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THE BUTLER-TARKINGTON COMMUNITY MEMBER VIEWS ON THE PERCEIVED GENTRIFICATION

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Abstract

Butler-Tarkington, a neighborhood within Indianapolis, has undergone some recent renovations, especially a noticeable change of the Butler-Tarkington community park. Such investments are often seen as much-needed changes to the community, but some people worry that this modification signals the initial threat of gentrification. Gentrification is a widespread phenomenon occurring throughout cities across the country. Two schools of thought have arisen about gentrification: that it is a beneficial process that redevelops low-income communities, and that it displaces old residents and creates a class and racial conflict. This study examines this process through the ground level by utilizing in-depth interviews as a means of clarifying this often-complex phenomenon. Through interview data gathered from longtime residents, newcomers, and stakeholders, we discovered attitudes toward this perceived gentrification of the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood. We believe our study offers an often-unheard voice in the scientific literature regarding gentrification.

Introduction

In the fast-paced globalizing world, urban communities struggle, almost universally, with the issue of segregated income, race, and ethnicity as a result of communities grappling with methods to manage racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity (Grier & Perry, 2018). Consequently, at times, the process of gentrification is introduced in which a community changes its demographic landscape and economic values (Williams & Needham, 2016). Many highlight these community changes that gentrification sparks; for example, the composition and neighborhood character are shifted—negatively or positively—once a gentry class returns (Kellogg, 2015). The social changes occurring within the gentrifying communities indeed spark debate among residents (both long- and short-term), policymakers, stakeholders, scholars, and concerned citizens.

According to research done on the 50 largest cities in the U.S., approximately 20% of lower-income neighborhoods have experienced gentrification since 2000, compared to 9% between 1990 and 2000 (Maciag, 2015). The need for scholarship on the interpretive accounts of all peoples involved in the process of gentrification is great; therefore, in this paper, we will find the two primary focal debates of gentrification. The first school of thought argues that gentrification is beneficial to struggling communities, while the second school of thought argues that gentrification shifts the urban layout that was once common to the original residents and sparks class and racial conflict. We conducted an exploratory study on the attitudes of residents and stakeholders according to their perceptions of gentrification in an Indianapolis, Indiana, neighborhood in order to explore the merits of each of these two different perspectives on gentrification. A lack of studies exist utilizing the voices of community members, and this is why we performed a project that is quite parallel to participatory action research; we decided it was best to have an exhaustive account from all members involved in the local community, thus further expanding the study of gentrification from a unique lens. To examine the phenomenon, we utilized a qualitative (open-ended) interview approach and a snowball sampling method, in which a community center in the local community assisted us in finding an array of interested participants.

Review of the Literature

Since the term “gentrification” first appeared, its meaning and significance have been ever-changing within the literature of the social sciences (Sheppard, 2012). Coined in 1964, the term was introduced to academia during London’s gentrification phase of the 1950s and 1960s (Glass, 1964). Social research has documented even earlier instances of gentrification dating back to the 1940s in Brooklyn, in which the historical “brownstoning” took place (Osman, 2011); however, the way the social sciences study gentrification is influenced now by the foundations set by Glass’s effort. With the realization that gentrification is such a complex social issue, scholars have utilized a wide range of methodological approaches to understand the phenomenon since the term’s original use (Zuk, Bierbaum, Chapple, Gorska, & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2018).

The salience behind gentrification is politically loaded (Davidson & Lees, 2005). By its very nature, gentrification evokes strong stances from different political parties within the affected community, and from bystanders external to the phenomenon. To many, the process of gentrification is a savior of crumbling communities, and to many others, it is riddled with class conflict and the

displacement of culture (Smith, 2005). In academia, gentrification is therefore seen as a dichotomy rather than a subject of complexity (Atkinson, 2002). This dichotomy is reflected in the two main schools of thought regarding gentrification: gentrification as a tool to uplift communities and gentrification as a catalyst of class and cultural conflict.

Without question, gentrification has parties that propose the process of gentrifying, and those who disapprove the movement. Many who support gentrification see it as a tool that reinvigorates the economic and social standing of areas that would often be left neglected otherwise (Meltzer & Ghorbani, 2017). Those against gentrification see it as a force that displaces residents, usually of ethnic minorities, and profoundly changes the cultural character of the community to adhere to the tastes of the gentry class (Langegger, 2016).

On balance, some scholars argue that gentrification is not harmful to the gentrified zone but is beneficial for both parties involved (Byrne, 2003; Meltzer & Schuetz, 2012). The increase of well-educated and affluent residents, according to research, is excellent for communities. For example, Byrne (2003) argues that residents who can pay taxes, purchase the goods and services, and support the political structure of the city, state, and federal processes can in return help both the gentrifiers and those in displacement. Consequently, cities that can attract more affluent members can aggressively push for affordable housing.

Some scholars argue that gentrification is not harmful and in fact has the possibility of providing job opportunities for the community. One study found that while regional job decline was found in the gentrified area in the form of low- and moderate-wage positions, local residents saw gains in higher-wage jobs in proximate areas, with lower-wage jobs being established slightly farther away (Meltzer & Ghorbani, 2017). While the local job losses initially appeared to be negative, the introduction of more goods-producing jobs and higher-wage jobs within only a mile of the gentrified neighborhood offered optimism in the gentrifiers' ability to bring in better-paying work. The gain in new employment more than compensated for the localized losses that occurred during the gentrification process (Meltzer & Ghorbani, 2017). Not only are jobs introduced, but gentrifiers can attract new services that had not existed before the gentrification process (Meltzer & Capperis, 2014; Meltzer & Schuetz, 2012).

In another argument regarding gentrification, literature has underlined enclaves attracting urban innovation (Zukin & Kosta, 2004), as in, far from the detriment of communities through commercial gentrification, the introduction of high-end businesses may create a neighborhood of innovation in the city's

economy, producing an attractive and social neighborhood interchange. Additionally, the gentrified community may bring increase in the public-service sector, such as sanitation and the introduction of public libraries (Byrne, 2003).

Furthermore, the relationship between crime and gentrification lacks consensus in academia. Some scholars find a positive association with crime and gentrification (Boggess, Lyndsay, & Hipp, 2016), while others see a negative association (Barton, 2016; MacDonald, 1985). Thirdly, other scholars find both positive and negative associations (Papachristos, Smith, Scherer, & Fugiero, 2011). Moreover, according to McDonald (1986), gentrification can account for the reduction of crime, especially violent crime. Some may argue, however, that gentrification may cause an increase in property crime within the gentrified community, at least in the short run, because of the tempting newcomers in the community. Further, the process of gentrification, through the ends of the gentry class, can be of more success in obtaining secure policing from the city, and the gentry class will pay the taxes to increase the possibility (McDonald, 1986).

Interestingly, we found studies that discovered higher crime in gentrifying areas; more interesting is their finding that fewer people were pulled over by police in gentrified areas but more were stopped in neighborhoods near the gentrified communities (Laniyonu, 2018). This finding may suggest that both an increase and a decrease in crime can occur, but in different places around and in the gentrified zone.

Moreover, research reveals neighborhood change on educational attainments during the process of gentrification. Schools that reflect diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels among parents have been shown to have a positive impact on students, contrary to the effect in schools in which all the families are poor (Heise & Ryan, 2002). Affluent parents fighting for higher standards of education, or affluent students understanding that if they work hard in school, they will receive benefits in the future are both reasons for an increase in education quality (Byrne, 2003).

Despite the scholarship that gives a round of applause to gentrification as a process of community safety, neighborhood revitalization, and the integration of communities (Byrne, 2003; MacDonald, 1986; Meltzer & Schuetz, 2012), many scholars are critical of the process of gentrification because of the termination of culture, the detrimental effects on the communities' original residents, and the physical and physiological displacement of the once-community (Danley & Weaver, 2018; Kellogg, 2015).

When the original residents communicate their fear of gentrification, they do not always revolve the dialogue around displacement through housing (Danley & Weaver, 2018). Instead, literature has found that residents also worry about the new developments being exclusionary toward them, a feeling of unwelcome known as the white space (Anderson, 2015). The creation of white space is a representation of a white invasion in a given community: the space is informally “off limits” to the original ethnic-minority residents (Anderson, 2015). Of argument, however, research has contested that the gentry class promotes a good “neighbor ethos” (Tissot, 2014): The gentrifiers not only claim their openness but also try to use their values to implement diversity among newcomers and different groups. Gentrifiers’ commitment to diversity is itself linked to their ability to control that diversity, however (Tissot, 2014).

The symbolic language of arriving businesses can spark cultural tension. Other research has discussed, similar to Anderson’s (2015) “white space” concept, the racial tension among spaces in gentrified neighborhoods. That is, the new retail sector offers goods and services to supply the gentry class, changes the prices according to the income of the newcomer class, and creates Anderson’s “white space” that attracts the arriving class yet alienates longtime residents (Patch 2008; Zukin 2008; Zukin et al., 2009). Moreover, scant studies take an interpretive account by interviewing community residents (Monroe Sullivan & Shaw, 2011). Of the available literature, they confirm that long-term residents feel that the new services and products lack representation of the once-community and make the residents uncomfortable, and residents are resentful about the original businesses being displaced by newly arriving ones (Deener, 2007; Freeman, 2006; Maurrasse & Bliss, 2006). Monroe Sullivan and Shaw (2011) empirically support this, but they uncovered the racial tension among involved parties in the gentrified neighborhood. Of their study, many people of color not only viewed the process of gentrification negatively but also used explicit racial language when describing the new retail stores in their community as dissatisfying for their community needs.

The transition of public space to privatized space is another issue that arises within gentrification. Neoliberal urbanism occurs when stratified economic and cultural resources produce inequality or unevenly developed public amenities, which can range from elite privatized public parks in wealthy neighborhoods to downtrodden parks in poor neighborhoods (Loughran, 2014). The creation of entrepreneurial parks has become common throughout contemporary cities across America. The idea of commodification can be introduced as well in regard to the use of diverse authenticity as a means of expunging money from incoming

gentrifiers. Cities are increasingly using entertainment as a driver for gentrification, which ultimately commodifies the neighborhood character (Langeegger, 2016).

Elite actors in gentrified areas spur economic growth in public spaces that promote leisure and in consumption that represents their tastes. Spatial privilege is derived from neoliberal urbanism and helps us understand the phenomenon of gentrification. Spatial privilege is the hegemonic ability to make claims on public space; this privilege is derived from having a high-standing position in the socially constructed hierarchies of gender, race, class, and national origin. These social advantages are reproduced in a process that affirms existing cultural capital for individuals; it also enables the practice of consumption that encourages communities to adapt even more types of areas that incorporate consumption as a main function of their existence (Loughran, 2014). This brings in the idea that public spaces must be financially self-sustaining rather than sustained by the state and by taxpayer money; parks can therefore be exclusionary in their policies, through either direct discrimination or, in most cases, indirect discrimination. For example, renovated parks may include more workers that make sure recycling bins are empty at all times to remove the presence of lower-class bottle collectors scrounging through the bins and showing a form of social disorder that is unattractive to the gentry (Loughran, 2014).

According to the theoretical basis of symbolic interactionism, cities and places can have identities that are fluid and dynamic, just as an individual or collective group can. Essentially, places are social in nature in the sense that they change over time because of external factors. Changes in demographics of the surrounding area and the movement of industry can drastically change the cultural context and collective memory of a certain area (Borer, 2010). Thus, to understand that certain areas change their collective memories because of demographic changes over time can further our knowledge on gentrification. As everyday interactions of certain public places change, symbolic boundaries of neighborhoods are redrawn, dictating which group has claim to the neighborhood, thus changing the future of that place. This urban culturalist approach can provide an insight into the demand side of gentrification.

The search for authenticity can be a driving factor for the influx of capital and the displacement of the older population by the gentry; collective memory is the dominant force driving this conflict (Brown-Saracino, 2013). The cultural norms of the gentry can be supported by the local institutions as the right way of doing things, thus cleansing the old neighborhood of individuals associated with the old decay (Brown-Saracino, 2013). Research has shown that an ideology of

diversity is persistent with gentrifiers. Affluent gentrifiers boast about their diverse neighborhoods, hence describing themselves as tolerant and progressive individuals; it is argued, however, that this maintains a system of inequality because the guise of diversity simply represents the interests of the gentry.

Essentially, gentrification occurs within the cultural framework based on the idea that a fragmentation in the collective memory is the catalyst for gentrification. The combination of the historicizing of a former working-class neighborhood, in addition to the delocalized celebration of diversity, leads to an ability of gentrification to take hold of this cultural taste. Once an area is gentrified, the meaning and cultural context of that area can be shaped to the tastes of the gentry, completely changing the environment. Areas that previously represented the old population culturally can be shifted to represent the cultural values of the gentry, thus making old residents feel alien in their own communities. This issue was termed “cosmopolitanism” by another research project and is what happens when gentrifiers create “authentic” restorations of the community that they believe represent the former demographic. Often, the original population sees these renovations as out of touch and not an accurate representation of their community (Langegger, 2016).

Gentrification changes the urban ecology of communities. At times, the process of gentrification is slow and unseen, sometimes not noticed at all (Williams & Needham, 2016). Moreover, gentrification is often seen in academia as harmful or beneficial in its outcome. The focus of this study is not on the consequences but rather on the perceptions of community residents living within the gentrifying community. This approach is an attempt to illuminate a voice that may not be heard otherwise. Neutral in stance, we sought to hear the meaningful accounts of Butler-Tarkington community members through an exploratory study.

Our research shined a light in the gaps of the present literature. That is, few studies include interpretive accounts gained from interviewing residents of the gentrified communities under examination (Danley & Weaver, 2018; Monroe Sullivan & Shaw, 2011). Further, many researchers have called attention to the displacement of residents caused by gentrification. Fewer, however, have examined how displacement affects the residents—particularly lower-income residents—at the ground level (Betancur, 2011). Additionally, little research has been completed on the perspective of the gentry class and the ways gentrifiers think of the new places they are moving into (Donnelly, 2018). In hopes of filling in the gaps, we explored opinions about the gentrification process through hearing the accounts of all residents and playing actors. Importantly, we emphasize not only displacement

when residents discuss gentrification; unwelcomeness and exclusion are also key focal points, both of which are often associated with the initial stage of gentrification (Danley & Weaver, 2018).

Butler-Tarkington

The Butler-Tarkington community is predominantly residential neighborhoods located on the near northwest side of Indianapolis, Indiana (Wheeler, 1999). The triangularity of the community is created by 38th Street to the south, Meridian Street to the east; and Michigan Road and Central Canal to the west (Figure 1). The name of Butler-Tarkington originates from Hoosier (Pulitzer prize-winning) author Booth Tarkington, who lived on Meridian Street from 1923 to 1946, and from the Butler University campus, which has been in the middle of the Butler-Tarkington community since 1920. Butler-Tarkington covers approximately 930 acres of Indianapolis (Polis Center, 2020; Wheeler, 1999).



Figure 1. The Butler-Tarkington neighborhood.

Source: "Butler-Tarkington Homes, History, Facts & Photos," by Amasters, 2015, M. S. Woods Real Estate, <https://www.mswoods.com/blog/butler-tarkington-homes-history-facts-photos/>.

By the turn of the 19th century, the farms that had once been operated by a German diaspora in the Butler-Tarkington area shifted to "suburban houses." The

development of the original homes is described as “small and narrow,” and these houses were built close to the streetcar line operated during the earlier decades of Indianapolis, an establishment known as a streetcar suburb (Wheeler, 1999). Simultaneously, the electric railways spawned North Meridian Street, an area well-known as a historic district in Indianapolis. Emerging as the location of choice for the Indianapolis elite, the locality is regarded as one of the most exclusive residential neighborhoods in the city of Indianapolis (Wheeler, 1999). Furthermore, in 1928, Butler University purchased a 300-acre Fairview campus; the establishment of the college campus catalyzed the second wave of middle-class residents. By the 1940s, the Butler-Tarkington community had a population of 12,244 people: 96.3% Caucasians and 3.6% African Americans (Polis Center, 2020). The community—a middle-class residential area—was thus considered a developed location in the city.

From the 1920s to the 1950s, Butler-Tarkington was a predominantly white middle-class community (Wheeler, 1999). During the 1950s, the community’s population began to shift. Because of the Civil Rights Movement, primarily white neighborhoods such as the Butler-Tarkington community started to open to people of color. As mentioned in by Wheeler (1999), the population south of 38th Street began to move northward. In response, the long-term community members of Butler-Tarkington started to move out toward the west and further north, a move known as white flight. Wheeler’s (1999) study describes the phenomenon as “realtors attempt[ing] to profit from the ignorance and fear of white residents, relying on peer pressure and encouraging whites to move so they could sell new property to them and their property to blacks” (p. 16). Thus, the population of the community gradually shifted. By the 1970s, the Caucasian population had decreased by 30% and the African American community had increased by 30%. According to Zip Data Maps, the neighborhood now comprises 68.5% white Americans and 28.99% African Americans.

Methods

The focus of this study was to reveal if gentrification is happening in the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood. To do this, we prioritized the voices and accounts of residents and stakeholders involved in the community. Urban renovations and reforms often coincide with worry and fear of gentrification, often leaving residents feeling powerless and as though they have no say in their community (Danley & Weaver, 2018). In contrast, renovations can be seen as a revival of a disabled community, which brings optimism to residents (Byrne, 2003). Thus, our research

focused on illuminating community voices and their perceptions. Our method of research was derived from Danley and Weaver (2018) and consisted of observation in addition to interviewing local residents and stakeholders. Importantly, we separated participants into two groups of two each: (1) longtime community members and newcomers and (2) residents and stakeholders. We defined community members to incorporate these groups. These classifications allowed us to determine whether contrasts exist due to differences in time spent in the community, as well as whether stakeholders' viewpoints differ from residents' viewpoints.

Our study is qualitative, and thus inductive in nature. We interviewed 16 participants, ages 18–74 (Figure 2), who were involved in the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood as either residents or stakeholders. These participants were further sorted into strata of nine newcomers and seven old members; three stakeholders; and four renters and nine homeowners. Longtime members are defined as having lived for 10 years or more in the community, while newcomers are defined as having been engaged in the Butler-Tarkington area for fewer than 10 years. Stakeholders are defined as individuals who do not live within the community but have an impact or investment—for example, as a teacher or a community leader/activist. Of the interviewed, eight are black, seven are white, and one identified as Latino (Figure 3). In regard to gender, eight are male, and the other eight are female. Thirteen (13) participants described themselves as homeowners or residents who lived within the community, while three considered themselves stakeholders (Figure 4). Of the participants, nine were considered newcomers and seven were considered old members.

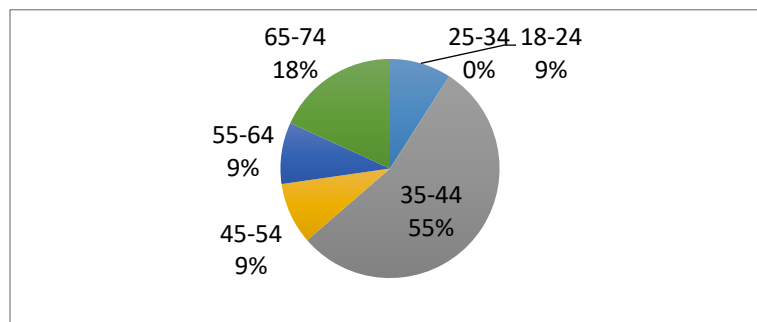


Figure 2. Age of study participants.

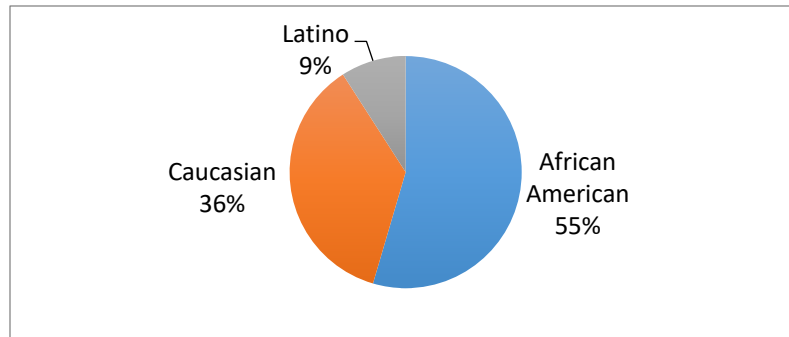


Figure 3. Race and ethnicity of study participants.

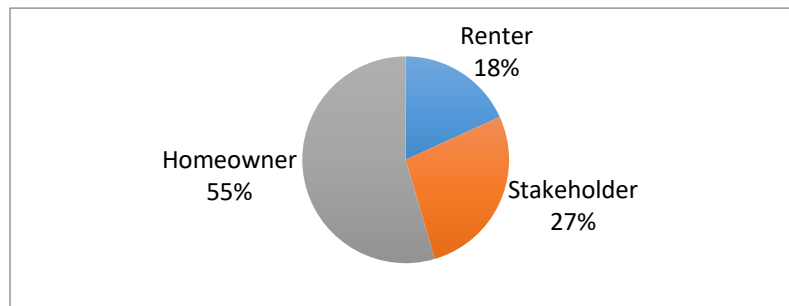


Figure 4. Types of community members in the study.

To find participants, we utilized a convenience-snowball sampling method. This sampling method attempts to gain varied perspectives in response to changes within the community; our questions and discussions capture different elements that intersect with gentrification. These elements consist of perceptions of crime, observed changes in one's community, and overall satisfaction in the community. In conjunction, questions regarding the newly renovated Butler-Tarkington park were asked to derive a starting point for discussion, especially regarding the topic of gentrification.

Structurally speaking, our interviews were open in nature, and semistructured. The questions we used are modeled from the interview guide of our mentor, Dr. Kenneth Colburn, a Butler University liberal arts professor, and can be found in Appendix A. Our data collection was based upon recurring themes in the interviews that arose. The themes were defined by similar elements that occurred often in the interviews; this was done through a coding process on an application called Nvivo12. We arranged quotes directly from the interviews into themes, then

organized subcategories within the themes. For example, one of our themes is two neighborhoods in one, and within this theme, one can find subcategories such as segregation, food deserts, and home values. This process allowed for themes to emerge through the recurrence of certain phrases and words while further enriching the themes by creating subcategories for each theme; ultimately, we ended up with three themes: neighborhood change, the good and the bad of the park, and two neighborhoods in one.

The Institutional Review Board reviewed our research methods and approved our methodology. Before proceeding with the interview, every participant in the study was informed that his or her responses would be completely confidential and anonymous, and this was finalized by participants signing an anonymity agreement preceding the interviews.

Findings

The results reveal that being a community member in the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood is not a simple conceptualization. Many community members argued against the change in their neighborhood; simultaneously, quite a few appreciated the transformation. We observed that sections of the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood are evidently different in terms of socioeconomic and racial diversity. Indeed, literature has mentioned the latter (Brabant & Braid, 2009; Wheeler, 1999). The analysis revealed three subordinate themes related to (1) neighborhood change, (2) the good and the bad of the park renovations, and (3) the division in Butler-Tarkington (Table 1).

Superordinate themes	Subthemes
1. Neighborhood Change	<p>“I am scared that these new housing development initiatives could destroy the uniqueness.”</p> <p>“I am glad the homes are being renovated. ... I just want the racial diversity to be maintained.”</p>
2. The Good and the Bad of the Park Renovations	<p>“I’m at odds. ... There was not enough inclusion in the process.”</p> <p>“The Tarkington Park is an excellent way to bring the neighborhood together.”</p> <p>“It is a beautiful sight to see the diversity and all the kids play together.”</p> <p>“I think they’re excessive (renovations), a little bit like an embarrassment of riches.”</p>
3. Two Neighborhoods in One	<p>“It’s not a Butler-Tarkington; there’s a Butler community, and there is a Tarkington community.”</p> <p>“Racial division ... as mixed as the neighborhood is, there is no close-knit connection.”</p> <p>“Your property is valued more if you are north of 42nd Street whereas less south of 42nd Street.”</p>

Table 1. Themes Revealed in the Study

Neighborhood Change

An overwhelming majority of community members noted a change in the neighborhood. As explained in the literature, termination of the previous culture, detrimental effects on the original residents, and physical and physiological displacement in the neighborhood all occur (Danley & Weaver, 2018; Kellogg, 2015). Often, the original population also argues that these renovations are not an accurate representation of their community (Langegger, 2016). Furthermore,

through our analysis, we have come across statements from community members that reflect the concerns mentioned in the literature review. For example:

I do not know ... it concerns me that there is less people of color in the neighborhood ... that bothers me. People [are] buying housing that were once owned by people of color, people [white Americans] are taking over the neighborhood. ... I have this reoccurring dream that white people are in our front yard ... so I guess this is a concern for me.

Change in the neighborhood is not solely physical; rather, it also has a psychological impact on residents, which was made evident by a resident of more than 25 years in her statement (above) about a reoccurring dream of white people standing in her front yard. The demographic change in the neighborhood coincides with her fear of alienation and the possibility of her displacement. Her fear is not unwarranted, as other respondents have observed these demographic changes as well. A former resident who was born and raised in the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood mentioned, "I remember it being much more urban, more blacker."

The abovementioned issue illuminates the possibility of a "white space," which consists of a white invasion in a given community; the space is informally "off limits" for the original ethnic-minority residents in certain areas (Anderson, 2015). A stakeholder and resident of more than 30 years mentioned residents "looking out for their history of what is going on ... need to remember where we come." The resident made it known that his history and culture in the Butler-Tarkington community should not be altered because of gentrification. Consequently, the change, according to many interviewed, is the presence of "young Caucasian couples with families."

Our study found that the neighborhood character was an important attribute for some residents of the Butler-Tarkington community. Langedger (2016) made a similar discovery through his study: that the change of neighborhood character was not an authentic representation of the studied community. The majority of respondents within our study did not oppose the renovations, however; most respondents were neutral about the renovations, and a few supported the housing renovations. We nevertheless find it essential to mention, since the possibility of more housing renovations may spark more opposition. Housing renovations were a concern for a small minority of the interviewees, as illustrated

by a long-term resident expressing her admiration for the unique style of housing in her neighborhood:

I love the uniqueness of every house. ... I am scared that these new housing development initiatives could destroy the uniqueness. ... I have seen the destruction of old homes being replaced by new ... replaced with homes twice the size and cost ... the raising of taxes that comes with this forces people [to] sell ... the housing is switching to young couples with families.

Because respondents were given the agency to define gentrification, the definition of the term varied according to the community member. The most prominent reasons for gentrification in Butler-Tarkington are based on race and housing renovations; thus, certain respondents concentrated on race and not housing renovations, and vice versa. In result, all but three respondents mentioned that gentrification is happening (10) and somewhat happening (3).

The Good and the Bad of the Park Renovations

Adjacent to the Martin Luther King Multi-Community Center and 38th Street lies the newly six-million-dollar-renovated Butler-Tarkington neighborhood park. As observers, we recognized the beauty of the park amenities, which community members did as well. After simply being asked what they thought about the park renovations, many participants (13/16) immediately commented on the beauty of the park. Moreover, half of the respondents noted that park renovations offer more community growth. Many participants explained this community growth as an aspect of propelling diversity through a public space serving as a foundation for community interactions. In addition to the diversity aspects, many participants stressed the importance of the park and economic growth. The park is seen as a beacon of redevelopment and serves as a magnet for businesses to open up shop, according to some community members. We observed, however, that a brewery was open for only a brief time, illuminating the issue that certain economic tastes initiated by the park are not yet supported by the community.

Some respondents offered the following:

Things like the Tarkington Park are an excellent way to bring the neighborhood together. ... My kids play with kids they probably wouldn't get a chance to play with any other time, and vice versa.

I have state senators and city counselors tell me that black kids won't play on that equipment and they have since come and told me that they were wrong. ... It is a beautiful sight to see the diversity and all the kids play together ... to me, the whole park being built for white kids was highly offensive.

I see the park surely bringing in growth on Illinois Street ... more businesses. ... The park serves as a catalyst for this stuff.

Many respondents acknowledged the beauty of the park and what it is—as well as what it could possibly bring—yet some participant members of Butler-Tarkington (6/16) still mentioned controversial opinions about the park. The noticeable price tag attached to the renovations on the park is evident through observation, and through the paperwork; one source lists the park renovations as costing \$6 million. Because the park is located in a community where many of our respondents mentioned a food desert and the injustices challenging the residents in the area, some respondents questioned if the initiative could have been best used somewhere else, not focused solely on the neighborhood park, as other locations “need more attention.” A community member of more than 50 years mentioned, “My biggest concern is around the corner ... on Illinois Street, 7-Eleven used to be there (next to the park) ... still need to improve that area, that area needs attention ... renovate what is there.” Another participant observed, “Best use of resources, that can be questionable. ... I heard some numbers, multi-millions. ... I don't know, I guess people are trying.”

Community members also highlighted the process of the park's renovation being top-to-bottom; there was no inclusion, some argue. Prior to the park renovations, some passionately mentioned, predominantly African Americans used the park amenities but they were not included in the process of developing the park:

Yeah, because we knew everybody. ... It is the coolest place [the park]. ... You never seen the whole hood this tight. ... We be at the park now, and

they act that like we be terrorizing the park ... and we didn't have a say in the park's upgrades. ... They changed it [the park] to make us go away; they only built that for the white people and Butler [University].

Yes ... I think they're pretty and would be good for the front of a magazine [park renovations], but I think they're excessive a little bit, like an embarrassment of riches ... process of it was very outside-in ... people are supposed to just appreciate it.

I'm at odds. ... A lot of the improvements pushed our football practices to where we are now. ... There was not enough inclusion in the process. ... As far of the look, it looks good. ... A lot of people who were not using the park were the ones making the decisions. ... We don't have a grocery store, we used to have a 7-Eleven, so mostly a food desert over here and a nice park.

Two Neighborhoods in One

Twenty years prior to our current research, an ethnographic study was done on the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood. Interestingly enough, the voices of the past echo to this day; the study reveals no change between the northern and southern halves of the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood. Cultural and financial differences between the northern part and the southern part have been long-standing. Wheeler (1999) observed, "It seemed to me that the African-American population was concentrated in the southern end of the neighborhood, with the northern end being primarily inhabited by white residents" (p. i).

We argue that the contemporary division in Butler-Tarkington still contains remnants of the past. As a key stakeholder of the community mentions, there is a "racial divide in the neighborhood ... unofficially a north Butler-Tarkington and a south Butler-Tarkington." Additionally, a long-term community member who has called Butler-Tarkington home for more than 30 years stated, "Racial division ... I think a lot of blacks don't interact with the whites, and a lot of the whites don't interact with the blacks ... as mixed as the neighborhood is, there's no close-knit connection ... it's not blended."

Residents who expressed concern regarding the racial divide in the community said this aspect of Butler-Tarkington was synonymous with segregation (4/16). As we conducted the interviews, we simultaneously spent numerous hours engaged in the Butler-Tarkington community. Observing the division firsthand, we could not help but notice the stark contrast in market value of the properties when only walking a few blocks. Some interviewees (5/16) noted the stark contrast in property values between the two halves of Butler-Tarkington. One longtime resident mentioned “lines of demarcation ... and that kind of thing ... where your property is valued more if you are north of 42nd Street whereas [valued] less south of 42nd Street.” Indeed, the housing stock shows a stark contrast between the “northern part with homes valued up to 2,000,000 dollars and homes in the south which can value as low as 30,000,” as a former community member mentioned.

Moving toward the southern part of Butler-Tarkington, many community members commonly stress the issue of inadequate food services and commercial options. A stakeholder involved with the community made it evident through our interview that he has a lack of food options during his work lunch break: “Lack of access ... I don’t eat McDonald’s or Burger king. ... I have a 20-minute window for lunch. ... I drive to [Broad] Ripple ... more healthy access to foods.” A separate stakeholder explained the situation in Butler-Tarkington in this way: “There’s no grocery store ... it’s a food desert.” A longtime community member’s statement further fortifies the idea of this food desert: “We don’t have a grocery store; we used to have a 7-Eleven, so mostly a food desert over here.” With these current findings, we note the struggles of certain residents to obtain adequate food.

Discussion

This qualitative study has sought to gain a clearer idea of the relationship between community attitudes and gentrification. Disclosure of the attitudes of many of the black participants of this study has clearly shown more of a racial perspective of the process of gentrification. These participants emphasized the division between the north and south of Butler-Tarkington similar to racial segregation of the past. Consequently, when the park renovations occurred toward the south side of the community, residents questioned why there was a lack of inclusivity. While these interviewees admired the new renovations, many who lived in the southern part of the community emphasized the need for adequate businesses.

Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical framework that applies to our research. Residents spoke about the issue of the changing demographics of the park. This relates back to the idea that physical locations can have shared social meaning

and character and that this social meaning can be changed by external factors. Residents who visited the park before renovations noticed a change in the racial demographics from predominantly black to more diverse. Respondents who raised this issue were not opposed to the changing demographics of the park; they just noted that this diversification was catalyzed by the renovation. Changing these demographics can lead to a change in the cultural context and collective memory of a location. In this case, the park was initially a predominately homogeneous cultural space for black visitors but has since diversified (Borer, 2010).

The conflictive nature with this change of cultural space arises with symbolic boundaries being redrawn to fit the needs of the gentry, that the change in the collective memory in a location can drive out the older residents of the community (Brown-Saracino, 2013). Based upon our interviews, residents did not feel as if the renovation and change in the culture were threats to them staying in the neighborhood. Furthermore, our study does not have the merit to generalize this park as a “white space,” as exclusion was not felt, according to the respondents.

While these interviewees stated that gentrification was occurring, only three respondents argued gentrification happening. These respondents focused on the fact that displacement was not occurring because of their view of a strong diverse community. The white respondents who agreed that gentrification was occurring focused more on aspects involved with housing renovations and home pricings, contrary to a racial perspective, which was predominant in the African American respondents. This was the only noticeable difference between black and white respondents. The length of involvement in the community and the type of community member did not have noticeable differences in viewpoints; however, the only participants to say gentrification was not happening were new members. Also, all four stakeholders mentioned that gentrification was happening and offered exhaustive responses.

Methodological Limitations

The biggest limitation of our study was the small sample size of 16, which means that the results cannot be generalized to all people of the Butler-Tarkington community. Additionally, a vast amount of the participants were contacted through the Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood Association; the possibility of a skewed result is evident, since these participants wanted their voices heard; others did so, too, but were not involved in the neighborhood association. To contact the latter, we randomly selected people from the neighborhood park, yet many did not have the time for meetings or never replied to requests for scheduled meetings.

Implications

The second-to-last question in our interview guide concentrated on how to deal with community change. A significant number of respondents mentioned the need for community members to participate in the Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood Association. Ultimately, this boils down to an aspect of inclusivity in decision-making, which was mentioned in some way by all participants. Essentially, having a seat at the table is desirable for residents. Through our analysis, this is the most profound implication that ought to be considered, as we wanted to hear and analyze what the residents were saying about what they want implemented.

Further Research

Studies to explore the relationship between Butler-Tarkington residential attitudes and gentrification, paying particular attention to the racial differences, are needed. It would also be helpful to explore the attitudes deriving from residents from the southern and northern ends of Butler-Tarkington. It would be beneficial to Indianapolis communities to better understand the depth of racial perspectives related to the community members and the ways to resolve the conflict among people who see gentrification as a negative, as unjust, and in some contexts a racist way of improving neighborhoods. It would also be helpful to understand the relationship between them and those who approve of gentrification in Butler-Tarkington, to see where their underlying premises are set. A longitudinal study could explore the relationship at an impressive account.

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Appendix A. Interview Guide

Demographic Information

Pseudo Name:

Gender:

Age:

Race and Ethnicity:

Type of Community Member (i.e. Renter, stakeholder, homeowner):

Years living/or involved with Butler-Tarkington:

Family living in the area (yes or no)

Street of your residence:

Occupation:

Highest educational level:

Home and Neighborhood

1. How important was the neighborhood (Butler-Tarkington) to your decision to buy/or get involved in?

Very important _____

Somewhat Important _____

Not at all Important _____

Explain:

2. Now that you have lived/or been involved here awhile, have your initial impressions or views about the neighborhood changed?

Yes: ____ No: _____

Explain _____

3. How many residents in the neighborhood do you know on a first name basis?

(Describe Interactions)

4. Have you or your family ever had any concerns about your personal safety living/involved in Butler-Tarkington? Yes: _____ No: _____

Explain _____

5. Do neighbors and residents here tend to look out for each other? Yes: _____ No: _____

Examples?

6. Have you or your family ever used the Butler-Tarkington park? Yes: _____
No: _____

How do you feel about the new renovations done to the Butler-Tarkington park?

7. Has neighborhood crime ever been a concern to you?
Yes: _____ No: _____

Explain:

8. How would you rate your overall level of satisfaction living/involved in
Butler-Tarkington neighborhood?
Very Satisfied _____
Somewhat Satisfied _____
Little or no Satisfaction _____

Explain:

9. What, if anything, do you like least about living in Butler-Tarkington?

Understanding the neighborhood perceptions

10. What comes to mind when you think of the Butler-Tarkington community?

The impacts of Gentrification

11. What changes have you seen in the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood?

12. What current changes have you seen in the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood?

13. Have you heard the term gentrification?

Yes: _____ No: _____

If yes, what do you make of the term gentrification?

If no, (give definition: pg. 18) what do you make of this definition?

14. Does gentrification apply to the Butler-Tarkington community?

15. What does “community roots” mean to you as a resident of the Butler-Tarkington community?

16. What is the best way to deal with community changes?

17. Finally, is there anything you would like to add or say that we may have left out, forgotten to ask or mention, that you think would help us understand this neighborhood?

Definition used for question #13

The fear of displacement, loss of community icons—such as parks, businesses, and/or homes—and do you see exclusions from certain spots in your neighborhood because of renovations?

*Definition influenced by Danley and Weaver (2018).