in the 1974 Housing and Community Development Act, and a new way of delivering subsidized housing that relied on individual tenants and the market to achieve dispersal" (Goetz 2003:49).
[xxxiv] "The "spatial-mismatch" hypotheses suggests that lower-income populations are trapped in economically obsolete inner cities away from the dynamic growth centers of the economy that are now increasingly located in suburban and non-metropolitan areas" (Goetz 2003:22). But of course Whittier activists would never say that Whittier was not poised to be a dynamic growth area.

[xxxv] There has been a good amount of research over the years that has tried to measure the effect on the poor of living among a high concentration of other poor, and while the evidence is often not conclusive or significant, it does seem to indicate an undeniable negative effect; neighborhood matters. For one summary on the evidence see Goetz 2003, p. 26-9, 39-40, 67-75.

[xxxvi] She falters here, and her voice trails off at the end, as if she is not real sure of what she is saying, or aware that what she is saying is sensitive. See Ruth Frankenburg, White Women, Race Matters, 1993, on rhetorical incoherence, and Jennifer Pierce, 2003,"Racing for Innocence."

[xxxvii] "All policy approaches invoke a story line of cause and effect a language that emphasizes some factors and neglects others. The discourse surrounding the deconcentration of poverty accentuate the behavioral pathologies of the poor and places the focus for change on the poor themselves. This language is easily adapted not only by conservatives, who argue that the poor must change their behavior, but also by liberals , who argue that the poor must change their location in order to improve their lot (and, in the end, their behavior will change, too)" (Goetz 2003:132).

[xxxviii] The judge also said that "the inability of opponents to post the" housing program's "requested $2 million bond for a delay also worked against halting construction" (Brandt 2003).

[xxxix] "Over time, popular attention to the entire issue has moved away from causes and scope and focused solidly on the behavior of the poor in response to concentrated poverty. The shift was facilitated by several factors, two of which stand out – the drift to the Right in the policy environment of the 1980s and 1990s, and the recent "moral panic" in response to drugs and drug-related violent crime" (Goetz 2003:30).

[xl] However, as Bourgois documents in In Search of Respect, all the talk about how incredibly dangerous minority ghettos are, is part of what keeps whites out of minority neighborhoods, and this helps to maintain urban segregation.

[xli] As an object of reflection, *gentrification* has its academic theories/tropes/debates, its quasi academic theories/tropes/debates, and its folk theories/tropes/debates. The scientific side includes the sociological debates over such things as, is it caused from the production side or the consumption side of the economy; is it an unintended consequence of changing political/economic times, or is it the deliberate result of the rich neglecting neighborhoods so as to exploit their low land price later (I did not do research on these, and will not engage with them except to comment on the stories they tell). The quasi scientific theories are found at business schools and think tanks, as exemplified by Richard Florida's books on The Creative Class, about how growth and renewal are created by an elite minority of people in technology, the arts, and media. And the popular theories are mixes of these two types along with its own base of first-hand knowledge, where often people either complain about yuppies forcing out the poor and/or artistic, or brag about the gays and young families who are making a "bad" area nice and exciting.

[xlii] In Bourdieu's typology, this representation of the gentrificationists would correspond to the petit-bourgeois – those who have been "called" to potentially join the bourgeois class but not yet actually been "chosen," even though they know they ought to be (Bourgeois 1984:339). [New petite bourgeois 354]

[xliii] "3.2 percent of the city's apartments have been converted to condos since 2000 — about 178 projects accounting for 2,334 units" (MacKenzie 2006). "Using 2000 census data, the city found a surplus of 28,537 units for people making 50 percent of the metro median or less. That makes 1,350 units lost to conversions seems like a trifle -- buttressing converters' claims that they are merely removing apartments from a soft rental market. However, that overall surplus masks a specific shortage. There's a 42,036-unit surplus for people making 30-50 percent MMI -- but 13,499 too few units for those making less (no more than $23,100 for a family of four). The city estimates four in 10 households at 30 percent MMI can't find units they can afford. Meanwhile, city's highest-income crowd -- at or above 80 percent MMI -- also faces a shortage: 44,583 units, according to the city report. That's pushing them to buy the surplus units in the 30-50 percent MMI range. However, the city's poorest do not have that luxury … Presenters used the example of a 3540 Hennepin Ave. S. conversion. There, one-bedrooms rented for $750 a month. Once converted, those units sold for $183,900, with monthly mortgage payments ranging from $1,228-$1,462 per month, according to Financial Freedom Realty, a conversion developer that is doing the 3540 Hennepin project … "a mass of conversions in the early ['80s] saw a mass of foreclosures" (Stratton 2005).

[xliv] An irony here is that at the same time the neighborhood is being sold as full of the young and hip, it is also being sold as old, trying to get the potential buyers to associate themselves with the veneration and legacy of the higher classes that lived here almost a century ago.

[xlv] I never actually noticed any Whittier activist driving an expensive car or donning any particularly high class anything. In fact, it only occurs to me while writing this five years after doing the interviews, but this could be one of things that the incredibly polarized camps in Whittier do share; they are not superficial when it comes to consumer goods, who you know, what influence you have, or how much you make. None of them ever brag about anything except what they have accomplished in the neighborhood. From casual observation of the people of Kenwood, the southwest neighborhoods, and the suburbs, whom I see often at places such as bars, playgrounds, stores, and my daughter's preschool, the people and activists of Whittier are strikingly different in their level of conspicuous consumption and casual conversation.
[xlvi] He also pointed out the impersonal market forces that had since come to the neighborhood's aid. City housing prices and the metro economy had very strong growth, bringing commerce and development to the area. "Fortunately, economics have overcome the problems and it seems good now."
[xlvii] A 2001 political science survey of 1,200 adult residents of southern California of different racial groups, argues that the new dividing line in to pay attention to American politics is homeownership rather than race/ethnicity. Asking how positive respondents felt about each of the five issues in their area - jobs, housing, transportation, education, and safety, as well as asking, "how would you rate your overall quality of life in your community," the researchers found that the big difference in answers was not between racial groups, but between homeowners and renters (10). It was no big surprise that homeowners gave more optimistic answers than renters, what was interesting was that homeowners as a group were statistically more alike than any particular racial group of homeowners were alike (22) (i.e., there was more variation among Latino homeowners than homeowners in general; all homeowners gave similar answers regardless of race) (While among the more pessimistic renters, minority renters are much more pessimistic than white renters). "Being a homeowner diminishes the probability of giving a negative grade in the "Jobs" area by 3.35%, in the "Housing" area by 4.78% and in the "Public Safety" by 2.48%" (18).
[xlviii] In what is known as "The Culture War Speech" at the 1992 Republican National Convention Pat Buchannan declared that "there is a religious war going on in our country for the soul of America. It is a cultural war, as critical to the kind of nation we will one day be as was the Cold War itself … The agenda Clinton and Clinton would impose on America — abortion on demand, a litmus test for the Supreme Court, homosexual rights, discrimination against religious schools, women in combat — that's change, all right. But it is not the kind of change America wants. It is not the kind of change America needs. And it is not the kind of change we can tolerate in a nation that we still call God's country."
[xlix] *"The map is not the territory"* - semanticist Alfred Korzybski
[l] Wuthnow's larger point is that although liberals and conservatives do differ on how important certain social problems are, and differ on their specific religious beliefs, these identities only correlate weakly with broad underlying orientations like moral worldviews and life values. Wuthnow finds that in spite of how the media has portrayed cultural conflict in America, conservatives do not significantly more value "family, community, and moral standards" than liberals; nor differ significantly on the importance of making money and being successful, or even paying attention to feelings (Wuthnow 1996:320). Wuthnow's findings support Miller and Hoffman's on the exaggeration of the "culture wars." Both argue against James Davidson Hunter's view of a deep and clear divide in America between two competing cultures, the conservative and liberals, each holding core worldviews and values that account for their opposing political positions. However, Hunter does feel that elite voices of organizations and politicians are more dogmatic than individuals', and that media effects do to some extent polarize the debate.
[li] "Democrats and Republicans have sorted out on issues relating to homosexuality and more recently on stem cell research. But identifiers with the two parties remain less differentiated than the public statements of party elites would suggest" (Fiorina 2008:580).
[lii] While votes may be polarized, voters may not (Fiorina:574).
[liii] An outsider might ask the question, "ok, they have different beliefs about neighborhood, housing, and social services, but placed in a different context, such as living in a far suburb, or all being at a city-wide Democratic Convention, an environmental rally, or the annual Gay pride fair, they would get along swimmingly and no one would know the difference." No, I suspect that the core members of each faction would never be friends in another context. While in another world they would not dislike each other, and would even work together to strengthen such things as neighborhood autonomy, gays rights, public schools,

community fairs ,historical preservation, or park restoration, they also would never connect with each other on any deep level, or even enjoy each other's company much.

[liv] "Neighborhood activists had a theory for their new approach – deconcentration of the poor" (Goetz 2003:125).

[lv] By 1960, "As a high density, low-income inner-city neighborhood, populated primarily by young people who don't live there long, Whittier developed problems … It was on the brink of serious and rapid decline" (Partners 1981:21or18?). "In the late 1960s the Whittier Community Organization was formed, and shortly after that a second group named the Whittier Action Council. When large discounters began to threaten the viability of the neighborhood's major businesses, small business owners organized. An entity called the Whittier Development Corporation was also formed about this same time" (Holt: section 2:2). In the late seventies the Twin Cities industrialist/philanthropist Bruce Dayton (of the Dayton-Hudson Department Stores, and whose son became the governor in 2010) was committed to public-private partnerships for the betterment of society, and his Dayton-Hudson Foundation decided to help Whittier by doing a study of the neighborhood's needs. While today the day to day, year to year income for Whittier neighborhood organizations deals in very meager amounts, at times in the neighborhood's history a relatively unimaginable amount of money has arrived at its door. When Dayton-Hudson thought it made a very generous offer to identify the Whittier's needs, and tie it to some funds to rejuvenate the North East quadrant of the neighborhood, activists balked at this largess. They only accepted Dayton-Hudson's help when it had increased the amount and scope of its offer, agreeing to commit one million dollars to help create a high-quality unified, neighborhood group that could carry out a long-term, comprehensive plan for neighborhood improvement. In 1978, in an ill-fated and much regretted decision, the city council found itself forced into placing a huge Kmart right smack in the middle of Nicollet Ave, between 29th Street and Lake Street, effectively cutting off Whittier's commercial corridor. The neighborhood resistance to this brought together an assorted group of residents and business owners, forming the basis for the first neighborhood organization, the Whittier Alliance. The Alliance itself though was created through a focused, and incredibly ambitious and well-funded endeavor. The newly formed Whittier Alliance "was designed to be a true alliance among ten Whittier neighborhood groups who represented the major neighborhood constituencies. Initially each group was invited to name two people to serve on the Alliance board of directors. Because not every group took that prerogative as the first board was seated in 1979, the notion of a true alliance was short-lived. The immediately became a hybrid form of ex-officio appointments and persons elected "at large" which is the structure still used today … For at least four years (1977-81) the Whittier Alliance's activities rolled smoothly forward on a carefully crafted cycle of planning and evaluation sustained by periodic two-day retreats. Published reports pridefully tallied huge numbers of volunteer hours contributed to various community revitalization tasks" (Holt: section 2:3).

[lvi] In the service of understanding why Whittier politics became so polarized in the mid-1990s, and what "homeowner" interests are, I will relate these various theories of how money was the source of the revolution. However, I use these theories in two ways, in one way I take them at face value, as legitimate analyses of polarization and Whittier politics, but at the same time, these theories are actors themselves within Whittier politics, and as such have had an effect on Whittier polarization. Since these theories circulated and grew within Whittier, they are sort of like self-fulfilling prophecies.

[lvii] In would not be until 1994 that it was discovered that "Not only had revenue assumptions been overly optimistic, but there was virtually no money set aside for ongoing maintenance or capital reserves" (Holt:5).

[lviii] The precinct commander "said he thinks one reason Whittier is again a haven for prostitution is because johns and prostitutes need a commonly understood place to go. Whittier, with its previous history, a smattering of restaurants and nightlife and now no public outcry, fits the bill" (Furst).

[lix] According to Goetz (2003:83-5), the research shows that scatter-site public housing, not the old high-rise monsters, has little impact on real estate prices in the "receiving" community. And while some studies have indicated a slight rise, overall the research is inclusive, especially because effects "depend highly on the local context and type of neighborhood" (85). But this is just the point of the protesters, Whittier is uniquely over-saturated with subsidized housing, in particular it is brimming with supportive housing that shelters the most vulnerable and incapacitated,

[lx] I tape recorded my interview with her fourteen years later, and I do not think that was the most comfortable experience of her life. At the end of the interview, she let a sigh of relief and said, "ok, we're done forever, right?" The ethnographer's most potent tool is that people love to talk about themselves, but not everyone does.

[lxi] Knowledge is a funny thing, it works best when it makes your enemies look bad, and your allies good. This is something we hear much of these days with the rise of Fox News and MSNBC; the media is abuzz with stories about how people gravitate towards sources of information that confirm what they already know, and discount information that conflicts with their views.

[lxii] Seeing such an interesting reaction on her face upon hearing the name of this person from the past, I dropped a few other names I knew of out of the past. I found it interesting to see who she had heard of and who she had not, who she had favorable impressions of who she did not. For example, one man who I assumed she would dislike because he had been a leader of the camp diametrically opposed to hers, she actually thought highly of.

[lxiii] Nothing breeds division more than accusations of racism, but most Americans have no idea what classism is, so this is not a salient signifier in America.

[lxiv] I had been focused on the conflict between opposing theories of community building, but it is here in the history that it began to become evident to me that the problem was much more than just differing theories. As many in the neighborhood had been telling me all along, it was also a matter of personality, leadership style, and political strategy. Studying worldviews can only explain so much, before the researcher needs to attend to the particularities of individual personalities and acts. From general talk I had been abstracting philosophies and symbols, and had been keeping my ear to the ground for overall doctrinal patterns, but not attending to how actual individuals or conversations were creating polarization, changing housing, or restructuring an organization. Place matters, worldview matters, and symbols matters, but so do the quixotic characteristics of particular individuals.

[lxv] "In 1983 Walk-up efficiencies rented at $247 in Whittier and at $237 citywide, one bedrooms were at $309 in Whittier and at $319 city-wide" (Alliance 1985:2). And in 1985 the those that the Alliance had tagged as "problem buildings" were being sold on average every 7.5 years (Alliance 1985:2).

[lxvi] "Condominiums are multi-unit dwellings with privately owned residences and shared common areas. Condominiums are classified as real property, meaning that buyers own the deeds to their dwellings … Co-ops are not considered real property. When you buy into a co-op, you become a shareholder in a corporation that owns the property. As a shareholder, you are entitled to exclusive use of a housing unit in the property" (Smith 2010).

[lxvii] However, landlords in Whittier are rarely wealthy, and even more rarely do they hang out in upper crust circles. Whittier landlords are mostly from working class backgrounds, often manual laborers themselves who use their skills to maintain their properties. The smaller rentals are often owned by people who live right in the neighborhood, such as renting out an old, student-style shared house, a brick four-plex, or a the other half of the duplex in which they reside. These landlords make the lion's share of their earnings from their regular full time jobs, only supplementing income from rentals.

[lxviii] "The new co-op structure and rent increases were a hard sell against the commodification culture that was growing in Cedar-Riverside. New co-op residents, lacking knowledge of the neighborhood's history and co-op philosophy, did not see themselves as collective owners. Instead, they saw housing ownership as external to themselves, and were more interested in cheap rents than community control."

[lxix] From a state-wide or metro-wide perspective, from way up high, looking down at the state or even the eleven country metro, Minneapolis must look like a swath of poverty compared to its western suburbs. The metro policies and reports then were aimed at gradually, gingerly, and conscientiously shifting the subsidized housing out of the city into its suburbs. But remember, half a mile from Whittier, a distance I sometimes walk in a matter of ten minutes, lies some of the most expensive residential real estate in the Upper Midwest. From the perspective of someone in Whittier, the extreme discrepancy between services for the in need in Whittier and in Kenwood is very discernible, vs. someone looking at maps showing only differences between cities.

[lxx] This is message linking those people that get subsidized with problems, and the vigilant with solutions, absolutely resonated with many concerned homeowners in the area, but Jackson's message is also one of tolerance, respect, and understanding. "We're not talking about whether they are bad people or not, but

some have bad behaviors … and have drug problems. Do they have problems, sure, are they able to stop problems, absolutely." He does not vilify the poor or needy, nor does he blame them directly for the problems in the neighborhood, or even their own problems.

[lxxi] "Incarnation House provides housing and counseling services for low-income women from chemically dependent or abusive backgrounds, and their children. The mothers and their kids can stay at the residence for up to a year" (Grow 1995)

[lxxii] The first recommendation was to lengthen the board terms from one to three years, as the short terms were creating "unstable conditions." Another recommendation to eliminate multiple board representatives from the Business Association Committee however was not enacted. "Reduce the number of board members from 30 to 25." "The Alliance currently has thirteen corporate, operations and public policy committees. Except where committees are named and their purposes defined in by-laws, none of the Alliance's committees has a statement of purpose, job description, strategic plan or work plan."

[lxxiii] Similar to how the neocons in the Bush White House saw the Democratic party as doing little more than constantly running smear campaigns against them, and preventing the democratically-elected president from realizing the mandate he had been given by the American people, to create an ownership society in America and freedom in Iraq.

[lxxiv] Another common complaint was that subsidized housing de-stabilizes neighborhoods. However, while only 23% of these residents had lived in their units for less than one year, 48% of the total population of the neighborhood studied had (3). For the charge that subsidized housing in Minneapolis was attracting poor people to come live there, "the data show that a larger percentage of subsidized tenants than of other neighborhood residents had previously lived in the city" (4). The projects do however attract people within Minneapolis and even within their neighborhoods that have lower incomes than their average neighbor (4), (but isn't this the point of subsidized housing?). 56% of subsidized housing residents are receiving "earned income" (working at a job), while 75% of the total number of neighborhood residents are, but "the percentage of households receiving public assistance is virtually identical between study site residents (44.8 percent) and neighborhood residents (42.1 percent)" (4).

[lxxv] However, my study goes much further, by showing what lies behind and leads to this ideology, including activists' personal experiences, personal fears and joys, idiosyncratic sentiments, detailed theories of how neighborhoods work, and relationships to one another, as well as the heterogeneity within this ideology and the contestation of it. For example, the previous chapter on the Lydia House battle showed what activists mean by "over-concentration" of poverty, and showed that this ideology is based on their understanding of people as contributors and non-contributors.

[lxxvi] This of course begs the question, to what extent did his arguments subconsciously affect my own?

[lxxvii] "The findings of this research indicate that nonprofit-developed subsidized multi-family housing is a very effective community development strategy; it increases nearby property values while reducing crime."

[lxxviii] Other interventions include two ethnographies of East Harlem in Manhattan – In Search of Respect, and Barrio Dreams. Even though Barrio Dreams' study of community activism seemed to be attempting to counter-act the portrayals of violence and criminality that are written into In Search of Respect, both books make serious arguments against constructing poor minority neighborhoods as essentially "bad" places.

[lxxix] A challenge facing me though, is that the representations of danger being propagated by both suburbanites and by many Whittier activists, were not simply sets of diaphanous knowledge that could be swept aside like some old cobweb, instead these knowledges were strongly rooted within political and social contexts, and were in the service of self-interested motivations. I suspect that suburbanites are interested in painting themselves as the rational, family-oriented people in relation to the insanity of the inner-city, and they were also interested in not being responsible financially for society's disinvestment in inner-cities. And many Whittier activists were interested in making Whittier look as dangerous as possible, in order to give credence to their call for gentrification and keeping out "even more" of the poor.

[lxxx] "Violence and fear are entangled with processes of social change in contemporary cities, generating new forms of spatial segregation and social discrimination" (Caldeira 2000:1).

[lxxxi] A traditional social science answer might be similar to this, but worded as – the crime activists are constructing the idea of a "dangerous class" of people in the neighborhood, in order to manufacture fear (or a moral panic), that would incite the middle-classes to ramp up their technologies of governance in order to

surveil, discipline and continue marginalizing the have-nots, for the purposes of maintaining the racial, socio-economic hierarchy.

[lxxxii] Caldeira however theorized the how, the why, and the what. By documenting the deep fear the middle-class had of burglary, attack, the poor and outsiders, she recognized a real sense of loss that lay behind their visceral fears. Caldeira theorized that their recurrent talk of crime, and the blame they placed for the crime on the poor of the slums and rooming houses, was the only way they knew how to express their disappointment with the economic disasters of both their country and their own finances. "Crime offers a language for expressing the feelings related to change in the neighborhood, the city, and Brazilian society more generally" (31). So when middle-class and working class residents spoke of the "infestation" (30) of their city from the poor from the north of Brazil, and accused them of being "invaders" destroying their neighborhood (32), they used these words and stereotypes because it was the only mode they knew of for speaking their resentments towards the many failures of their political-economy. In Caldeira's interviews, "discussions of crime almost always lead to reflections on the country. Economic crisis, inflation, and unemployment were repeatedly associated with violence by people who were losing their hope of social mobility" (53). When they "misrecognize" the poor, the slum dwellers, and the racially colored as essentially criminals, they were "symbolically reordering" the world (32-34), in order to justify segregation, neighborhood barriers, exclusion, and a suspension of human rights, resulting in greater stratification and a general failure of democracy. It is tempting to apply Caldeira's theory to Whittier crime fighters, and IF I was to do it, the next paragraph would be how.

Discussions on crime almost always lead to resentment towards the neighborhood's affordable and supportive housing, as well as towards the non-profits that bring in these kinds of housing, and also toward city hall because it fails to stop these non-profits from over-concentrating the poor in Whittier. The very moment when crime-fighting home-owners in Whittier took over the board in 1992, Minneapolis "was a city in fear – in fear of losing its status as one of the most livable urban communities in the nation … [and] of being well governed and managed … By the 1990s, however, this tidy sense of well-being was eroding fast" (Goetz 2003:95). It was the *language* of crime that offered the anxious a way of expressing this fear of loss of status and order. However, this talk misrecognizes the poor, the addicted, and the disabled as, if not criminals themselves, then attractors/allowers of crime. This dynamic symbolically reordered the world into one where the poor are linked to crime and disorganization, and subsidized/supportive housing is linked to neighborhood degradation. And this justified policies by anxious homeowners of excluding non-profits and their clients from Whittier, resulting in greater segregation and a failure of democracy.

However, I am not convinced that crime fighters in Whittier are not in some ways, reducing segregation, revitalizing the neighborhood, and enhancing democracy. Also, as informed crime activists instead of just crime victims, my informants have a language for crime, for neighborhood renewal, and for many other national/global issues; it is not that they use talk of crime because they have no other vocabularies for their frustrations and anxieties. Instead they have detailed theories on how exactly crime is linked to the poor, their housing, the economic industries that create the housing, and the political complexities that structure all this.

[lxxxiii] Still, my research also finds itself as part of an academic trend Escobar identifies and promotes that is interested in "finding place at work, place being constructed, imagined, and struggled over" (Escobar 2001:143). I join with Escobar on this point for pragmatic reasons – an anti-essentialist portrayal of Whittier is a more accurate and productive representation of it. It gives a picture that more logically allows me to theorize about the activities going on within it, and this allows the reader a greater understanding of inequality, multiculturalism, and community.

[lxxxiv] According to the 2010 Census, however, the previous two censuses had Whittier at over 15,000.

[lxxxv] "Officially, robbery is defined as the taking of property through the use of or the threat of force. Thus, robbery is a violent crime and an important indicator of public safety. There is often confusion about what constitutes a robbery. Informally, people often speak of their house being robbed – which would be officially recorded as a burglary – or having property stolen without force – which would be officially recorded as theft" (Cahill 2010:1). Robberies are also a good measure because while the number of robberies can vary greatly from week to week, it remains relatively constant from year to year. Significant changes over long periods of time in a neighborhood do of course occur, but are slow in coming, represent gradual trends, and are influenced by larger factors such as overall reductions in crime nationally and

regionally. Murder counts, being far fewer in frequency, do fluctuate more by year, and cities find it very embarrassing when a string of bad luck, or a few workplace or domestic massacres by mentally ill individuals, push their annual count way up. Robbery also follows a seasonal pattern; those who rob, like everyone else, tend to like milder weather to get out and about.

[lxxxvi] For my university campus, which holding one of the largest universities in the world and spanning the Mississippi is quite a massive area holding tens of thousands of people daily, there has not been a murder in at least the last ten years, and while there are rapes and robberies, in 2012 there was only one rape, three robberies, and one aggravated assault.

[lxxxvii] Raw numbers calculated from Langan, 2004.

[lxxxviii] Or a liberal arts college in Des Moines, Iowa. In a study of the campus volunteer patrol that was in effect from 1980-1985 (Troyer 1988:400), "The campus security office reports little change [in crime] from 1978 to 1985. Further, most of the incidents involved minor matters … These reports indicate that 1.5 serious crimes took place per year … The crime rate in the area surrounding the campus has remained steady or has decreased slightly since 1978 … Yet a survey of students and patrol members conducted in the spring of 1981 found that 65 percent of respondents believed that crime was a serious problem on campus."

[lxxxix] "Neighborhood crime not only deprives individuals (victims, offenders, and other fearful residents) of the opportunity to reach their full potential, but it deprives society of its capacity to be fully functioning" (Schuck 2006:67). "Individuals with fewer material resources, including transportation, are less mobile and thus would appear to be more reliant on the social networks in their geographic neighborhood. Hence, the geographic neighborhood may place a more crucial function for individuals with fewer resources" (Schuck 2006:68).

[xc] There are two 15 year-old victims, one 17 year old, seven 18 and 19 year olds, eighty-eight in their 20s, forty-two in their 30s, twenty six in their 40s, fourteen in their 50s, three in their 60s, one in their 70s, one in their 80s.

[xci] 15-17 year olds comprised 1.6% of victims and 1.6% of residents, 18-24 29%/19.2%, 25-34 36.6%/33.2%, 35-44 16.1%/13.7%, 45-54 11.3%/9.5%, 55-64 3.8%/5.7%

[xcii] And since robberies clump late at night, these age ratios better represent those leaving a restaurant or bar late at night, whether they drove from a suburb, biked from another neighborhood, or walked from a few blocks away. But it may not be a coincidence that the majority of both those who choose to live in Whittier and those who choose to go out in Whittier, are in their twenties or early thirties. Half the Whittier-ites are between 18 and 34 (52.4%). For every one robbery victim between the ages of 15 and 17 years old, there are 73 Whittier residents. 1/48 for 18-24yo's, 1/67 for 25-34yo's, 1/63 34-44yo's, 1/62 for 45-54yo's, 1/111 for 55-64yo's, and since there is only one victim in the next three age groups statistics are not meaningful for these ages.

[xciii] And then there's sex; there were 57 female and 129 male robbery victims. While there are almost a thousand more men in the neighborhood than women (immigrant labor?), this skew probably is accounted by, again, who is out on the streets late at night. Unfortunately police do not record the victims' education, length of residence, language spoken at home, household type, occupation, earnings, work destination, household income, poverty level, or vehicles per household, if so I could correlate these census categories for Whittier with Whittier victims.

[xciv] A year later there was a major media event around a white suburban man out for the night with friends in the popular theater district who was randomly killed when a man shot across the street at another man he had had a dispute with. Mayor Rybak assured people that the theater district was a safe place for people to come and have fun. As a cheerleader for Minneapolis businesses, it is his job to assuage the fears of people who he would bring their money to Minneapolis. And again he was correct. While the stories about this random act created a panic, this was incident in the face of hundreds of thousands of visits to the theater district.

[xcv] "Some might object that by focusing on conventional, interpersonal homicide, we are defining the concept of murder too narrowly. In the United States, thousands of people are killed every year by unsafe products, dangerous working conditions, and illegal hazardous waste disposal, and these irresponsible corporate actions are not usually understood to be "homicidal" in nature. By excluding these acts of

corporate violence from our analysis, we may be reinforcing the erroneous impression that murder is something done mostly by the poor and powerless rather than the rich and powerful" (Beckett 2003:25).

[xcvi] "An FBI report shows that of the 12,664 Americans murdered in 2011, less than 1,500 – or 12 percent – were murdered by a stranger" (Bashida 2013). Truman (2010:9) found that "Strangers were offenders in about 39% of all violent victimizations during 2010, a percentage that has declined from 44% in 2001 … From 2001 to 2010, close to half of all victims of violence knew their offenders … In 2010, the percentage of violence perpetrated by strangers and nonstrangers varied by the victim's sex. Females knew their offenders in 64% of violent victimizations committed against them, and males knew their offenders in 40% of violent victimizations against them ... Females were more likely to be victimized by someone they knew (a nonstranger) than by a stranger for all measured violent crimes except robbery."

[xcvii] "The news media have also been more likely to report instances of violent crime committed by strangers than those committed by acquaintances or intimates (especially domestic violence) (Reiner, 1997). As a result, criminal offenders have typically been portrayed as predatory outsiders rather than as friends and family members. Over the past century, these predatory criminals have been depicted as ever more barbaric and irrational, and their crimes are presented as more and more violent and unpredictable (Surette, 1994, pp. 134-135; see also Barak, 1994). Sexual violence, for example, has been covered extensively by the news media, but the cases deemed newsworthy have been almost exclusively those involving predatory strangers as suspects (especially cases involving multiple victims). These stories reinforce the notion that sex crimes are committed only by "sex fiends"—crazy and irrational individuals—and both reflect and perpetuate the myth that sexual violence is not committed by known and trusted individuals (Soothhill & Walby, 1991). In fact, the majority of rapes are committed by people known to the victims (Beirne & Messerschmidt, 1991)" (Beckett 2003:76).

[xcviii] "In the first incident family members sprinkled heroin on a five-year-old's Halloween candy in the hopes of fooling the police about the cause of the child's death. Actually, the boy had found and eaten heroin in the uncle's home. In the second incident a boy died after eating cyanide-poisoned candy on Halloween, but police determined that his father had spiked the candy to collect insurance money … Yet if anonymous Halloween sadists were fictitious creatures, they were useful diversions from some truly frightening realities, such as the fact that far more children are seriously injured and killed by family members than strangers." One media psychiatrist however declared in an 1970 New York Times article that "Halloween sadism was a by-product of "the permissiveness in society," including the allowing of 60s era campus riots.

[xcix] Stories of roving packs of disrespectful youth terrorizing the elderly are another example of a discourse that distracts us from the real and pressing problems affecting our elderly. While few elderly could say they have been victims of vandals, how many have been victims of poor housing, poor health insurance or health care, loneliness, depression, or a chronic illness? These are among the real problems the elderly face every day, yet these strategies happen behind closed doors where they are hidden from most. One attack on an elderly woman on the street is witnessed by many and has a police report to document it, while the daily but subtle neglect of millions garners little sustained attention. And these are the problems that can only be fixed on the macro-scale through specific government regulations, resources, and legislation. It is obvious that we should treat our elderly well, who would argue with that, but exhorting individuals to do so and blaming poor care on wicked family members changes little (this is a case of the elderly being victimized by strangers, the strangers happen to be their government representatives however).

[c] Even though crime is dropping, "Two-thirds of Americans say there is more crime in the United States than there was a year ago, reflecting Americans' general tendency to perceive crime as increasing" (Gallup 2010).

[ci] "No matter how it's broken down statistically, murder is ultimately just a surrogate for the broader perceptions about security and danger that profoundly shape our lives. We focus on homicides, in part, because they can be measured with relative accuracy. Few go unreported; the demarcation between life and death is clear. In legal terms, too, it makes a huge difference: When a man was shot at a downtown Minneapolis bus stop in late November, the fact that he survived meant that the shooter could not be charged with murder. Knowing that the victim survived, however, does not make those who witnessed the shooting, or who wait at that bus stop every day, feel measurably safer" (Clancy 2007).

[cii] "Anthropologist Michael Taussig coined the term "culture of terror" to convey the dominating effect of widespread violence on a vulnerable society" (Bourgois 1995:34).
[ciii] Except perhaps for the comment about it not being a citywide phenomenon. For while the journalist is accurate in pointing out that most murders take place in few locations, each crime needs to be understood in the context of what is going on in the whole city. Economic conditions, employment, politics, and policing in Minneapolis as a whole, have a serious effect on each and every murder that takes place in any 'out of the way ghetto block,' regardless of how far that block may seem from the 40th floor of a downtown office or the living room of a Lake Harriet mansion.
[civ] The murder rate for black men victims in their 20s was "nearly 100 times higher than for white men in their 20s."
[cv] It is not only middle-class whites that police segregation however; drug dealers, other criminals, and even the police, all worked together to try to keep Bourgois out of El Barrio (the funny thing is that he grew up just a few blocks south, in the extremely wealthy and extremely separate world of the Upper East Side). After moving into El Barrio to do ethnography on people working in the informal economy, Bourgois walked to a block that he had heard many dealers hang out on, but when he arrived, they split, fearing that he was an undercover cop (29). The dealers would have nothing to do with someone so obviously out of place. The police on the other hand assumed a skinny white guy like him was an addict who had wandered into El Barrio looking to score, harassing him multiple times. The first time police stopped him, Bourgois naively told them he was an anthropologist doing ethnography. The police were not amused by his obviously cockamamie story and he received more abuse because of it. The next time he told them he was living in El Barrio because the rent was cheap, to which they advised him that there was plenty of cheap apartments in white parts of Brooklyn. For the police it was not an option that he was anything but an addict, and the only time he convinced them otherwise was when in frisking him they felt his tape recorder and took him for an undercover cop.
[cvi] Teens have been mugged though, and a baby was hurt once when an SUV accidentally crushed her mother to death against the wall at the McDonald's drive. After this incident, a local blogger penned – "In what Mayor R.T. Rybak would call a "high risk" lifestyle … an unidentified male ran over a woman in the drive-through area of McDonalds while she was participating in the high-risk activity of "*getting fast food*," killing her instantly." As if the mayor's lack of support for funding more police contributed to this woman's death.
[cvii] The odd thing about segregation is that it is cheaper to live in the suburbs than the city. The real-estate term "Drive till you qualify" means that people looking to buy a house must leave the city and perhaps even the suburbs, to get to the ex-urbs, before they reach land that they can afford.
[cviii] When they do choose to identify as *ethnic*, it is a largely luxurious and symbolic act that provides them a sense of both being part of a flavorful community such as Irish, Italian, or Norweigan, and being an individual who has a distinct, and distinctly prestigious, identity (Waters 1990:164).
[cix] There is crime, and then there is criminology. Crime is the event (as defined by custom), such as a theft; criminology is a way of *studying* those events (and those customs). To better understand the difference between the two, take a similar dichotomy, such as past and history. There is the past and there is the field of study known as history, which studies the past. From this point of view *history* is not what happened, it is all those things that include the people who study what happened – the books they write, organizations they create, classes they teach, methods they use, etc.. Because of the dichotomy between the crime and criminology, I can study criminology without necessarily studying crime itself, I can analyze the body of knowledge that criminologists have created.
[cx] Analysis of this school of thought has centered on the Bourbon Restoration period of France, 1814-30. Foucault theorized that positivist (scientific) criminology was invented by the upper and middle-classes at this time as a way to legitimize incarcerating those among the more populous have-nots who threatened the hold that the wealthy had on property. Piers Beirne (1993) however finds this explanation to be "crude instrumentalism," an oversimplified, just so story that ignores that the discourse on statistics about crime was actually separate from the drawing up of criminal penalties (68). After the merging of the two realms of statistics and penalties, that criminology emerged. In other words, the creation of crime statistics in Europe could not have primarily been in the interest of protecting the property of the upper classes, because

demographic statistics at the time were created by people not affiliated with, or having influence on, laws and sentencing.

[cxi] It was during this time that talk specifically of the term "dangerous classes" appeared, putting eloquence to all that grumbling and sentiment that had been stereotyping whole classes of Parisians as hazardous to decency and organized society (Beirne 1993:98).

[cxii] Cursing can be illegal if it can be construed as non-constitutionally protected "fighting words." "There are certain well-defined and narrowly limited classes of speech, the prevention and punishment of which have never been thought to raise any constitutional problem. These include the lewd and obscene, the profane, the libelous, and the insulting or "fighting words" those that by their very utterance inflict injury or tend to incite an immediate breach of the peace. It has been well observed that such utterances are no essential part of any exposition of ideas, and are of such slight social value as a step to truth that any benefit that may be derived from them is clearly outweighed by the social interest in order and morality" *Chaplinsky v. New Hampshire, 1942*.

[cxiii] The "it's not you but the act" way of speaking is a modern pop psychology method of not shaming the individual, in the hope that by not taking it personally they will be more agreeable to changing their behavior – "it's not you it's me" method of dumping a love interest, "it's not you it's the sin" in Christian gospel.

[cxiv] I find her comment instructive of both how she views herself and how she conceptualizes social problems. Public drunkenness is not a problem for her because it affects her personally, but because it occurs. For example, if the *sickness* of alcoholism is better understood, then solutions can be found. This root cause perspective on local troubles also illustrates the social structural way that she and her friends discuss social problems. She implies that the act itself of urinating in public is not nearly so significant as those complex aspects of politics and economics that lay *behind* the act. One criticism of community crime prevention programs (such as restorative justice), is that it does not understanding that people commit crimes not simply because they don't know the negative impact it has on others, but out of a necessity bred by larger social and economic contexts (Hope 1995).

[cxv] Thompson himself was a famous activist against nuclear weapons.

[cxvi] I never asked and they never offered. And even if those fighting livability crimes were anxious about property values, saying so would only reinforce the long-standing accusations against them.

[cxvii] And as for my wondering if maybe the Indian urinator was trying to constructively resist the unequal society he lived in, I doubt it. By unzipping his pants at two a.m. in Whittier, his act left behind nothing more than an unnoticed puddle. Thompson cautions against viewing crime "only in its aspects of resistance to oppression on the part of the property-less" (193). What he found was that the English peasants exploiting royal forests were out for things they needed to get by; they displayed no overt political or revolutionary intention. And "it was because they pursued not a luxury but a livelihood that encounters between them and the keepers [of the forest employed by the aristocrats] were so grim" (240). And while they were not idealists, neither were they criminal gangs hewing to a criminal subculture (194-5), but the Black Act outlawing hunting on his majesty's land was sold to the legislature as a bulwark against a criminal subculture. Thompson argues that the reason the Black Act was successfully enacted was not because there was a tangible subculture of crime among the "loose and disorderly" sorts, but rather because of a particular subculture among the ones actually passing this act, the elite Hanoverian Whigs. Amongst themselves they had fashioned a state of mind that had elevated the protection of property "over all other values." In conjunction, they had "formed habits of mental distance and moral levity towards human life," to the extent that it seemed reasonable to them to kill someone for hunting deer on what the dominant class had decided was their property (197). Ironically, Whig-influenced, eighteenth century England was progressive in many ways, but their version of progress did not necessarily progress the lower classes. Partly because of Whig political reforms, people "were no longer killed or tormented for their opinions and religious beliefs.

[cxviii] Begging is the easiest way to move money from the haves to have nots, and to restrict it is almost to say that people may not try to redistribute wealth on an informal, individual level.

[cxix] So I dug deeper, and after spending a great deal of time searching, while I came up with a bit more information in terms of quantity, quality was elusive (the mythical place I thought of as "The Research" turned out to be pretty empty, dusty, and scattered with bits of junk). There are lots of things that do not

have "a literature" on them, but what was so frustrating was that patrolling was something I was actually doing, not just observing, and I enjoyed it. I wanted to know what "my people" (academics) had to say about it; specifically, I really wanted to "objectively" know exactly how effective citizen patrols were at reducing crime. "Although citizen patrols are common in urban neighborhoods and have been praised as partially effective in reducing street crime (Castberg 1980; Russell 1982: Washnis 1977), there has been very little evaluation research that measures their impact" (Rosenbaum 1988:360).

[cxx] At the time he estimated there were about 850 resident patrols in urban areas of the US (113).

[cxxi] "Comparing trends in reported crimes in two adjacent areas in San Diego suggests that Angels did not have an impact on the violent crimes they target. However, their presence may have contributed to a decline in the number of property crimes in the areas patrolled" (Pennell 1986:107).

[cxxii] Take these for example. "The Edgewater Uptown Community Safety Program … reported a decrease in crime of 28.7% in the study area compared to a 20.7% decline in the city as a whole" (Pennell 1985). In another report an individual is quoted as saying "that communities using such programs have been rewarded with reductions in loitering, disorderly conduct, property crime rates and increases in citizen security" (Pennell 1985). And my personal favorite is from The Newcastle County Crime Prevention – "Although no statistics were given, a decrease in crime was reported" (Pennell 1985).

[cxxiii] "At best, then, it seems that citizens patrols have the support of the public to carry out their objectives (reduce crime and fear of crime) even if those objectives are rarely achieved" (Dershem 1990:59). "Despite growing participation in neighborhood watch programs and citizen patrols, scientifically rigorous evaluation has failed to find consistent crime reduction benefits or significant increases in quality-of-life measures. While these programs may provide additional eyes and ears for the police, improve police-community relations, reduce crime and disorder, and strengthen social control and social support mechanisms, evaluators have yet to document such results" (Schuck 2006).

[cxxiv] The trainer however felt that in some situations though, the "chicken" could be up against patrollers who are there specifically to "take back feelings of empowerment" from those who have intimidated them in the past; those looking to assert themselves against these "bullies" may not want to back down or move away from them.

[cxxv] When doing fieldwork my mind always takes note when I hear those two words, "research shows," for I anticipate soon finding this piece of research and pouring excitedly over its findings. But alas, I cannot remember ever being anything but disappointed. Inevitably, when I ask someone about this research they mentioned, I receive anything from a blank look, to 'I don't know,' to 'I read it somewhere,' to the more specific 'it was in the Star Tribune a month ago.' I almost never find the source (if there even was one to begin with), and when I have, it disappoints in both relevancy and quality. When I was in China I would sometimes find myself facing a clerk in a store or office, and wanting a specific item of piece of information. In this situation, I like to know exactly what they have and do not have, so I can make an informed choice or know how to follow up on something. But I learned that when a clerk did not have what I wanted or could not figure out what I wanted (I did not speak the language), I discovered that even politely pressing the matter only led to them becoming embarrassed or freezing up. Saving face is important in any culture, but is talked about a lot in Chinese communities, and by badgering some poor young woman about how I might be able to go about finding a post office, when she did not know, only led to her feeling embarrassed and anxious. So now I do not usually bother asking for the source when non-academics bring up "the research," it just puts the person in the uncomfortable position of having to justify themselves.

[cxxvi] After writing "neighborhood patrol," I caught myself, the patrol did not belong to the neighborhood, for even if it belonged to everyone who lived/used the space delineated by four streets, it still had to be run by some particular organization. Just as the Whittier Alliance is not Whittier (remember there was for a time the rival Whittier neighbors), the Whittier Walkers was not objectively an extension of some magical essence of the people of Whittier; it was created and run by the Whittier Alliance, a unique, discrete organization that had particular interests and activities different from other organizations in the neighborhood. And besides, did the Whittier Walkers represent the drug dealers in the neighborhood? Aren't they stakeholders also?

[cxxvii] I take these numbers to be roughly representative of what happened, but by no means accurate. At the time I was not interested in the statistics and so kept no tally myself, and it was more important to the

organizer to recruit volunteers and keep the patrol going than keep records. Criminologists will be appalled by the lack of and quality of the data I present here.

[cxxviii] I have no doubt that even though we were attempting to reach out to people of many different ethnic, immigration status, and class backgrounds, the simple fact that we were all white professionals patrolling in a tightly knit group with matching uniforms, largely down blocks of poor minorities, and stopping to stare groups of poor minorities, that we were reifying class boundaries. Reading a draft of this chapter a friend wondered, how did the patrollers know that the people they were counter-loitering were really selling drugs, instead of just hanging out. My answer was, we just knew, there was little doubt. My answer made me realize how native I had gone. Not only had I developed the sense for how to spot drug dealers (or maybe everyone has this, or everyone thinks they have it), but I had become defensive at the suggestion that maybe we did not really know. And what did "drug dealer" or "dealing" mean, certainly there are many ways of doing/being a drug dealer (does selling once a week make one a dealer by trade or identity?). "A number of studies have found that those who participate in voluntary organizations are more likely to be middle or upper middle class, homeowners, well-educated, middle-aged, married with children, and less transient than non-participators (for reviews see Greenberg et al 1985;skogan 1987). Certainly, residents who participate in Neighborhood Watch fit this description, as shown in both a national survey of Neighborhood Watch programs (Garololo and McLeod 1986) and in the one existing national survey of U.S. households (Whitaker) … Also, unlike self-protection and even household protection behaviors, participation in collective neighborhood anti-crime activities often is motivated by "civic-mindedness" rather than by fear of crime (Lavrakas et al. 1980)." (Rosenbaum 1988).

[cxxix] It also may have reinforced particular notions of what makes a good citizen, and helped reimagine the structure of the law enforcement industry, and every person's relationship to it. "The most significant finding to us is the extent to which these patrols came to be seen as manifestations of good citizenship … We found strong support for the idea that citizens have an important role to play in fighting crime and for the sentiment that good citizenship means assuming responsibility for combating crime [as opposed to fighting crime being seen as vigilantism]. Whether the immediate issue is organizing patrols or participating in neighborhood-watch programs, crime prevention is seen as something that should not be left entirely to professionals" (Troyer 1985:239).

[cxxx] One of my past landlords in Whittier once wondered a similar thing about his attempts to keep his tenants safe. He had gotten a police listserve email about recent rapes and gun muggings in the area, and said he had made a lot of copies of the report and brought them to our apartment building to post, "but then thought better of it." He wanted to warn people, but did not want to scare of tenants.

[cxxxi] "For instance, from the late 1970s through the mid-1980s they brought about a 95 percent reduction in brown lung disease among textile workers by instituting rules limiting exposure to cotton dust" (Glassner 1999:199).

[cxxxii] Borrowing from Edward Said's study of those who write books about "The Orient" and from Lutz and Collins' study of those who write National Geographic, talk of crime can tell us more about the talkers and listeners, than about crime itself.

[cxxxiii] "Tallying instances of fictional violence tells us nothing about the meanings these images have for the public. Dramas about crime and law enforcement may foster fear of a chaotic and risky world, but the opposite is also possible: Perhaps such shows reassure people who are already anxious that heroic law enforcers are making the world a safer place. Similarly, whether or not fictional representations of crime encourage popular punitiveness probably depends on the way criminals, law enforcers, and the American justice system are presented and perceived by the audience" (Beckett 2003:83).

[cxxxiv] "Heavy viewers are also more likely to buy new locks, watchdogs and guns "for protection.""

[cxxxv] "In short, as one member of the research team stated, "television's mean and dangerous world tends to cultivate a sense of relative danger, mistrust, insecurity, vulnerability, dependence, and –despite its supposedly 'entertaining' nature—alienation and gloom" (Signorielli, 1990, p. 88)" (Beckett 2003:97).

[cxxxvi] "Horrific incidents of rogue gunmen get news coverage many of us consume virtually as it happens. Psychoanalyst Ross says modern communication technologies alter our perception of the world, bringing news of violent crime to us in ways that make them much more vivid than ever before. "It's picturesque on TV and sensationalized, which makes it look like it's happening a lot more"" (Bashida 2013).

[cxxxvii] "Overall, less than a third of the light viewers, but almost half of the heavy viewers, say that being out alone at night on their own street is "not safe."”

[cxxxviii] Gerbner also theorizes that the fear resulting from television viewing can magnify ones oppression of the "others" among them. He calls this pattern of effects the "mean world syndrome." "Viewers who see their own group as having a higher calculus of risk than those of other groups, develop a greater sense of apprehension, mistrust and alienation; the "mean world syndrome." This unequal sense of danger, vulnerability and general unease, combined with reduced sensitivity, invites not only aggression but also exploitation and repression. The projection of power is a function of all cultures and mainstream mass media. Television streamlines it, sanitizes it, puts it on the dramatic assembly line and discharges it into the world's common cultural environment. The "mean world" of television explodes with a powerful political fallout. Insecure people may be prone to violence but are even more likely to be dependent on authority and susceptible to deceptively simple, strong, hard-line postures. They may accept and even welcome repression if it promises to relieve their anxieties."

[cxxxix] In another study, regular viewers of reality-based crime shows provided higher-than-average estimates of crime prevalence, and, in contradistinction to heavy viewers of fictional police dramas, higher-than-average estimates of crime prevalence among African Americans (Oliver & Armstrong, 1998).

[cxl] "Although violence is occurring at younger ages and plagues poorer (often minority) neighborhoods, the real epidemic we have is not homicidal violence but the fear of violence and the soaring rate of incarceration in what is already the most imprisonment-prone society in the industrial world. The more affluent are also imprisoned in their own neighborhoods and cars, afraid to walk in the city or to use public transportation. Most politicians, however, cannot resist the appeal (and competitive pressure) of advocating ever harsher measures that have never reduced violence but always get votes" (Gerbner 1994)."

[cxli] The real cost of being robbed is the emotional fallout, especially if a weapon or threat of violence is involved. Having a gun menacingly pointed at you is a major event in almost anyone's life. But assuming that gun does not get used, beyond the lost wallet the effect is fear; it is the anxiety that this will happen again. The mugging event takes half a minute (I wonder how long on average muggings do take?), but the exact memory of every moment of that minute can last decades. I have heard post-traumatic stress described as an excess of memory that never fades. While normally the mind gradually forgets almost everything one experiences, including very saddest occasions, traumatic experiences can suffer from no memory loss; the scene can play back in one's head again and again and again without change, stuck (or lurk in the back of the mind, never dealt with but always hurting). However, that trauma only lives in those rare few who do get mugged.

[cxlii] As we have seen in this chapter, crime, violence, and imprisonment are not random; they visit those living within particular contexts. Minorities, the poor, and the unemployed disproportionately suffer the consequences of violence and imprisonment in America. "The likelihood of black males going to prison in their lifetime is 16% compared to 2% of white males and 9% of Hispanic males" (Rand 2008). In terms of income, households with a 2008 annual income of less than $15,000 were significantly more likely to have their homes burgled (Rand 2008). While white middle-class kids stand a miniscule chance of being victims of crimes in Whittier, kids growing up in poor, black communities in the inner-city are at risk of choosing work that includes violence and crime. Black, urban boys do stand the very real chance of being enticed into joining peer groups who live with or glorify crime and violence.

[cxliii] While whites tend to fear minority neighborhoods, it is the minorities that need to be more afraid of the low income inner-city. However, the local news is targeted to its middle-class white audience, and therefore is created to feed into their fear of random crime, disorder and the inner-city (what if the local news always began with stories about non-random suburban crime, white collar crime, or acts of kindness in the inner-city?). According to Beckett (2003:76), "In the news, when crime victims are depicted, they are typically white, female, and affluent (Chermak, 1995; Elias, 1993; Reiner, 1997, p. 201). One content analysis of national and local television newscasts, for example, found that when the race and gender of crime victims could be identified, white females were the most common category of victims (see Exhibit 5,2) (Chiricos et al., 1997, p. 354). In fact, young men of color— especially those living in poor and urban areas - experience the highest rates of victimization, and white females report the lowest."

[cxliv] Please do not take my sensationalistic stories of crimes I witnessed to be representative of everyone's experience in Whittier. Living on Blaisdell and across from a couple large apartment buildings, I see much

more crime than most Whittier-ites. I also walked for years on the crime patrol. I also went looking for crime scenes, but if you fear crime, hearing about a single crime is a disappointment (when I lived in Oakland I had a friend who wanted to be a forensic anthropologist, whenever she heard on the news that some unfortunate person had discovered a dead body, she would say, "why can't I be the one to find a dead body?"

[cxlv] "Racial attitudes are complex and are dependent upon the situation and context" (Croll 2011:15). After asking informants on such issues as race and inequality, I imagined I could see the gears turning in their heads over whether they were going to access knowledge/theories about inequality on the national level, or local one. And I did not like putting them in this position; while purposely putting informants in this ambiguous position could potentially be a very interesting research project, it was not getting me where I wanted to go. I would suspect that when asked about race/poverty in general, the mind moves toward such things as affirmative action, welfare, minimum wage, health care, outsourcing, irresponsibility, and discrimination. But when asked in the context of neighborhood, the space in the head that is accessed I suspect is a different place, although interconnected with the national "head-space."

[cxlvi] If I had wanted to be scientific, I would have asked the exact same questions as the AMP, so as to be able to legitimately compare my results to the AMP's. It was not that the questions were a problem, but they were designed for a different kind of research, and may work well for a different sort of ethnography.

[cxlvii] Why is it always "purple hair" that is the marker for weirdness? Once in the largely black section of Minneapolis, I was trying to tell a middle-aged black woman where Uptown was. She said, "oh, you mean where those white kids with purple hair hang out?"

[cxlviii] No one told me that diversity was not a strength.

[cxlix] Bell and Hartmann also found that interviewees gave answers that were often qualified, fragmented and incoherent, for more on this see the next chapter on privilege.

[cl] I will deal substantially with their conclusions in the next chapter on privilege, here I only relate them in order to show that they were able to come to significant conclusions.

[cli] In her 2000 article, Nancy Scheper-Hughes argued that the global shortage in human organs for transplantation was a myth manufactured by the medical industry to further their profits. She claimed that the long lists of people awaiting organs was a fiction meant to give urgency to the "great need" to "procure" (as opposed to violently rip) organs from "donors" (as opposed to victims).

[clii] So as to maintain a status quo they deny exists. Although many would argue that in the 21st century with its historically lower tax levels, regulation under attack, more open campaign financing, shrinking unions, and increasing wealth disparity, conservatives are doing much better than just hold the line, but instead are aggressively successful at continuing a neoliberal redesign of society

[cliii] Working within what Steinberg calls the classic "race relations" paradigm (2007), activists see themselves as diplomats, working to bridge the divides between ethnic groups, finding commonalities, and toiling for the betterment of all the different groups.

[cliv] As an informal group not a part of actual government, neighborhood organizations such as the Whittier Alliance have no authority on these matters. But while they have no power, they hold *influence* over the city (who does have formal authority over such matters), not necessarily because neighborhood groups have much sway over politicians, but because the city and some politicians do often sincerely care what people think should happen in their own neighborhood. You may ask though, why does anyone have to get permission from the city to build on private property. They don't, but they do have to get permission if they want to do anything that is a bit outside the bounds of the construction codes. And this is almost guaranteed, almost all developments in Minneapolis it seems need (or want) to do something that is controlled by the city.

There are two kinds of common exceptions that builders request, the first are conditional use permits (CUPs). These are things that are allowed, but only if you get permission from the city, such as having a 24 hour businesses. The second kind are variances, variances are requests to do what codes say you cannot, and are often granted, but only when you only go a bit outside the lines, such as wanting your building to start five yards from the street instead of seven. Another common request is to change the zoning of a parcel altogether to allow for the kind of development you want, such as changing from C-1 to C-2 to allow for a drive through. Often neighbors do not care one way or the other about these changes, but

they can withhold their support for those modifications until they get what they want from the developer, such as a high quality façade like brick or stone, or larger units.

"They demonstrate that conflicts over the park's function are permanent features of that history, and that the park is a site where larger political and economic controversies often rose" (Abu-Lughod 1994b:7). In Whittier conflicts over the function of housing are the "permanent features" of its history, and instead of a physical place being the site of unending conflict, it is instead the ideological dichotomy of market/subsidized housing.

[clv] Ed Cohen (1991) poses well the paradox of those that debate the pros and cons of the project to deconstruct rigid identities. Since the only way to fight against homophobia is to organize around a category like homosexual, this unfortunately reifies categories like "gay" (or Somali) and elides the valuable differential identities within them (Cohen 1991:73). This fight fire with fire strategy is seen as a necessary evil; for their own eventual good the oppressed must take on an identity which often has been chosen for them by those that despise them. However, proclaiming an identity like "gay" comes at the expense of: one's other identities, those not "gay," and the freedom to not have to have a clear identity (Cohen 1991:76). The more the identity becomes known, the more "natural" it appears, and this elides the complex processes through which this category is constantly maintained. "Somali" may appear natural, but only because of the work that is done by many, including the majority whites. But regardless that the meaning of the category Somali is contested at neighborhood meetings, the category itself and its core meanings are not disputed. Also, Allan Berube (2001) shows how in the construction of a colorblind homosexuality, "gay" is always tacitly represented as normatively white (this hides the omnipresent impact of racial thinking on all types of identity, whether sexuality, gender, class or otherwise). Likewise, in America the category of "democracy" (and crime fighting) is also normed as white, which implies that for Somalis to gain respect and inclusion in America, they will need to both whiten themselves, and blacken democracy. However, a Critical Theory approach assumes that along with the creation and reification of identities, there can be greater examination and interrogation. Identities are created around an oppressed group in order to fight the oppression, but what if they are also deconstructed in order to fight against the oppressive power that always emanates from the process of inclusive/exclusion.

[clvi] When the Dutch took control of the area that would arbitrarily become the small nation of Rwanda, they found the vaguely defined group called the Tutsi to be in a somewhat superior position within a complex and organized political structure of the area, and backed by faulty anthropological research on African bodies, the Dutch also found the Tutsi to be taller, more gracefully slender, and even with more narrow noses. However, if in fact there were any physical differences between the groups, it can be explained by environmental factors, such as the agricultural hard labor and meager diet of the Hutu. Europeans "knew" that Africans were not capable of having developed this level of politic sophistication on their own, so social scientists theorized that the Tutsis must have brought it to the Africans, and that the Tutsi's themselves were not really the Africans they appeared to be, but were actually a group of "black Caucasians" who migrated from Europe to Africa where they civilized the locals.

[clvii] In order to highlight how such a local and specific moment as one white diver honking at another Somali one on Pillsbury Avenue in South Minneapolis, can be the result of profound, historical, global phenomenon, imagine for a moment how such things as the auto industry, capitalism, or cardinal directions, created the parking problem near Pillsbury Ave.

[clviii] At the time of the meeting there were 26 critical parking zones.

[clix] But since the Burakumin have the same ancestors as the majority Japanese, Burakumin can pass for "standard" Japanese, if they can successfully obscure their recent ancestry and the ghetto address of their parents.

[clx] In the genocidal Bosnian War in the 1990s, as war broke out in Yugoslavia, and armed conflict moved closer to and more intimately into a once peaceful farming village outside Sarajevo, people who for a long time had thought of themselves as Bosnians or Yugoslavians, over the course of weeks or months suddenly and fanatically became either Catholic Croats, Eastern Orthodox Serbs, or Muslim Bosniacs (Bringa, 1994). While their race did not change, because they were all white Europeans with the same ancestors, their ethnicity drastically did. Nationalist and religious flags, songs, and myths became commonplace, where before under the greater communist Yugoslavia, these symbols had been banned. The prevailing way

to interpret conflicts such as these is to see the breakup of Yugoslavia as allowing for deep-seated, long-simmering hatreds to once again be free and generate the killings that ensued.

[clxi] My ethnography works in opposition to a conventional trope of seeing as essentially racist, the middle-class whites who talk of "protecting" their neighborhood from livability crimes, homeless, outsiders, and general disorder. I do not buy that the racist inside of them is just waiting and ready to spring forth as soon as Somalis appear on their streets. My research did not find a single person who expressed hatred of Somalis, and while I do suspect many of them of being irritated by them at times and stereotyping them, these things would be just one facet of the complex whole that is their activism.

[clxii] With the English colonization of South Asia, where before Hindu and Muslim had been often confused and nebulous identities, the English instituted their own sets of policies that dichotomized these two previously intertwined religious traditions, codifying a separate set of laws for Hindu and Muslim. And when the English left, setting up the massive violence and movement of people in the Partition of the area into separate nations, people suddenly became Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi, and willing to fight endless wars on behalf of these arbitrary and nascent nationalities.

[clxiii] In the Bosnian village, the Croats began talking up the differences between them and their Muslim neighbors in order to portray Muslims as foreign, not trustworthy, and usurpers; this then help legitimate the Croat villagers ultimate purpose of violently driving the Muslims from the village and taking their fields. There were already differences between people in this village, but these differences had to be drawn anew and much more dramatically in order to identify an outsider group, to prove their inferiority, and to kill them.

[clxiv] "In 1985 there was one Asian owned business in that stretch (A Chau), by 1990, eleven, by 1993, twenty-one and by 1999, there were thirty-one. Now, there are forty-nine Asian businesses on the street, the majority of which are Vietnamese, in addition to eight Latino businesses.[clxiv] As for food-based businesses, this part of Nicollet is currently home to twenty-five restaurants/delis/cafes (of all types) and twelve grocery stores (Minneapolis City Directory 1985, 1990, 1993,1999; field observations)" (Jacobson 2004:63)

[clxv] Comedian Daniel Tosh has cleverly asked, "Can cannibals taste ethnicity?"

[clxvi] The Minneapolis Millers began in 1884 as a member of the Northwestern league, and after years of bouncing around Minneapolis looking for a permanent stadium, finally found a worthy site with easy transportation access from multiple directions at 31st and Nicollet (Thornley 1988: 19, 69). The $4,000 and 4,000 seat stadium (originally called Wright Field), opened on June 19th, 1896 and consistently attracted crowds to watch prize fights, high school football games and above all, the Millers (Jacobson 2004:7).

[clxvii] "The geographies of housing and transportation had shifted in the mid-1950s, and Nicollet Avenue was poised for decline … In the late 1950s and early 1960s, businesses on the street were stable and did well enough, with few vacancies. At least when they were shiny and new, the walk-ups were new and inviting for people hungry for housing. The transition from streetcars to busses was not considered significant, if anything it was a positive sign of the faster and more convenient automobile age. In retrospect, however, the year 1954 can be accurately called the "economic zenith" of the area. Looking back from 1972, Minneapolis city planners pinpointed that year since it saw the opening of the first suburban malls, the removal of the streetcars, the approval for the interstate highway system and the peak of Minneapolis' population" (Minneapolis City Coordinator's Office 1972: 5).

[clxviii] It is interesting to note that the 1960 Minneapolis City Planning Commission called for fewer businesses on Nicollet. The reasoning went that since so many were leaving for the suburbs, what everyone must want the suburban experience of one-stop shopping all in one place (Jacobson 2004:25), and not the antiquated piecemeal shopping of having to stop at the baker, then the butcher on the next block, then the hardware store on the next, etc. The commission found that "Nicollet's success was actually a problem for Whittier, since it was "an intrusion into the residential part of the neighborhood"" (Jacobson 2004:25).

[clxix] Whittier at that had two main destination places, the MIA complex and the Black Forest, and two destination "services," drug-dealing and prostitution – that people would come to despite the inconvenience of driving in the area. The suburbanites and south Minneapolitans whom planners expected to come and shop at Nicollet and Lake never did, and dreams of recapturing the market never materialized (Jacobson 2004:38).

[clxx] In Governing the Soul (1989), Nikolas Rose explores how it came to be that the inner subjectivity of people became a subject of contemplation and manipulation by state bureaucracies. Management talked about the corporate entity having positive social values and caring about the mental well-being of its individuals. Meanwhile the language of therapy, effective communication, and constant personal self-improvement, kept one busy worrying about their inner subjectivities, and not the conditions of their work or the policies of their government. This new development that Rose is describing is effectively a hijacking of subjectivities and replacement of their interests with those of the nation, or the corporation, or the bureaucracy, etc. It operated by having people perceive that their world was being opened up to new possibilities, but actually it channeled their thoughts and wants into narrow pathways that only lead to their exploitation.

[clxxi] "The original idea was to build upon the presence of the MIA, the Children's Theater and the Minneapolis College of Art and Design and focus on media development. The major piece in this strategy was the Icehouse building, located at 2540 Nicollet, which the WCDC bought in hopes of converting it into a TV/video production studio" (Jacobson 2004:44). "The end result of this type of intervention - a street known for its ethnic restaurants and grocery stores - was really not the intention during the 1980s. As mentioned, the real strategy that was supposed to drive growth on Nicollet was the media development idea centered on the Icehouse studio. The WCDC's support for immigrant business was an afterthought, and the concentration of ethnic businesses on Nicollet that was obvious by 1990 was serendipitous. City officials were slow to see these changes, and the economic potential of Nicollet Avenue doesn't seem to have registered until the mid 1990s, at the earliest" (Jacobson 2004:52).

[clxxii] "Today, tourists on Grant Avenue photograph the curved eaves and colorful tiled roofs and wander through atmospheric alleys and into temples heavy with incense and resounding with the cacophony of fake crickets, classical Chinese zither and Muzak. "It was an ingenious move, selling a fake China to those white folks who didn't know any better; and the Chinese community since survived with a degree of prosperity on its own despite intense racial prejudice and discrimination," said Marlon Hom, chairman of Asian American Studies at San Francisco State University" (Hua 2006).

[clxxiii] In 1990, three Asian markets had set up shop on Nicollet between Franklin and 29th Street, along with an Asian-owned dentist's office, photo-processing shop, and bakery. This kernel of Asian-run businesses, and the low rents on the boarded up storefronts along the avenue, began to attract more small business (Hart 1997).

[clxxiv] "In the mid-1980s, Minneapolis sued GFI over the company's refusal to pay a $20,000 bill for the cleanup of a grease-plugged sewer main, just downstream from where GFI's line entered the system. "At first they tried to say it was from a Chinese restaurant [Rainbow Chinese] up the line," recalled Assistant City Attorney Scott Reeves … "My best evidence in the case was from a sewer maintenance worker who crawled down into the sewer main to chip out the congealed fat with a spike," Reeves said. "The jet wash wouldn't work"" (Kennedy 1993).

[clxxv] even if all of an American's grandparents were from Germany, and so he or she can boasts of being "pure" German, people have always been on the move, and while those grandparents all lived in Germany, their parents might not have. And there was not even a "Germany" before 1871.

[clxxvi] Today the shopOakland.com site markets this district as "an eclectic and diverse selection of businesses in a colorful and bustling environment. This multicultural area is known as Oakland's Fusion Neighborhood. The logo for this website reads "Shop Oakland, the world at home," as if one can purchase anything from around the world right here at "home," maintaining the dichotomy between the (big bad) global world out there, and the domestic place of Oakland. Oakland is constructed as local, a real place where people live and shop.

[clxxvii] "After the recession of 1990/1991, available investment capital was still scarce and offered at relatively high interest rates. Economic prosperity in the mid-1990s started chipping away at those rates, and several businesses were able to find the money to finance expansions and property investment. Around the same time, downtown Minneapolis was experiencing a revival of sorts, and there was a boom in commercial investment there. As downtown started to prosper with escalating property tax revenues, the calls from neighborhoods to start sharing some of that wealth got louder and louder" (Jacobson 2006:55).

[clxxviii] "Together, the Stevens Square Community Organization and the Whittier Neighborhood Association invested nearly $800,000 of their Neighborhood Revitalization Program funding for a corridor study and

redevelopment and business loan funds … An additional $310,000 of NRP dollars were invested in streetscape improvements which provided neighborhood residents and businesses leverage and a seat at the table for the planned reconstruction of the avenue. Streetscape improvements include benches, planters, and banners which proclaim the street's brand and identity – Eat Street. The catchy name, which genuinely builds upon a strength of the avenue, home to a variety of excellent ethnic restaurants, is now so well known that real estate advertisements claim proximity to Eat Street as an asset" (Corridor Revitalization: Minneapolis Case Study).

[clxxix] An irony is that this effort also called for changes in the nearby I-35 freeway, to get the through traffic off streets like Nicollet and onto the freeway, but at the same time one of the prevailing theories of the "death" of Nicollet was due to its lack of traffic after the Kmart cut Nicollet in half.

[clxxx] "By 1999, the corridor had already moved beyond its most derelict period. Regional draw anchor businesses such as the Black Forest Inn remained through the most difficult years, when there was little private investment on the avenue and crime was a huge concern. Problems remained, however, and Nicollet between Lake Street and downtown Minneapolis was not yet known far and wide as "Eat Street," though that brand identity was coined in the late 1990s" (Corridor Revitalization: Minneapolis Case Studies).

[clxxxi] Working off of Bourdieu (1984), Caldeira explains that "To describe the poor as being limited to the necessary is just another prejudice against them, one that is very common among those who think of themselves as better off. Moreover, to locate the poor close to necessity, to identify them with need, nature, and a lack of reason or sophisticated culture can be a way of associating them with crime, which is often identified with the same traits … Discussions about social decline become discussions about social difference and the maintenance of one's own place in the social hierarchy" (2000:68). Caldeira's middle-class informants often expressed irritation that the poor were wasteful in their extravagant consumption, and were hurting the country with their "squandering mentality" (2000:69).

[clxxxii] Other historical examples include the challenging marketing campaigns to de-link negative meanings from products, such as disassociating sociopathic murder from Twinkies, Tylenol, and The Dark Knight Rises.

[clxxxiii] For example, the 19th century scientific consensus was the African "race" was actually physically inferior, as evidenced by their higher incidence of disease and dying younger, and it was only a matter of time before Africans died out entirely. However, in the 30s when African-Americans started doing so well in sports, especially when Jesse Owens went to the Olympics in Berlin in front of Hitler, it flew in the face of this common sense. So to reconcile this with the supposed inferiority of blacks, the new idea became that Africans had superior athletic ability, but lacked cognitive abilities. They had brute strength, but were inferior when it came to being civilized. The evidence was that there were so few blacks in position of wealth and power in the Western world, and that the governments of African nations were so chaotic. The meaning attached to the category black was refined, while keeping the hierarchy the same (Race: The Power of Illusion 2003).

[clxxxiv] This is the song many of us only know from the movie 2001: A Space Odyssey, which ironically conferred high class-ness onto that movie, given that its audience mostly Americans, who not being educated in elite French schools, did not "know" that Blue Danube, being a fanciful waltz, was "actually" low brow.

[clxxxv] This is ironic given that ethnographers earlier in the century have been criticized for focusing too intently on poor, minority, small-scale and/or third-world communities, and not "studying up" the hierarchies to sites of power (see Nader 1972, 1980) or to sites of middle class westerners.

[clxxxvi] But the low/high class dichotomy operates on a double standard, while a lower class individual may bring up their class standing a bit by habitually dining at Azia, a higher class individual risks little by going to Pho Quan. Knowing how to order at Azia and how to talk about the latest Asian fusion cuisine is decidedly prestigious, but knowing how to order at Pho Quan and about Vietnamese soup does not bring down one's level of distinction. Pho Quan can be seen as exotic, or "slumming it," it can be interpreted by the higher class as an adventure, such as going to Vietnam itself. It has never occurred to me that I may incur class penalties from being seen at Pho Quan. While browsing for fun the reviews of Pho Quan on yelp.com, it occurred to me that maybe ordering at Pho Quan does take special knowledge. One man gave the restaurant a one star review because when he entered and asked twice to be seated, the Vietnamese owners gave him a blank look, so he left mad. I messaged him trying to explain that the owners were just

confused because they do not speak much English and he was the first person ever to expect a hostess to seat him at Pho Quan. Also, while he interprets a blank look as not caring, for many peoples in Asia, a blank face commonly can mean they simply do not understand exactly what you want or how to give it to you, and the blankness is a way for everyone to not be offended and to save face. He responded to me with – "does the C in you middle name stand for constipated prick." If "the eye is a product of history, reproduced by education" (Bourdieu 1984:3), then his eye had been produced by a different education than mine. And my arrogantly trying to educate him on his cultural ignorance offended his sense of being cosmopolitan. Perhaps he was the one slumming it, because a scan of his other reviews revealed that he appeared to dine exclusively at higher class operations.

[clxxxvii] Jacobson's only real castigation in his research is reserved for the Whittier Alliance's 2001 Neighborhood Revitalization Program report. "The report says that "Despite only $40,000 in funding, Whittier's ingenuity resulted in amazing strides towards bringing back the neighborhood's economic vitality. Ethnic restaurants and shops began to fill in the empty spaces" (Whittier Alliance 2001: 8). The claim that NRP support preceded the arrival of the businesses is false, since the businesses started arriving from about ten years before NRP was even introduced. Worst of all, this report gives primary credit to "Whittier's ingenuity" in using the NRP money, and thus subordinates the ingenuity of owners of places like A Chau Market, Hiep Thanh Market and Quang Pastry & Deli" (Jacobson:60).

[clxxxviii] "Over the past twenty years, Nicollet Avenue has been revitalized not through any grand plan, but through the slow, unappreciated and gradual process of neighborhood and commercial development. It would not be wise to abandon too quickly those modest but proven methods in favor of the "home run" development promising instant success" (Jacobson:69).

[clxxxix] In Athenian democracy, citizens would actually have to nominate themselves to be in the pool. The names in the lottery were only those of people who *chose* voluntarily to "put their name in the hat," introducing one of the layers of self-selection that structured the Athenian system of rotation. But in my democratic Whittier no one would be spared from the pool, and all would be obligated to serve when their names came up. And in Athens there were many official positions that were not chosen by lot, particularly the most powerful ones (generals and those overseeing large sums of money). It was the lesser officials that were randomly chosen from the pool of nominated citizens. This seems to run counter to democracy, especially since these greater positions were only assigned to the wealthiest of even the elite citizenry. However, in Athens the highest ruling authority was the assembly, where any and all citizens could freely participate and vote. The only other body whose decisions could not be altered was the courts, whose juries were also open to all citizens. If the Whittier Alliance was to become this democratic, it would have to disband the board, and make the Community Issues Committee (CI) the ultimate authority, since it is the CI committee where all are allowed to vote (and the WA staff positions would be chosen by lot, instead of the board choosing permanent professionals from outside the neighborhood). But of course this would allow the populace as a whole to gain the ultimate power, instead of all CI votes being merely recommendations to the elite board, which makes all final decisions. And while Athens may appear democratic at first blush, only a small portion of the population of Athens were actually voting citizens; most had already been weeded out, leaving only the more wealthy of the propertied men as able to vote in the assembly, or nominate themselves for office.

[cxc] While using a mirror in this way might create class and racial justice, it did not have the same effect when for a decade starting in 1955, the Chicago Housing Authority required "that public housing residents must mirror the ethnic distribution of their surrounding neighborhood" (Goetz 2003:34). This simply meant continued segregation, and keeping minorities out of white neighborhoods.

[cxci] Interestingly, the mathematical concept of probability is claimed to not have been developed until the seventeenth century (Manin 1997:39), so this would mean that the Athenians were presumably "mathematically" unaware of the idea that choosing representatives by lot would create a government body that held the same ratio of different groupings of people and interests, as the total population of those eligible for the lottery.

[cxcii] "My own experience with town meeting democracy (Mansbridge [1980] 1983) leads me to conclude that the ability, expertise, and commitment to the public good of ordinary members of the public are sufficient to make a relatively random sample of citizens a plausible, although by no means ideal,

representative assembly" (Mansbridge 1999:631). However, the people that show up to a town meeting are not at all representative of the total population of the town, so this argument is logically invalid.

[cxciii] The annual report a year later however did betray anxiety over this bylaw change. The only mention of the change was, "We successfully updated the Whittier Alliance By-Laws to give Whittier residents and neighborhood business and property owners a stronger voice and a more powerful vote." The tortuous spin put on this and the glaring lack of any mention of workers losing their vote, shows that someone at the Alliance was anxious about publicizing what they really did, even though it was a year later and they already won.

[cxciv] it was only a few decades ago that the Christian Conservative movement was inconsequential; Fundamentalist Christians in America traditionally found politics objectionable and concerned themselves with family and the hear after, but as some Christian Conservatives began making noise about the crumbling foundation of American society and about their own persecution, more and more added to the chorus. Barry Goldwater, who in 1964 was the Republic presidential candidate, lost because he was too far right, and was dubbed "Mr. Conservative" once said, "Mark my word, if and when these preachers get control of the [Republican] party, and they're sure trying to do so, it's going to be a terrible damn problem. Frankly, these people frighten me. Politics and governing demand compromise. But these Christians believe they are acting in the name of God, so they can't and won't compromise. I know, I've tried to deal with them."

[cxcv] While looking for political science theory on democracy for this chapter, I stumbled upon a University of Chicago Press book entitled, "Freedom Is an Endless Meeting: Democracy in American Social Movements." It is telling that at first I was excited that I had found an academic source for validating my feelings about how the meetings of social movements never seems to end, but go on and on and on. Only after looking at the book's description did I realize that actually the title was arguing that maintaining freedom and democracy in a society requires never ending work (and not never ending boredom).

[cxcvi] However, another way of looking at it is that the neighborhood is being governed by those who lack the common sense to stay at home after a long day at work, and let the professionals in the city's Zoning Division decide how many feet someone's garage should be set back from the alley. The ones at home "vegetating" in front of the television are normally seen as the second-rate masses, but while insensitive and simplified, for a moment imagine it is the mediocre who choose to show up at neighborhood meetings, while the gifted and inspired are involved in other ventures? What if the community activists are extraordinary only in the sense of being out of the ordinary, because of their un-envious ability to withstand being a part of something often offensive and trivial?

[cxcvii] Bureaucrats are incredibly maligned as the epitome of inefficiency and ignorance, but bureaucrats can also be seen as the trained experts who make impartial decision based on the common good, instead of based on the rants of the next door neighbor to the garage who may know little of urban planning and view the issue only from her or her own interest. With every new mayor/governor/president, would you rather the bureaucrats were reappointed by the new elected official who was chosen directly by the people, but end up with a city hall of nothing but cronies and culture warrior ideologues, or would you rather keep a stable group of professionals who are chosen by their supervisors, who themselves are experienced in their field?

[cxcviii] "Discussion networks are smaller in 2004 than in 1985. The number of people saying there is no one with whom they discuss important matters nearly tripled" (McPherson 2006:353). "almost half of the population (43.6 percent) now reporting that they discuss important matters with either no one or with only one other person" (McPherson 2006:358). Almost one in four Americans have no one.

[cxcix] I will use "minority" here to stand in for ethnic/racial minorities, non-whites; renters are a minority group in the sense that they hold less wealth and power, but while some have tried to get more renters involved, others see renters as not have nearly as much "stake" in the neighborhood as homeowners so are not particularly concerned by their very low participation rate; while most board members are women no one complains of this, and for at least since the early 1990s there have been a plethora of openly gay men on the boards of both groups.

[cc] "In the post-civil rights U.S., one can witness the Euro-American attempt to stake out a status of innocent victimhood in the resounding chorus "I never owned slaves." This phrase is our stylized version of what we believe to be an increasingly hegemonic strategy on the part of Euro-Americans for dealing with (or rather

evading) America's racist past and for justifying the present course of backlash politics. … While the legacy of slavery continues to infect the lives and well-being of African Americans, the living descendants of its immediate victims, it also shapes and informs the perspectives of Euro-Americans, many of who vehemently deny and connect to or responsibility for these continuing consequences, and increasingly reject the validity of the black complaint or demand for redress" (Ansell & Statman 1999:152).

[cci] Anthropologists refuted this long ago, showing that in general, the larger and more complex the economy and technology, the more time people spend working. Anthropologists found that the Kung! "bushmen" of the Kalahari spent an average of fifteen hours a week at subsistence activities; between infrequent bouts of hunting, "visiting, entertaining, and especially dancing are the primary activities of men" (Lee:1968). Women worked more regularly and a bit more in general.

[ccii] This was the identical argument made by supporters of the 2012 voter ID amendment to the Minnesota constitution.

[cciii] "Symbolic racism is expressed not through racial slurs or hatred of others, but is represented as moral feelings that minorities like blacks violate such traditional American values as individualism, self-reliance, the work ethic, and discipline" (Lamont 2000:298). Sears is convinced that a deeply emotional hatred of blacks by whites still exists, but that it is today symbolic because it is expressed not in terms of admitting this hatred or with racial slurs, but by arguing "that blacks violate such traditional American values as work ethic, traditional morality, and respect of traditional authority" (Sears et al 1997:22). Symbolic racism "represents a powerful and different form of white racial resentment" (Sears et al 1997:37). Abstract and ideological (moral codes), cognitive (belief that racism is over and blacks are just lazy), affect and perception ("blend of anti-black affect with the perception that blacks violate such traditional American values as work ethic, traditional morality, and respect of traditional authority" (Sears et al 1997:22)).

[cciv] "Racism is assumed to be a thing of the past. Discrimination is alleged to have ended in the 1960s. A level playing field is believed to exist, such that opportunity can be had by all. The corollary is denial of the collective disadvantages still faced by people of color today" (Ansell and Statman 1999:160). "Our white respondents saw the [racial] playing field as essentially flat and the vast majority of people as unprejudiced" (Emerson & Smith 2000:82). Likewise Bonilla-Silva found that whites believe racial discrimination to have basically disappeared (Bonilla-Silva 2001:151)

[ccv] "Our point is not only that racist discourse is less overt today as compared to the past, but also that its terms of reference have shifted form the realm of biology and white supremacy to that of culture and white victimization" (Ansell & Statman 1999:156).

[ccvi] "More traditional forms of racism replete with hateful, derogatory images provide a reservoir of meanings that is still exploited today" (Ansell & Statman 1999:158).

[ccvii] "The discourse that views race as a marker of ontological, essential, or biological difference – a discourse that dominated white thinking on race for much of U.S. history and that I refer to here as essential racism … – is in many ways the absent presence in these women's discussions of race and difference. However, I suggest that much of what the women said about the kind of difference race makes refers back to that mode of thinking through race" (Frankenberg 1993:138).

[ccviii] "Respecting" another's culture is a tricky business, where do you draw the line? Take the case of female genital cutting, is it insensitive or ignorant to say that it is wrong, when it is a respectable and cherished cultural tradition celebrated gladly by millions of women across the world? (See Gruenbaum's, "respectful challenge" and the two-edged sword of culture).

[ccix] This Indian of their fantasies is often the wizened old man, who is expected to speak softly about peace being the moral path, about the Indians having lost America and belonging to the past, and about how someday the Europeans also will lose this land to the next group to come along (even though it ain't true) (Deloria 1980:xi).

[ccx] The Athenian democratic system was not created with the intention of making government proportionally representative of the population, this is our value not theirs. Although if this was truly an American value, the US would not simply junk the electoral college, but also replace the highly undemocratic senate with something like the German Bundesbat, were seats are assigned to each party according to their ratio of support among the total nation. The US would also use a ranked voting system, so that electors would be chosen by a *majority* of voters and not just the plurality that Bill Clinton and George W. Bush enjoyed.

[ccxi] Journalist Andy Humm argues that a 9,000 member US congress would be more democratic, as millionaires would no longer dominate, as more minority voices would be represented, and special interests would not be able to use one senator to create pork for themselves (1997 Humm, Andy In Government, More May be More: an argument for a 9,000 Member Congress. Social Policy, Fall 97 Vol. 28:1).
[ccxii] In practice deliberative democracy 1) is *synergistic* and therefore needs as many different viewpoints as possible; 2) may need a *critical mass* of members from one minority group before their position will get enunciated or considered; 3) will need a sufficient number of people from each group in order to be able to disperse simultaneously into different committees; and 4) multiple members from one group are needed in order to represent the heterogeneity within any supposed group.
[ccxiii] "The combination of rotation and drawing of lots stemmed from a deep distrust of professionalism" (Manin 1997:32). "If professionals intervened in government they would inevitable dominate."
[ccxiv] Critical Multiculturalism is critical in the sense that it derives from the Critical Theory school of thought. This is a way of engaging with society not just by trying to understand it, but also progressively changing it. Critical Theory is not a unified or easily grasped thing, as it can come from a variety of intellectual/academic traditions, primarily the Frankfurt School literary theory, and Marxist sociological theories, both of which seek to understand how society has been socially/materially constructed in order to seek to know how to transform it for the benefit of the oppressed. It does not simply critique the way people are represented (stereotypes), but critiques the political economy that works in complex ways to structure every aspect of culture and society.
[ccxv] In a sense my questions were a qualitative test of questions that produced quantitative results (questions that had themselves been bred from qualitative research on race in America). In an article coming out of the AMP results, Hartmann, Gerteis and Croll, advised that in their statistical analysis of the survey answers, "the patterns of adherence to the core propositions of whiteness studies we have charted … are those of some average, hypothetical cross section of white America rather than actual white Americans" (Hartmann 2009:416). My questions on the other hand were all asked by me, one individual at a time, and analyzed at that individual level, as well as on the group level.

Also, I asked some of my interviewees both about white success and black poverty (AMP asked each respondent about only one of these), and this gave me another level of analysis that AMP did not have (but as I will explain later, it was not without its disadvantages). "The odds of believing that prejudice and discrimination are important in explaining … [racial inequality] decreases by almost 50 percent … when respondents are asked about white advantage instead of African American disadvantage. This basic result shows that Americans are far less likely to see the effects of prejudice and discrimination in generating advantage [than disadvantage]" (Croll 2011:17).

My interview group was obviously not random, I tested knowledge of inequality among a particularly salient group, the activists who were the ones particularly responsible for changes affecting poverty in an ethnically diverse neighborhood. And while I did have a few minority informants (in neighborhoods that have substantial white populations, neighborhood activists are almost always primarily white), only one of them was among those asked these inequality questions. Unlike AMP, I was not interested in comparing results across racial lines, I did however end up comparing answers across lines more relevant to politics in Whittier.
[ccxvi] Along these lines, they also hypothesized that whites will especially skew their answers toward these individualistic explanations when asked about the success of whites as opposed to black poverty (because white privilege is hidden from them, but not as much from blacks).
[ccxvii] I wondered where she got this bit of progressive rhetoric, and tracked it to a 1991 Time magazine article by the well-known poverty crusader Sandy Ehrenreich, entitled – "Welfare: A White Secret."
[ccxviii] These results would be in line with Croll's data –

- "Higher educated Americans are less likely to believe that differences in family upbringing are important in explaining racial inequality" (Croll 2011:24).
- "Higher educated Americans and those living in populous areas are more likely to believe that prejudice and discrimination are important in explaining white advantage" (Croll 2011:18).
- "Americans who are older, with higher incomes, and living in more populous areas are all more likely to believe that schools and social connections play a role in explaining white advantage. However,

those living in the West are less likely to see this factor as important in explaining white advantage" (Croll 2011:21).

While this one would not –

- "Americans living in areas with high levels of poverty and with high levels of self-perceived diversity are more likely to see effort and hard work as an important explanatory factor" (Croll 2011:22).

[ccxix] "It is important to note that respondents were given the chance to state the importance of each factor independently. It is possible, for example, that some people believe hard work and effort are very important in explaining whites' greater success and laws and institutions favor whites more than others" (Croll 2011:6).

[ccxx] While not having a job can be attributed to either blacks being historically shut out of the market or to laziness, anyone can come up with a few books for not much money. To suggest otherwise would be to deny the agency of black parents. I am not saying that black parents who do not have books do not care about education or are to blame for their children's lack of success.

[ccxxi] It was common for progressive interviewees to point out the privileges they assume I had enjoyed. They must have been trying to gauge where I came from, and had sized me up pretty quickly.

[ccxxii] For example, when I asked Jason his opinion on affirmative action he replied, "I'm conflicted, I don't know what to do." On the issue of welfare he was similarly uncertain, suggesting that recipients already had "about enough" and perhaps now needed some incentives to produce their own income. He did not blame the benefactors of either social program for their need for help, nor did he blame society at large. While 47% in the AMP survey strongly disagreed with giving special consideration to blacks, my informants were fairly indifferent to this issue. Many did not seem enamored with it, but no one had a serious problem with it. It was a possible solution, but not one that was going to change anything dramatically.

[ccxxiii] In his ethnography in Detroit, Hartigan found that, "Citizens whose training in reading the significance of race comes mainly through such media accounts learn to see race as a series of abstractions, whereby social forms are ready-made to contain whatever meanings arise. The withes featured in this book, however, have learned about race from an array of sources; their grapplings with the unruly meanings of racial difference and identity constitute a complex account of how race still matters" (Hartigan 1999:7).

[ccxxiv] Regarding the relationship between national and local narratives on race, Hartigan found that "The points of correspondence and dissonance provide a means for recognizing how shifts in scale affect the significance of race; the local operation of racial categories also demonstrates how lass-based distinctions animate the role of place in constituting racial identity and difference" (1999:24).

[ccxxv] Like I had falsely assumed that not supporting subsidized housing in one's neighborhood would correspond with not knowing how social structures are responsible for producing inequality, I had also falsely assumed that knowing about individualistic causes for poverty would fit with not feeling one has been privileged, with attributing one's own successes purely to oneself. Just as I had assumed that the affordable housing opponents would be much less accepting of structural inequality than their opponents, I also assumed the opponents would "know" little of their own privilege.

[ccxxvi] In his review of Johnson's book, Aaron Pallas also was not sure of the contradiction because this inconsistency unreasonably relies on an American Dream that is monolithic (and equates purely with meritocracy). Pallas argues that different classes hold different (heterogeneous) versions of the American dream, and do not compete across class lines for their place in discrete hierarchies (they operate in different "fields" using Bourdieu's terms) (Pallas 2008:638). While the lower classes dream of moving up a bit in relation to their peers, the upper classes fear falling down relative to theirs'; and while wealthy families compete for social standing by placing their children into the best private schools, the poor do not live in the world of private schooling. Given multiple and not so stable American dreams, the contradiction between "it" and structured inequality is no longer so firmly established.

[ccxxvii] When Johnson characterizes ideology as something that "seeps in from every facet, … when it appear to be perhaps the only explanation" (154), it is reminiscent of horror movies like "The Blob," "The Fog," or any other oozy or tentacled dreadfulness from which there is no escape from its total control of us. True, she does tell us that the "families interviewed did not seem to fully surrender" (154), but saying this (and also showing how hopeful the families can be about the future) does not change an entire book strongly

portraying people as contradictory. "In the United States, ideologies about the meritocracy of the social system are particularly strong, and particularly deceptive" (153-4). Perhaps, but she provides no evidence comparing ideology in the U.S. with anywhere else. However, it would be fascinating to have research of this sort; what would Chinese factory workers or Al Qaeda soldiers have to say on the matter?

[ccxxviii] Layers of context my research enjoyed were a particular neighborhood-based community, first hand observation of neighborhood meetings and other events, volunteering alongside informants, the history of activism within that neighborhood, in-depth research on the conflicts they fought, their views on these conflicts and on diversity, inequality and privilege, and open-ended interviews that included many directly unrelated information about their lives. As research adds layers of context onto each other, patterns emerge and become clearer, significant symbols, words, and concepts come to the fore. This allows the researcher to make conclusions, which allow for the crafting of arguments about those conclusions. Johnson had conclusions because she observed a pattern of similarities between interviewees (they all seemed to verify both meritocracy and structured inequality), and from this she constructed the argument that Americans "upheld the contradiction." In order to make even more sense of her interviewees though, I believe she would need other levels of context.

[ccxxix] In one of the most classic anthropological ethnographies, E.E. Evans-Pritchard dazzled academia by sketching out what he termed the "segmentary lineage" structure of the kinship system of the Nuer cattle herders of East Africa. With this discovered matrix, it was assumed, one could understand the regulation and expression of Nuer social life. This kind of discovery is the hallmark of traditional anthropology, and it is only through long-term, first-hand experience with a people, that an ethnographer is able to translate a culture's understanding of their world (cattle herding), into a scientifically expressed proposition (segmentary lineage).

[ccxxx] For a more comprehensive listing of studies of Whittier, visit the Wikipedia page on Whittier.

[ccxxxi] Interviewees for this study ultimately included past and present volunteers and staff of Whittier organizations, officers of local community development institutions, and all the authors I could track down of any Whittier report (I will refer to all of these people as "activists"). I interviewed fourteen exclusively about research on Whittier, and I received email feedback from another three. Interviews lasted from half an hour to two hours, seven were in-person and seven by phone. One person refused an interview, seven would not reply to my multiple phone or email messages, and another five I specifically searched hard for and could not find anywhere).