

Distribution Agreement

In presenting this thesis or dissertation as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree from Emory University, I hereby grant to Emory University and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive, make accessible, and display my thesis or dissertation in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known, including display on the world wide web. I understand that I may select some access restrictions as part of the online submission of this thesis or dissertation. I retain all ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis or dissertation. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis or dissertation.

Signature:

Robert Stewart Varner
Name

02-19-2010
Date

Inside the Perimeter:
Urban Development in Atlanta since the 1996 Olympic Games

By

Robert Stewart Varner
Doctor of Philosophy
Graduate Institute of the Liberal Arts

Kevin Corrigan, Ph.D.
Advisor

Frank Lechner, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Cynthia Willett, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Accepted:

Lisa A. Tedesco, Ph.D. Dean of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies

Date

Inside the Perimeter:
Urban Development in Atlanta since the 1996 Olympic Games

By

Robert Stewart Varner
M.A., Bowling Green State University, 2001
B.A., Queens College, 1998

Advisor: Kevin Corrigan, Ph.D.

An abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in The Graduate Institute of the Liberal Arts
2010

Abstract

Inside the Perimeter: Urban Development in Atlanta since the 1996 Olympic Games By Robert Stewart Varner

In the 1990s the population of the city of Atlanta grew for the first time since the early 1970s. Many of the newly arrived residents were white and middle class and this contrasted with the city's recent history which had been marked by decades of white flight and extreme class bifurcation. Far from a spontaneous reversal, Atlanta's business and political leaders had been working together for years to counteract the pull of the suburbs and attract middle class residents to the city. This partnership has been called a governing regime and it worked to take advantage of increasingly global networks of capital and people to create the thriving cosmopolitan city Atlanta's leaders have dreamed of since the Civil War.

This dissertation examines the changes that have taken place in Atlanta's physical and social landscape since the city hosted the Olympic Games in 1996 and places these changes within their local, national and global historical context. In addition to examining the global economic situation within which these changes took place and the governing regime that steered the city through these networks, this dissertation analyses the development of a tourist infrastructure in Downtown, the phenomenon of Intown gentrification and the creation of a consumer driven "live, work and play" neighborhood called Atlantic Station.

The governing regime is characterized as pro-Third Way because it defines the role of local government as facilitator for private business. This relationship has been arguably successful in recreating parts of the city but it has often done so at the expense of those who are least able to take advantage of the market. Whether it be from the destruction of public housing, displacement due to gentrification or increased antagonism toward the homeless, the city's most vulnerable residents are unlikely to see the changes to the city as positive.

Inside the Perimeter:
Urban Development in Atlanta since the 1996 Olympic Games

By

Robert Stewart Varner
M.A., Bowling Green State University, 2001
B.A., Queens College, 1998

Advisor: Kevin Corrigan, Ph.D.

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in The Graduate Institute of the Liberal Arts
2010

CONTENTS

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION: GLOBALIZATION AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT	1
Globalization	3
Keynesianism and Neoliberal Economics	4
Neoliberalism and the “Third Way”	8
The Third Way, Neoliberalism and Globalization	12
Critics of Globalization	15
Globalization and the Global City	17
Global Atlanta	20
2. GLOBAL ATLANTA	24
Regional Trends: The Rise of Sunbelt Cities and the (New) New South	29
Local Trends: The Atlanta Way	32
Maynard Jackson to Andy Young	34
Andynamics	35
The Presidential Parkway	38
Underground	39
The Absentee Mayor and Citizen Young	41
The 1996 Olympics and Municipal Debt	41
Conclusion	45
3. PRODUCING AND ENFORCING DOWNTOWN ATLANTA	47
Central Area Study I and II	49

Tourism, Themed Spaces and the New American City	54
Underground Atlanta and the World of Coca-Cola	59
The 1996 Olympics	65
The Effect of the Olympics on Intown Neighborhoods	67
Summerhill	70
The Olympic Village and Olympic Park	71
The Georgia Aquarium	73
Security: Panhandling Ban	77
Civil Rights Museum?	81
Conclusion	87

4. THE POLITICS OF GENTRIFICATION IN POST-OLYMPICS ATLANTA	92
Gentrification: Global Trend	97
Neil Smith and Gentrification as a Critical Rhetoric	99
Atlanta's Intown Neighborhoods in the 1990s	101
HUD Empowerment Zone	103
Renaissance Atlanta	105
Urban Revitalization	106
The Gentrification Task Force	108
The Limits of Gentrification as a Critical Rhetoric	110
Places, Spaces and Networks	112
A Brief History of East Atlanta	117
The East Atlanta "Renaissance"	120
East Atlanta: Themed Space and Themed History	123

The Death and Life of a Place	132
Conclusion	137
5. ATLANTIC STATION: COMMUNITY, CONSUMERISM AND ATLANTA'S NEW URBANISM	141
Against Suburbia: Riverside and the Birth of Atlanta's New Urbanism	141
A Brief Overview of New Urbanism	145
Questioning and Critiquing New Urbanism	151
Atlantic Station	158
Atlantic Station in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution	161
Atlantic Station and Public Private Partnerships	165
Analysis	169
Conclusion	175
6. CONCLUSION: SPACE AND POWER INSIDE THE PERIMETER	177
Works Cited	183

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: GLOBALIZATION AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Amid the millennial hyperbole of the last decade of the twentieth century were claims of revolutionary change in the social, economic, technological and political order of global life. The end of the Cold War in the early 1990s and the continued expansion of free markets throughout the decade seemed for many to mark the victory of Western Capitalism and Liberal Democracy. The politically influential American philosopher and political theorist Francis Fukuyama viewed all of this as the conclusion of centuries of ideological debate and famously proclaimed the “end of history” in his book of the same name.

While Fukuyama’s early support for the neo-conservative Project for a New American Century – a position he later distanced himself from – made him a controversial figure, his insistence on the centrality of globalization in world affairs was shared by many academics. An avalanche of scholarship has emerged since the 1990s from all corners of academia to comment on and debate the extent of these changes, real and perceived. The discourse on globalization has energized old debates about political power, human rights and identity. Furthermore, globalization has added new dimensions to ongoing questions about locality, the role of the nation-state and the status of culture.

The academic interest in globalization – both positive and negative – over the past ten years could be explained by the conspicuous lack of consensus about what globalization is and what it means. Globalization, as an organizing concept, implies a nearly unlimited expansion of what is thought to be local and a blurring – if not a dissolution – of the spatial boundaries that could be used to define states, nations, cultures

and people. However, (or as a result) globalization has gained currency in the context of increased calls for nationalism and appeals to the sanctity of national sovereignty. It holds open the possibility of world-wide cooperation but also sets the stage – and provides the motivation – for conflict on a massive scale. Globalization is presented as though it is the next phase of human development after the industrial revolution but there is still much debate over what exactly is new about this in terms of human history. As David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt and Jonathan Perraton pointed out in their book *Global Transformations*, there is plenty of room for a spectrum of perspectives on globalization which range from hyperglobalists who argue that everything is different now to skeptics who don't understand what all the fuss is about (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt and Perraton 2-10).

Within the context of such a wide range of scholarship and scholarly opinion on globalization, some academics have turned to much smaller scales to see what effects all of this is having on lived experiences. Scholars such as Peter Taylor, Saskia Sassen and Manuel Castells have focused much of their globalization work on cities and argue that urban areas have undergone radical changes as they had taken on new roles in the global economy. This has certainly been true for many cities in the United States which had spent most of the previous three decades in the much publicized urban crises. By the 1990s many of these long neglected urban centers seemed to be experiencing something of a turn around as their populations began to grow and investments started to trickle in.

This chapter will establish the academic context for the present project which seeks to understand the dizzying changes that have taken place in Atlanta since it hosted the 1996 Olympics as well as the forces which have influenced it. It begins with a brief

overview of what scholars mean when they talk about globalization, what ideologies and political theories have gained currency within its context and why its defining processes have been both praised and criticized. Next, this chapter maps out the connections between globalization and cities. The chapter concludes by situating the city of Atlanta within these larger discussions and outlining how the following chapters will address these concerns.

Globalization

There are many paths one may take into the vast academic discussion of globalization. Robust bodies of literature have developed around issues of migration, inter-state relations, cultural exchange and the internationalization of any number of phenomena. While this literature makes a strong case for the contemporary experience of globalization as representing something relatively novel in terms of the scale and intensity of international interaction, whether or not there is truly something new going on has been the subject of considerable debate.

An examination of the scholarly work done on globalization reveals much of the interest in this debate gathers with a particular density around issues of trade and commerce. At least part of the reason for this is because trade is often a consideration, if not a central factor, in questions of globalization. As a result, many scholars have focused their attention here in the belief that, if there is anything truly new about globalization, it will be found in economic transformations. Peter Taylor finds this to be the case and summarizes the argument in favor of globalization as something new in his book *Modernities*. He argues that the economic issues raised by globalization demand a

new way of looking at the relationship between “the society” and “the state” because, he writes, globalization offers “a new scale of economic organization transcending individual states” (Taylor 1999, 7). Whereas international economic relationships are nothing new, what is new in Taylor’s argument is the concept of a stateless and global economic order.

Whether one agrees with Taylor or not about an economic order “transcending the individual states,” the relationship between the state and the market is a point of enormous interest for scholars of globalization. Specifically, changes in the prevailing economic theories which took place in the 1970s have attracted a great deal of attention and the reasons for this are at least two fold. First, in this period economists began talking about transnational economies, as Taylor mentioned, which were markedly different from local and international economies in that they were fueled by increasingly mobile – in some senses, “stateless” – capital. Secondly, in the early 1970s a new school of economic thought, born in the London School of Economics and raised at the University of Chicago, caught the interest of some of the most powerful leaders in the world by questioning almost every assumption economists had made for the previous half-century. This new body of economic theory is generally called Neoliberalism and it takes its inspiration from Classical economic theory (and is thus sometimes called neo-classical economics) and is marked by its strong preference for free markets and its skepticism – if not outright hostility – toward state regulation. As a result, it has become a central point of concern for scholars of globalization.

In order to understand the connection between neoliberalism and globalization, it is important to understand the context within which both seem to have emerged. By the late 1960s, Keynesian economic theory, named for John Maynard Keynes, was the virtually unquestioned dogma for mainstream economists in Western Europe and North America. Keynes advanced an economic theory which advocated vigorous state regulation of markets but not state ownership. Keynesianism, with its call for a mixed economy, thus amounted to a middle-of-the-road compromise between what it saw as the abusive and crash-prone *laissez-faire* that had led to the Great Depression but also to the bureaucratic and undemocratic systems which characterized both Soviet and Chinese communism.

However, in 1973, an oil embargo imposed by OPEC resulted in, among other things, a general questioning of the predictions and prescriptions of Keynesian economics. As Monica Prasad notes, "the consequent fivefold increase in the price of this one commodity increased inflation throughout every developed country. The higher cost of domestic goods reduced returns to investment, and a new economic phenomenon entered the world: 'stagflation'" (Prasad 2006, 2). Stagflation was marked by rising unemployment coupled with inflation and this presented a dilemma for Keynesian economists. Keynes had recommended raising interest rates to counteract inflation but lowering interest rates to counteract unemployment but had developed no mechanism to deal with both. At this point, a hitherto marginal economic theory, espoused by Friedrich Hayek and his followers, most notably Milton Friedman, became much more influential. These so-called "Chicago School" economists argued for much less government intervention as they believed the market was naturally self-regulating. Thus,

they argued that the way out of stagflation was less, not more, regulation. They advocated free trade agreements and tax cuts for industry. The loss of revenue from tariffs and taxes would be made up for with deep cuts to government social welfare programs. The loss in public sector services would be made up for by lower cost of living (a result of increased industrial efficiency) and private charity made possible by the money the wealthiest citizens would save as a result of the tax cuts. In the 1980s, “trickle down” economics became the overly simplified short-hand for this theory.

More than just a system of bookkeeping, neoliberal economic theory makes deeply normative claims based on certain fundamental assumptions about not only markets but also people. Completing the bulk of his work in the years after the Second World War from his post at the London School of Economics, Hayek wrote explicitly against what he saw as the adoption of socialist ideas by leading European economists such as Keynes. Hayek contends that, though these ideas may be well-intended, they are doomed to result in the forced conformity and violent nationalism characteristic of Nazi Germany. This is because he saw a serious threat to individualism in the protectionist planned economies produced by state regulation.

In *The Road to Serfdom*, Hayek’s most famous book of economic theory, the author makes what is essentially a moral argument against state intervention in matters of trade. Hayek argues that state regulation necessarily limits freedom and seeks to take away a sense of social responsibility. He writes,

A movement whose main promise is the relief from responsibility cannot but be amoral in its effect, however lofty the ideals to which it owes its birth. Can there be much doubt that the feeling of personal obligation to remedy inequities, where our individual power permits, has been weakened rather than strengthened, that both the willingness to bear

responsibility and the consciousness that it is our own individual duty to know how to choose have been perceptibly impaired? (Hayek 2007, 217)

As an alternative to state regulation of trade, Hayek prescribed doing away with almost all central regulation which would allow people to be truly virtuous as they nobly and individually took on the responsibility for providing for the common good through charitable giving and the rational and efficient means of the free market.

David Harvey writes that the years 1978 to 1980 marked a "revolutionary turning point in the world's social and economic history" as free market economic theory gained acceptance from some of the most powerful political leaders in the world (Harvey 2005, 1). Margaret Thatcher, the English Prime Minister from 1979 to 1990, famously went to work dismantling the power of trade unions and also shrank the robust system of state sponsored entitlement programs that had developed in England in the post war years. In the United States, President Ronald Reagan, who served from 1981 to 1989, presided over massive deregulation efforts, most notably, in the telecommunication, air travel and utilities sectors.

Such market driven policies at least made good on the promise of creating powerful new markets that have generated vast sums of capital – or at least *virtual* capital in the form of credit, futures and derivatives. However, the critics of neoliberalism often point out that the consumer freedom neoliberalism is based on has failed to result in a balanced distribution of global wealth. George DeMartino argues that what separates the critics of neoliberalism from its supporters is the former's "normative commitment to substantive equality in economic outcomes rather than to the personal liberty that neoliberalism promises" (DeMartino 2000, 10).

David Harvey has gone so far as to argue that neoliberalism is not a radical new way for societies to confront economic difficulties but is actually an attempt to restore class power to the elite after years of policies aimed at redistribution measures (Harvey 2005, 154). While this may strike some as a needlessly dogmatic appeal to Marxism, there is strong evidence to suggest that the neoliberal era was marked by a dramatic and global widening of the gap between rich and poor. In his highly detailed work on globalization and inequality Branko Milanovic researched what he calls “world inequality” which he argues “captures inequality between individuals” and not just between nation states (Milanovic 2007, 27). This research uses household surveys and tries to solve for the potential problem raised by other kinds of inequality calculations which arise from the fact that an expanding upper-class in a poor nation does not necessarily mean that economic welfare is improving for every citizen of that nation. His work found that “the top 5 percent of highest earners in the world receive one third of the world income, whereas the bottom 5 percent receive only 0.2 percent” (Milanovic 2007, 40). Stated in terms of purchasing power (expressed as dollars using a purchasing power parity scale) Milanovic found that “a little over 40 percent of the world population lives on an income/expenditure less than \$PPP 1,000 per capita annually; 75 percent of world population with an income of less than the world mean income of \$PPP 3,526; the top 10 percent of world distribution includes all those with incomes above \$PPP 9,600 per capita per annum” (Milanovic 2005, 130).

Neoliberalism and the “Third Way”

Harvey argues that “the greatest testimony” to the success of Reagan’s and Thatcher’s political and economic restructuring, “lies in the fact that both Clinton and Blair [their successors] found themselves in a situation where their room for manoeuvre was so limited that they could not help but sustain the process of restoration of class power even against their own better instincts” (Harvey 2005, 62-3). However, it is arguably an over-simplification to characterize the shift from Reagan/Thatcher to Clinton/Blair as, essentially, a continuation of the same ideology. Indeed, the triumph of Clinton’s new Democrats and Blair’s New Labour was generally understood as the ascendancy of yet another political ideology with its own body of economic theory known as “The Third Way.” Third Way politics are closely linked to the British political scientist Anthony Giddens and seek to envision post-Cold War political and economic theories which, as Giddens argues, “escape the left/right divide” (Giddens 1998, 65).

In his book *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*, Giddens takes on both the European socialism that worried Hayek as well as the Neoliberalism. Reaching back to Keynes, Giddens calls for a “new mixed economy” which would have the state promote business but also protect its citizens from the excesses of the market (Giddens 1998, 99). The distinction between this and basic Keynesianism is in the subtle but important call for the state to work with the private sector. Using clearly modified Keynesian language, Giddens writes, “This new mixed economy looks instead for a synergy between public and private sectors, utilizing the dynamism of the markets but with the public interest in mind” (Giddens 1998, 99-100). For Keynes, the role of the state was to regulate markets. Giddens envisions a state that, in addition to regulation, would work with the private sector to facilitate its growth.

In order to understand Giddens's theory, it is important to come to terms with his analysis of the Welfare State. Invented in Bismarck's Germany and exported all over Europe and the United Kingdom, the welfare state defined European social democracy in the Twentieth century and became the primary target of the right. Giddens suggests that social democrats should accept many of the criticisms the right has made of the welfare state though not their solution. Summarizing these critiques, he writes,

It is essentially undemocratic, depending as it does upon a top-down distribution of benefits. Its motive force is protection and care, but it does not give enough space to personal liberty. Some forms of welfare institutions are bureaucratic, alienating and inefficient, and welfare benefits can create perverse consequences that undermine what they were designed to achieve. (Giddens 1998, 113)

However, rather than abandoning the responsibilities of the Welfare State to the market, Giddens suggests reimagining it as the Social Investment State. In his original formulation of the concept of the Social Investment State, found in *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*, Giddens suggests that the state should favor "investment in *human capital* wherever possible, rather than direct provision of economic maintenance" (Giddens 1998, 117). The idea here is that state expenditure should not be seen as just spending but rather as investing in more efficient infrastructure and more productive citizens. To use a medical metaphor, the focus is on preventative medicine, rather than triage, for social ills.

Ruth Lister, in her article "The Third Way's Social Investment State," suggests that this is both a pragmatic response and a normative ideal (Lister 2004, 157). As a pragmatic response, the social investment state seeks to answer the concerns raised by both the traditional welfare state and a state that offers little or no social safety net. As a

normative ideal, Lister argues that the social investment state assumes and enforces through policy a conception of individuals and communities as economically productive entities that embody the values of responsibility, inclusion and opportunity (Lister 2004, 157). She writes that a key element in the notion of the social investment state is that “[c]hildren [are] prioritized as citizen-workers” and that “adult social citizenship [is] defined by work obligations” (Lister 2004, 160).

Third way politics bills itself as a correction to free market neoliberalism on the right and European socialism and on the left. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that it is itself the target of much criticism from both the right and the left. From the right, the third way is critiqued as being simply another name for socialism in that it calls for too large a role for the state and requires wealth redistribution in the form of a progressive tax rate. Echoing Hayek’s ethical critique of socialism, the libertarian scholar Tibor Machan argues that:

As an ethic some of this [third way tax policy] has a point – people who are well enough off ought to look out, in times of emergency, after those less fortunate than they are. But as politics it is vicious and intolerable because it isn't a matter of ethical choice but via government coercion that the behavior is supposed to be secured. (Machan 1999, n.p.)

Not surprisingly, the third way is critiqued from the left for exactly the opposite reason. Because Socialism is the social theory which most directly confronts what is seen as the exploitive tendencies of capitalism, it is predictable that those to the left of Giddens would bristle at the thought of the welfare state handing over any responsibility to the market. Put simply, some on the left worry that proponents of the third way are simply advancing a theory of social democracy with the socialism replaced with capitalism. Paul Cammack, in his article “Giddens’ Way With Words,” argues that the

third way may not be *laissez-faire* neoliberalism but that it is “*active*” neoliberalism. “On issue after issue,” he writes, Giddens “seeks to make the behaviour of individuals, corporations, ‘third-sector’ organisations and the State consistent with and supportive of a social system thoroughly permeated and ruled by capital” (Cammack 2007, 152).

While Cammack’s concerns may be overstated, they point to the key controversy within Third Way politics which is the role of state government *vis à vis* the market. Whereas Keynesianism positioned the state as a kind of protector of the people against market excesses and neoliberalism positioned the state as, largely, an impediment to individual freedom which should be minimized, the Third Way positions the state as both a check against market excesses but also a facilitator of market innovation. While it is easy to separate these tasks in theory, it is clear that a state which seeks to regulate and facilitate the same entities may be unable to separate them in practice.

The Third Way, Neoliberalism and Globalization

In *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*, Giddens argued that globalization is one of “the great social transformations of the end of the twentieth century” (Giddens 1998, 65). Thus his conception of the Third Way is designed specifically to deal with the particular set of issues presented by globalization. Not the least of these issues is determining how power should be balanced between the nation state and the markets. Yet, while the Third Way presents itself as a rejection of, and alternative to, neoliberalism, it shares with neoliberalism the conception of a powerful role for the market. This is not to say the Third Way and Neoliberalism are the same thing, differentiated only by intensity. Whereas neoliberalism rejects, as much as

possible, government interference, the Third Way uses state policy and regulation to prod the market down particular paths. However, both rely heavily and, to an extent, faithfully, in the beneficial potential of market forces.

One of the effects of this must be, at some level, the establishment of standard operation procedures and protocols which make possible the efficient functioning of market processes across vast geographic spaces. This is because the efficient functioning of markets, regardless of whether or not they are being facilitated by the state, depends on predictable and compatible practices. This need not be presented as some sort of frightening and oppressive imposition of cultural will by strong actors on weak ones but it is clear that in order for transactions to take place, the relevant parties must, at some level, be in sync with one another and this will almost certainly require changes to at least one of the parties. As such, what appears to be a simple plan for the buying and selling of commodities becomes a central part of the development of a more or less unified world view with enabling structures and institutions. Thus, advocates of market driven globalization, whether they be neoliberal or third way, have developed robust arguments for their position which center around their belief that it will result in an safe, efficient and free world society.

John Meyer, John Boli, George Thomas and Francisco Ramirez's article "World Society and the Nation State" illustrates this process. The article begins by taking a strong stance in favor of recognizing globalization as increasingly stateless. By this the authors mean that part of the story of globalization is the diminishing role of "the nation-state" as power becomes more widely disbursed amongst other entities such as corporations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). They write, "We see the

nation-state as culturally constructed and embedded rather than as the unanalyzed rational actor depicted by realists” (Meyer et al. 1997, 103, 147). However, the writers argue that it does not follow that anarchic relativism has replaced the global order previously policed by powerful nations. Rather, they describe an emerging and “world society” which is characterized by more or less standardized institutions and modes of operation for international actors.

Meyer *et al.* argue that the features of contemporary nation-states “derive from worldwide models constructed and propagated through global cultural and associational processes” (Meyer et al. 1997, 103, 144-145). This has created more or less standardized forms of interactions which allow transnational relationships to occur as smoothly and predictably as possible. The writers list many examples to illustrate the growing uniformity between nation-states: constitutional forms of government, standardized public school systems, economic and demographic record keeping, population control policies, formal recognition of women’s rights and human rights in general, environmental protection, economic development policies, welfare systems and health care systems (Meyer et al. 1997, 103, 152). The authors conclude that the development of such a world society is an integral, perhaps definitive, part of the process of modernization which they describe as inevitable, universal and, by and large, advantageous.

The concept of an efficient and peaceful cosmopolitan globalization is the one posited by the Third Way. Giddens praises organizations such as Greenpeace, Amnesty International and other NGOs which work across the softened borders of nation states in accordance with values that are, arguably, not culturally specific but which represent the

social values of this new global space. As Giddens writes, “like any other social environment ... this new space needs regulation, the introduction of rights and obligations” (Giddens 1998, 141). However, this is not as unproblematic and straightforward as they may appear. Who defines these rights and obligations? How will they be enforced? Who will do it? Even if this kind of cosmopolitan world society does eventually emerge, it will emerge out of fierce conflict over the answers to these questions.

Critics of Globalization

Not surprisingly, critics of globalization – whether it be Neoliberal or Third Way – are numerous. Though their challenges are frequently characterized as “anti-globalization,” the global breadth of their interests and the sympathy they express for transnational solidarity which defines the work indicates that these critics are not opposed to globalization defined as the interaction and interconnection of people. It is more accurate to say that these criticisms are directed at specific relationships of power that are common, though not inevitable, in the context of globalization. Rather than taking “development” and “modernization” to be generally positive and rather than seeing the market as a generally fair arbiter of global relationships, critics tend to see free trade agreements, NGO activity and Western capitalist expansion in general in terms of the networks of power to which they are inextricably linked.

Immanuel Wallerstein’s work on what he calls World Systems Theory predates much of the current interest in globalization and serves as an implied or explicit touchstone for much of this scholarship. In his numerous books and articles, published

over a career that began in the early 1960s, Wallerstein argues that the particular contours of contemporary capitalist globalization can trace their roots to the centuries old European colonial project. As opposed to advocates of neoliberal globalization, Wallerstein understands capitalist globalization in terms of power rather than in terms of development or modernization. In his work, powerful actors (those he calls core states) maintain this power over weaker states (the periphery) through trade agreements and international policy using ideas like “development” and “modernization” rhetorically but not a true motivation (Wallerstein 2004).

The geographer David Harvey has done much work to outline these relationships and techniques. Explicitly drawing out an implicit position in Wallerstein’s work, and in traditional Marxist theory in general, Harvey seeks to understand class conflict in spatial, and specifically global, terms in addition to the temporal emphasis of historical materialism. Harvey has published three books and numerous articles that directly address the notion of globalization, and in particular its neoliberal manifestations which will be dealt with in more detail later in this chapter. For the present purposes, it is enough to point out that Harvey sees globalization in terms of the expansion of free markets and sees this expansion as a means of maintaining (even reclaiming) class power which had been challenged in the twentieth century by communist revolutions in Russia, Asia and Latin America and had been eroded by the ascendancy of Keynesian economic theory in Europe and North America.

While it is true that critics like Wallerstein and Harvey are aiming their opposition at those who would paint a rosy picture of development, modernization and global expansion, they need not be seen as necessarily contradicting others who look

optimistically toward a cosmopolitan future for a globalized planet. However, they are playing the necessary role filling in a gap in the optimistic versions of globalization by pointing out that so far globalization has been a process where the distribution of benefits has been strikingly uneven and arguing that the world's most vulnerable people are going to need more to hold on to than the hope that one day all of this will work out.

Globalization and the Global City

All of the writers dealt with so far acknowledge that some level of deterritorialization is being experienced in globalization as activities, institutions and processes – like entertainment, work, politics and community – are no longer bound to fixed geographic locations. This is linked to the proposition that a desirable result of globalization would be a kind of cosmopolitanism which decreases the deterministic power of locality. Therefore, it may seem odd, even passé, to focus research that takes globalization seriously on such a traditional space as the city. However, in so far as globalization can be characterized as the spread of connected kinds of human activity across vast tracts of space, a key to understanding this process and its consequences must be how and where distinct individuals, groups and activities linked up. The global city, as a space that serves as a connection point for a wide range of global activities in addition to its more local duties as an urban center (though, in the world city, the two roles become hard to separate), is a good place to start looking for signs of what the realities and possibilities of globalization mean for people.

Peter Taylor has done some of the most sophisticated work on the roles cities play in the processes of globalization. In his book *World City Network: A Global Urban*

Analysis, he focuses on what he calls inter-city relations as the “configurations of connections” between cities which allow them to “work together as economic entities” (Taylor 1999, 7). In order to do this he develops a number of metrics which allow him to measure the levels of interconnection between urban centers around the globe and to describe how the work of global commerce is divided both competitively and cooperatively between them. Taylor states that this work is meant to counteract State-centric views of globalization and to make an argument for the power of cities.

Saskia Sassen, in the book *The Global City*, works with a very similar perspective on the power of cities in theories of globalization. She is so adamant about this newness of the power of cities that she quite pointedly refuses to call them World Cities, as Taylor does, insisting on the term “Global Cities” to mark both their difference from earlier putatively “world cities” and their connection to globalization. Sassen argues that globalization is a trans-urban process and that “global cities” operate as command and control centers for global transaction. Sassen’s work does differ from Taylor’s in that she is less interested (though not disinterested) in the interconnections between cities and more interested in the consequences of globalization on global cities. Her book focuses on three cities, New York, London and Tokyo, and she identifies a series of characteristic changes and challenges they have each experienced as they transformed from simply major cities to complexly global ones. Among the interconnected characteristics she finds are, (1) new kinds of “manufacturing” that produce “products” for global business such as accounting practices, legal strategies and marketing plans (2) extreme class bifurcation as the result of the near disappearance of traditional skilled and semi-skilled industrial work and (3) the informalization and casualization of many kinds of work that

require (and, importantly, are not created by) unskilled and undocumented workers (Sassen 2001, 284-294).

Harvey is also interested in the relationship between globalization and the city but, while not directly contradicting Sassen, he has argued that globalization, and specifically the neoliberal economic models that frequently determine its structures, were first developed to meet urban problems. In his book *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Harvey argues that in the 1970s, New York City served as a lab where neoliberal theory was developed through the creation of a partnership between the nearly bankrupt city government and the investment banking community. In 1973, at the same time the city for all intents and purposes went bankrupt, the financial institutions there had just received a windfall in the form of OPEC's petrodollars as the result of negotiations to end the oil embargo. When the Ford administration refused to bail the city out of its crisis, the investment banks offered to buy the city's debt in the form of tax free municipal bonds. This was no philanthropic venture though and the banks quickly made demands on the city to insure that their investment was secure. First, the city was to make deep cuts in its budget and the first items on the chopping block were social welfare programs and many of the jobs the city had created to fill the whole in labor market that was created when heavy industry relocated. Second, the city was encouraged to attract new economic activity and it was decided that the city's role as a cultural center should be promoted. Faced with massive debt held by very anxious banks, the city had little choice but to comply and debt service became a top priority for city leaders which affected not only public spending but also the kinds of activity - and people - the city tried to attract. The result was much more activity on Broadway and the famous "I Love New York"

campaign. New York emerged from the crisis of the 1970s to be a truly global economic powerhouse. However, the measures the city took can also be said to have exacerbated the divide between rich and poor and to have sanitized the edgier sides of the city (Harvey 2005).

Global Atlanta

Though Atlanta is by no means a global/world city on par with New York, London or Tokyo, according to Taylor's World City Network calculations, the city ranks as the sixth most connected city in the United States and the thirty-third most connected city globally. The city's connectivity is largely due to a handful of specific institutions. Hartsfield Jackson, the city's international airport, is often cited as the busiest in the world with over 2,400 passenger and cargo flights passing through the facility daily. Furthermore, Atlanta is the world headquarters of Coca-Cola, perhaps the international symbol of American capitalism and the power of branding, as well as United Parcel Service (UPS) which is representative of the near centrality of distribution to global commerce. As Sassen notes, these institutions depend on a broad range of services such as accounting offices, marketing firms, law firms, banks and suppliers. Add to this the variety of stores, professionals and services used by employees and the dynamic impact of the city's involvement in global networks of trade becomes clear.

In addition to the private sector, federal, state and local institutions have worked to develop a robust infrastructure to facilitate Atlanta's connectivity. As the following chapters will demonstrate, much of the development within the metropolitan area, including road construction, residential development and zoning patterns, has been

envisioned and implemented with an eye toward the increasingly global networks of commerce. Simultaneously, Atlanta's labor market has evolved in response to these changes. Though, the city was never an industrial center like those in the north, what manufacturing did exist has largely been replaced by the kinds of administrative, clerical, informational and informal labor that is characteristic of other world cities.

Just as Atlanta has seized upon the opportunities of globalization, the city also faces many of the challenges described by Sassen and Harvey. The gap between the rich and poor continues to grow and is further exacerbated by racial divisions. An explosion of investment in the city during the 1990s and early 2000s from developers and retailers as well as newly arrived workers and homebuyers has led to dramatic changes to the city which has been a source of tension within the city and has been a challenge to those residents who are most vulnerable to a rapidly rising cost of living.

As the chapters that follow demonstrate, Atlanta addressed the "urban crisis" years with pro-business strategies, made increasing the number of middle class residents in the city center a priority, invested heavily in tourism and experienced often dramatic social, cultural and political changes as a result. Given how well Atlanta's recent history maps on to the academic literature on globalization and cities it is tempting to illustrate this history in the same way that Harvey characterized the recent history of New York. In Harvey's narrative, the bail out of the city by the local investment banks represented a revolutionary change which overthrew the existing order, creating a new municipal entity in the shell of the old. Whether or not this is a fair assessment of what happened in New York is a question for historians of that city. What is clear is that this story does not apply to Atlanta. Whereas Harvey explains the changes in New York as being

characterized by a dismantling of public sector structures and a new leadership role for private business, Atlanta was simply working within a decades old tradition in which political leaders and business leaders have been operating on a more or less informal power-sharing agreement, or “governing regime” identified by Clarence Stone in his book *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta 1946-1988*.

The following chapter will discuss the history and inner workings of this regime in depth but, for the current purpose, it is enough to say that this particular civic power structure is very different from the kind of rapid privatization of municipal governance described by Harvey. It is more proper to characterize the city’s urban development in terms of Third Way Politics. Unlike New York, Atlanta never had much of a public sector to dismantle and so the city’s political leaders have aggressively sought to serve the public interest through intimate and ambitious partnerships with private capital. However, the fact that Atlanta developed differently from New York does not mean that Atlanta is an example of an antithesis or antidote to the uneven structures of civic power that Harvey describes. Though they followed different paths, both Atlanta and New York emerged from the 1990s as growing, rather than declining, urban centers and this growth was largely directed by corporate interests who had an eye on the city but from the perspective of global networks of capital, labor and commerce.

Like most cities, Atlanta has always had a number of arguably civic minded leaders whose commitment to the city goes beyond simple self-interest. While these individuals are generally powerful business and/or political leaders it is too simple to characterize their influence on the city as oligarchic. Robert Woodruff, John Wesley Dobbs and Ivan Allen Sr. are perhaps the most well known examples of Atlantans from

the post-War era who, despite the fact that they were not elected city officials, nevertheless welded extraordinary power in the life of the city and devoted vast amounts of time, energy and money to the cause of making Atlanta a world class city. The tradition has continued through consecutive Coca-Cola executives, most notably Robert Goizuetta, and other leaders such as Home Depot founders Bernie Marcus and Arthur Blank. Political leaders who emerged in the civil rights movement such as Andrew Young, the Rev. Joseph Lowery and members of the King family have also taken a personal interest in the city.

In public statements, it is clear that each of these leaders regularly had more than simple commerce in mind. The boosterism for which the city has become famous has been characterized by the often ambitious and occasionally outlandish statements of broad civic aspirations by the members of the governing regime. However, while the city's leadership may have had good intentions what has to be interrogated is what their concept of good entails, what values it embodies and what it leaves out. Furthermore, the stated intention must be judged against what actually happened, who it happened to and what the consequences were for the city. These are the questions the present project seeks to address.

CHAPTER II

GLOBAL ATLANTA

In May of 2005, Mayor Shirley Franklin announced an ambitious branding project for the city of Atlanta. With the apparent success of Las Vegas' "What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas" campaign in mind, city leaders identified the need to promote the city to convention planners, tourists, big business and new residents in the hopes of generating more economic activity inside the city. Despite many attempts to confront the challenges posed to the city by suburbanization, city leaders had watched in horror as I-285, the interstate by-pass that circles the city, became the new main street. They were very keen to increase the activity in the central business district and to capture some of the capital which had avoided the city in favor of the suburbs for the past 30 years. Hosting the Olympics nearly a decade earlier had rekindled some long hoped-for interest in the city and the Brand Atlanta campaign was set to capitalize on this interest.

Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide was hired to partner with the city in developing the project and, at a Falcons' football game in October of 2005, Brand Atlanta debuted the city's new Dallas Austin penned theme song, a dramatic and upbeat R&B song called "ATL" in reference to the local airport code which has become a trendy shorthand for the city as a whole. The following month, a new city motto, "Everyday is Opening Day" was announced. Soon billboards began to spring up all over the city, many located along the tangle of roads near the famously busy airport, to capture the attention of the thousands of visitors the city hosts each week. Ads were also placed in a wide variety of national and international magazines and trade journals in the hopes of

reaching conventioners, business investors and tourists. All the ads dealt in one way or another with the theme of "opening day." Some ads used local sports icons to play on the connection to the opening day of a sports season. Other ads made clear the pro-business implications of the slogan, as in the opening of a store, depicting enthusiastic new business owners and were meant to imply that Atlanta welcomes entrepreneurs. Other ads showed children opening books to create a family friendly image for the city.

The success of a marketing campaign is a notoriously tricky thing to determine and no reliable data is yet available concerning how successful Brand Atlanta has been with its assumed target markets. However, the reaction from some residents of the city has certainly been less than enthusiastic. Tapping into some of this skepticism, a local radio station, 99X, erected several billboards parodying the look and logo of the ones Brand Atlanta produced for its morning show "T.J. In the Morning." The billboard read "TJLANA: Making Bad Ideas Ours" and the radio station was quickly issued a cease and desist order from King and Spalding, the campaign's attorneys.¹ Part of this negative reaction, and a part that should not be dismissed, could be linked to resentment toward the presumptiveness of a business committee who took it upon themselves to define what Atlanta is with very little input from ordinary citizens. Another, more easily quantified, gripe was that the city committed several million dollars of public money to the project at a time when the city was in desperate need of much more material public works.

One of the biggest stories about the need for material improvements to the city had been about the city's sewers. Parts of the system dated back to the Civil War and were in dire need of upgrading. While the city had publicly committed itself to the

¹ Jimmy Baron , "Gag Billboard Makes Brand Atlanta Frown" *Associated Press State and Local Wire*, April 4 2006, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed September 13 2008].

problem, progress had/has been excruciatingly slow due, in part, to insufficient funding which was exacerbated when Fitch downgraded the city's water and sewer bond rating from A to A- in November of 2003.² In a related issue, several areas of the city, most notably the struggling west side Vine City neighborhood, seemed to be terrifyingly flood prone. Knowledge of this problem prompted city officials to ask residents in some neighborhoods not to place yard waste near the curb where it could clog storm drains. Beyond that, however, no other action had been announced.³

Another concern was the city's public transit system. Though the systems shortcomings were often exaggerated, the city made cuts to several popular routes and eliminated others all together just prior to the Brand Atlanta announcement. Deprived of any funding from a state legislature that is historically hostile to the city's needs, the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) had been in a state of perpetual financial crisis practically since its inception. While several new initiatives, including the ambitious beltline project, had been announced, progress was glacial and fraught with controversy. Indeed, in an apparent repeat of the construction of the first public transit lines in the city (discussed later), concern over who would most directly benefit from the project had been an issue from the beginning and continues to threaten future progress.⁴

Furthermore, the city's public housing was rapidly being torn down to make way for more luxurious homes. Community activists had voiced extreme opposition to the city's plan to funnel displaced residents into federal assistance programs that provide

² Ty Tagami and Robert Luke, "City's Credit on the Ropes," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, December 4 2003, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed September 13 2008].

³ Beth Warren, "Vine City Lawsuit: Residents say '02 Flooding Caused by City's Negligence," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, April 22, 2004, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed 13 September 2008].

⁴ Paul Donsky, "Talk Turns to Beltline Transit," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, April 5, 2006, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed September 13, 2008].

vouchers but no actual homes. While leaders and community advocates agreed that breaking up the concentrated blocks of poverty that public housing projects typically represent was a worthy goal, the plan assumed a much greater number of affordable homes than existed inside the city.⁵ In late 2006, Mayor Franklin announced that a bond issue has been approved that would fund the construction of affordable housing which would be targeted at health care workers, teachers, public safety personnel and city employees.⁶ If completed as planned, the project will go a long way toward addressing the issue. However, after decades of mismanagement and neglect in the public housing sector - and at least a decade of city-wide gentrification and skyrocketing housing costs - this plan may be too little, too late, if it is implemented at all.

Additionally, the failure of the city to provide competitive wages for police officers was often blamed for the low morale, high attrition and understaffing.⁷ These issues have been linked to draconian police tactics such as the DC-6 law - commonly referred to as "walking while black" - which allowed officers to arrest anyone in a "known crime area" despite the fact that such areas were never defined let alone marked. After public outrage over a series of very public mishaps including the shooting of an elderly woman by officers who entered her home on a so-called "no-knock warrant," both

⁵ David Pendered, "60 Rally to Protest Public Housing Evictions," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, April 26, 2007, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed 13 September 2008].

⁶ David Pendered, "City Looks Into Affordable Housing," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, November 28, 2006, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed 13 September 2008].

⁷ David McNaughton, "Our Opinions: Police Deserve Pay Above, Beyond," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, June 9, 2006, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed 13 September 2008].

practices have been abandoned though the underlying problem of inexperienced, and underpaid officers has not meaningfully been addressed.⁸

The question that emerged is, why would the city put the Brand Atlanta initiative on the fast track while these other, more tangible, projects creep along constantly in danger of being abandoned? On the surface, this appears as a simple case of city leaders obviously, almost criminally, neglecting the poorest residents - who would be the primary beneficiaries of new sewers, flood prevention, mass transit, public housing and more effective policing - in favor of subsidizing the already wealthy business elite by taking on some of their marketing expenses. However, the local political, historic, economic and social context in which this decision was made denies any simplistic explanation. The fact of the matter is that there is nothing particularly conspiratorial - or even particularly exceptional - about the city's enthusiastic support for the brand Atlanta campaign. Rather, it is only one very public example of how Atlanta works.

The purpose of this chapter is to set the ground work for the chapters which follow by outlining the context for the dramatic changes that have taken place in Atlanta since it played host to the 1996 Olympic Games. Having set out the global context for this shift in the previous chapter, this chapter will focus on the regional and local trends that have created and shaped this context need to be considered. In keeping with the very nature of cities, this context is an interdependent web of trends, countertrends, political compromises, the reactions to them, one sided successes and very public failures. Each layer will be dealt with individually though it should be clear that such separations are

⁸ David Pendered, "Panel Would Eye No-Knock Warrants," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, February 19, 2007, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed 13 September 2008].

only an organizational tool and merely attempt to represent a much more complex and dynamic reality.

Regional Trends: The Rise of Sunbelt Cities and the (New) New South

The global shift toward unregulated free markets and transnational capital, discussed in chapter one, was paralleled by a shift in domestic manufacturing away from the Northeast and Midwest and to the South. As early as 1977, when this shift was first being taken seriously by social scientists, Alfred Watkins and David Perry pointed out that the so-called "rise of the sunbelt cities" was already being understood as a rather simple case of free market economics favoring the cheap land, low wages, low taxes and docile (read, non-union) labor force found in the southern states. Though the writers were perhaps too close to the changes going on around them to recognize the larger trend this was part of, they were very aware that what they were seeing was not just another geographic gain in the expansion of American capitalism. While industry was clearly moving into the Sunbelt, it was abandoning its previous homes in the process. Watkins and Perry argued that since the south had never built up the kinds of regulatory apparatuses and had virtually none of the protections for labor that were proving to be massive obstacles for northern industry, the sunbelt was "in a more flexible position to shift with the changing needs of the economy" (Watkins and Perry 1977, 41). They write that the South, "in a sense ... presented the economy with a *tabula rasa*, uncluttered with the outmoded infrastructure and habits characteristic of past eras" (Watkins and Perry 1977, 41). This suspicion that something fundamental had changed in the overall, and globalizing, economy turned out to be a rather astute observation.

Now, thirty years after Watkins and Perry made these observations, it is clear that Atlanta has emerged as a major story in this shift in the domestic economy. However, it is not the case that Atlanta, or the south as a whole for that matter, configured itself in such an economically attractive way for strictly business reasons or that it simply got lucky. As is almost always the case in the south - and in Atlanta particular - race relations played a significant role in constructing the kind of individualistic, anti-big government business climate which facilitated the shift to the sunbelt.

At least since the Civil War, the influence of which on the political culture of the South cannot really be exaggerated, there has been very powerful anti-government intervention rhetoric in mainstream southern politics. This rhetoric took on an increased significance for post-World War II Atlanta. As Kevin Kruse has documented in his book *White Flight*, there was significant resistance to, first, the influx of black residents into the city after World War II, and, second, to the city's compliance with federally mandated desegregation from very vocal portions of the city's working class white population. While the city was clearly under pressure from the business elite to manage desegregation in as progressive and as peaceful a way as possible, it appeared to the working class whites - and, importantly, the white supremacists in the Ku Klux Klan who claimed to speak and act in their interests - that the city's political leaders were destroying their communities, heritage and way of life by allowing such changes to take place. To highlight the class dynamic involved in Atlanta's desegregation, Kruse recounts how many of those white working class residents who resisted the process, assuming that both white supremacy and white outrage over the changing demographics of the city were completely rational and justified, argued that the white business leaders and the elected

officials were willing to sacrifice the so-called "white community" and the public services it enjoyed - such as schools, parks, swimming pools, golf courses and public transportation - because the wealthy white elite never used these services anyway.

Thus, while it is true that the city of Atlanta desegregated much faster, much earlier and with less violence than other southern cities, this is not because the vast majority of white Atlantans decided to embrace diversity and racial respect. When the angry and sometimes violent resistance to desegregation failed to turn the political tide in its favor, working class white residents began leaving the city in massive numbers. This prompted one of many revisions of Atlanta's motto, "the city too busy to hate" to read "the city too busy *moving* to hate" (Kruse 2005, 5). As Kruse notes, the rhetorical justification for this out migration was not simple white supremacy and racist intolerance, although neither was very far from the surface. Rather, the publicly articulated target of scorn for the fleeing masses was an interventionist city government that dared to meddle in the private affairs of its citizens and which trampled on their individual right to freedom of association (or, more commonly, freedom *from* association) particularly in schools and businesses by supporting all kinds of desegregation.

As a result, the suburban areas that grew so rapidly during the 1970s and 1980s did so on the premise that government interference is bad and that, left to its own devices, the market will sort out almost all problems. Though they were quite happy to take advantage of the vast interstate highway system that converged in downtown as well as the city's airport and relative urban prestige, the suburban areas wanted as little to do with Atlanta as possible and constructed sprawling suburban edge-cities which proved remarkably capable of attracting offices for a number of emerging sectors such as data

management, transportation and warehousing, technology development and financial services. And it is these pro-business suburban areas that lead the way in the so-called rise of the Sunbelt.

Local Trends: The Atlanta Way

Kruse argues that the rhetoric behind this white flight was aimed at what many saw as an elite coalition that ruled Atlanta. There is ample evidence that this claim may be legitimate, even if the racial prejudice that inspired it is not. Clarence Stone's book *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988* starts from the premise that, to the extent that Atlanta was able to weather the radical social and economic changes of the post-World War Two era, it did so by working through an informal but very powerful "regime" where the predominantly white business elite partnered with leaders in the black community who could mobilize large numbers of voters. The origins of this regime arguably begin with Mayor William Hartsfield. When, in 1946, the Democratic Party was forced to do away with its "white only" primary, 20,000 black votes came into play and, because this represented one quarter of the city's electorate, the mayor could not afford to alienate them. Furthermore, Hartsfield knew that racial tension - and, particularly, violent racist extremism - were not good for the public image of the city which desperately needed investment from national firms. This was particularly important to white business leaders in Atlanta who were consumed with the dream of making the city an important hub for domestic commerce. Hartsfield himself coined the motto "the city too busy to hate" and it clearly represents the hard working and socially progressive image the regime tried to project though its veracity is questionable.

The ideological apparatus at work in this regime was rather straight-forward. The success of Atlanta, it assumed, was inextricably linked to the success of the major businesses operating there. The regime, made up of black community leaders and white business leaders and held together by a mayor who was (more or less) approved of by both camps, served as the forum for negotiations and was marked by a surprisingly high degree of cooperation through the tumultuous era.

The construction of the city's subway illustrates well how the regime operated. Early feasibility studies, one in 1967 and another in 1969, argued that Atlanta was not well suited to a rapid-rail system due to its low population density. Experts in mass transit design urged city leaders to invest in a less expensive and more effective network of busses that would better serve the dispersed urban population. However, as Larry Keating has argued, the construction of the rail lines was, "essentially an effort to enhance the city's image," on the part of city leaders who wanted "Atlanta to have a modern, 'big city' transportation system" (Keating 2001, 113). After several studies, a proposal for rail transit was prepared and put before voters in 1968 during Mayor Ivan Allen's administration. However, it failed to win the support of Black leaders and, thus, voters' approval, because the project favored the predominantly white northern neighborhoods and paid little attention to predominantly black communities. After many revisions, including the inclusion of East-West rail service, voters accepted the city's proposal in 1971. Keating suggests that the success of the referendum was due to the business elite's willingness (however grudging it may have been) to bring black leaders into the planning process and to work out compromises with them (Keating 2001, 128). However, another way to see this is that, in a context where rail service was equated with

social prestige and not actual social need, Atlanta wound up with not one but two rail lines it didn't need.

Maynard Jackson to Andy Young

The partnership between white economic power and black electoral power served its purpose fairly well through the tumultuous process of desegregation and its aftermath and, while it was far from Utopian and arguably far from democratic, the regime is often credited for Atlanta's ability to avoid the kinds of violence that hit many other southern cities such as Birmingham and Little Rock. Things began to change, however, when Maynard Jackson was elected as the first black mayor of the city in 1973. Though he had an impeccable political pedigree as a Morehouse educated grandson of John Wesley Dobbs, Jackson's decision to run still shocked many in both the city's black and white establishment. Once elected, Stone argues that the brash, young (only 35) Jackson seemed to have little patience for the diplomacy that had, until that point, characterized black participation in the governing regime and he quickly ran afoul of the white business elite. In response to criticism from chairman of the Community Relations Commission, Jackson said "I will not cater to the old-line establishment leaders of Atlanta commerce, whose wishes were often granted by past administrations" (Stone 1989, 87). It is this attitude that led Jackson into the Mayor's office despite the concerns of some of the older figures in the city's black leadership. Thus, the Jackson administration can be seen as a reaction against the governing coalition which had done a fairly good job of keeping the peace in Atlanta but had done very little for the city's poorest residents. Furthermore, despite the constant tension that marked the Jackson years, the mayor was able to commit

the city to making special efforts to contract with minority owned businesses in a move that marks a clear effort by city leadership to use policy to directly confront social issues.

Jackson was followed in 1981 by Andrew Young who had no doubt learned a great deal about diplomacy and compromise in his years as President Carter's representative to the United Nations. Still reeling from the Jackson years, the business elite refused to back Young but, by this point, the Black electorate had grown to 60 percent of the city and was strong enough to overcome the challenge. However, Young refrained from antagonizing the city's business leaders. The day after his election, at a luncheon with downtown business leaders, Young famously began his address by saying, "I didn't get elected with your help, but I can't govern without you" (Stone 1989, 110).

Stone notes that Young's administration marked a full return of the governing regime that began with Hartsfield and which was clearly at work behind nearly every decision of public importance for the city since the end of World War Two. It is responsible for the city's reputation as socially progressive in the era of desegregation and its ability to weather the urban crisis years that brought on and was exacerbated by both white flight and suburbanization well enough to take advantage of the new urban trend in America which is urban revitalization. However, Young's reestablishment of the biracial coalition was only one part in a much broader project. While the traditional regime was made up of local, arguably civic minded, individuals and tended to act on their behalf, Young's work, both in and out of office, was aimed at connecting the city of Atlanta with much larger global networks.

The parallel and interlocking stories of the emergence of market based development on the global stage, the domestic rise of Sunbelt cities, and the simultaneous and intimately related phenomena of white flight and the rise of Black political power in Atlanta had a dramatic effect on the social, cultural, political and physical shape of the city. Kruse's book ends with a picture of the Atlanta metropolitan area that is complexly fragmented along these lines. Defined roughly by the interstate bypass, the majority black inner-city with its disproportionately wealthy white minority tended toward Democratic candidates and (at least relatively) socially liberal politics. However, the city was surrounded by a majority white suburban ring that, like the rest of the state, was markedly more socially conservative than the city and tended to support Republican candidates. Though the two Georgia's were often seen as being radically at odds with one another, this is only true to the extent that the spectrum of acceptable politics was narrowly defined with moderate democrats on one side and conservative Republicans on the other. In a broader sense, the two sides seem to have much in common though the differences that did exist were the source of much tension.

As Kruse argues, on the national scene, suburbanization was, not coincidentally, followed by a nationwide shift to the political right in the 1980s. Suburban voters responded favorably to Reagan and Bush who both espoused the same anti-government, pro-individual rights rhetoric they themselves had rallied under during the previous two decades and the Atlanta metropolitan area exemplified this shift. In the 1980 Presidential election, the suburbs to the north - the primary destination for many whites who left the city - joined the majority of the nation and voted against former Georgia Governor Carter and supported Reagan while Fulton and DeKalb Counties went to

Carter. In each Presidential election since then, the suburbs, along with most of the state, have increasingly voted Republican and the city has repeatedly voted Democrat.

Suburban support for conservative candidates has been so staunch that it has included support for Dole at the height of Clinton's popularity and support for Republicans in the 2006 midterm elections even as much of the rest of the country seemed to punish Republicans for the highly unpopular President Bush.

In the 1980s, this suburban turn to the right was countered within the city limits, not by attempts by elected official to follow Jackson's lead and directly confront the stifling poverty, crumbling infrastructure and lack of good jobs the city suffered from as a result of deindustrialization and suburbanization with focused public actions such as public sector job growth and enhancements to the welfare state. Rather, city leaders in Atlanta, and across the country, embarked on boosterism fueled campaigns to attract more private capital to the city, funding improvements to their cities' images with bond issues that put a strain on their ability to provide necessary, though not directly revenue producing, civic projects. All of this was done with full faith in the market-based solutions and trickle-down economics. At a time when this was the prevailing answer to the problems of urban America, Atlanta elected a mayor, Andrew Young, who was dedicated to this theory which he called "public purpose capitalism," and which others would later call "Andynomics," putting an Atlanta spin on Reaganomics (Biles 1992, 119). Indeed, in 1985 *Esquire* magazine wrote, in a statement that can only be read as an insult to the former civil rights leader, that Andy Young "is doing for Atlanta what Reagan has done for America: he's making rich white people feel good again" (Kruse 2005, 241).

Young's administration is perhaps best remembered for two initiatives that were each on the downtown business community's wish list despite vigorous opposition from city residents: the Carter Center and Presidential Parkway project and the re-opening of the controversial and largely unsuccessful Underground Atlanta. Even after leaving office, Young maintained a central position in the city's power structure and continued his work to make Atlanta an international city as a key figure in the city's efforts to host the 1996 Olympics. Taken individually, Young's activities in and out of public office range from arguable - though not undeniable - successes to very loud failures. Furthermore, projects like a tourist attraction and an expressway are hardly radical tactics for a mayor to champion. However, within the context of Atlanta in the 1980s, they reveal the tendencies of a city whose power brokers constantly and eagerly turned to the workings of the market to accomplish civic goals despite voter protests.

The Presidential Parkway

Since the 1970s, downtown business leaders had been concerned about the growth of the suburbs because they feared these new population centers would exacerbate the dispersal of their power. So, despite the fact that three massive interstates converged on in the middle of downtown Atlanta, each of which intersect the perimeter interstate, and a number of expressways funnel traffic into the area from every direction - not to mention the fact that The Five Points station - where the city's two subway lines meet - is in the heart of downtown, the business elite strongly backed the construction of yet another express way that would link downtown with Stone Mountain through a number of

residential neighborhoods to the east of the city and running almost precisely parallel with MARTA's east-west line.

In the style of the traditional coalition, Young supported the construction project, publicly arguing that it would create jobs and that many of them would go to minority owned businesses. However, the mayor faced significant opposition from residents who feared that the expressway would bring more traffic to their neighborhoods and that its construction would compromise the historic park areas - some of which had been designed by the famous landscape architect Fredric Law Olmstead. After several years of protests and litigation, the project was all but abandoned though the portion from downtown to Moreland Avenue, which encompasses the site of the Carter Center, was completed albeit in a much abridged form than what was originally proposed.

Underground

The second project Mayor Young tackled at the urging of downtown business was the re-re-development of Underground Atlanta, examined closely in the next chapter. In the 1920s, as train traffic in the heart of Atlanta increased, an elaborate system of viaducts was constructed over the tracks which effectively raised the ground level of large parts of downtown and buried the rail lines along with several city blocks and the buildings that once operated at street level. In the late 1960s, with rail traffic greatly reduced, an attempt was made to reanimate this literally "underground" Atlanta and the result was a 1890s themed entertainment zone and market place. As Charles Rutheiser notes, "there is something not entirely coincidental or innocent in the playful recreation of the Jim Crow era at the same time that the 'real' Atlanta was making the transition to a

majority black city" (Rutheiser 1996,166). Rutheiser's skepticism about the theme seems justified by the fact that Lester Maddox, the staunchly segregationist former governor operated a booth in Underground where he sold autographed axe handles, the piece of hardware that became symbolic of his political career after he chased would-be lunch counter protestors out of his restaurant with one.

This version of Underground, however, was short lived as construction of the MARTA subway line demolished some of its space. Young's administration revisited the site, in partnership with downtown business leaders, in an attempt to both increase economic activity in the area but also to offer visitors an engaging entertainment opportunity that would endear them to the city. This time, the site was envisioned as a "festival marketplace" and the Rouse Company of Maryland, the company responsible for the arguably successful Harborplace in Baltimore, was used to develop the new Underground.

Seen from the beginning as a civic initiative, the project was first funded almost entirely with public money. Having seen the first attempt at Underground renewal fail and with the more recent memory of the defunct Omni complex on their minds, the city council was skeptical about the project (Stone 1989, 139). Without private support in the form of actual patronage the project was never able to generate the kinds of money that its promoters had wanted and is now generally considered to be a tourist trap though it has become a somewhat popular as a hangout - though not exactly a shopping destination - for some of the city's youth. In fact, with rhetoric that barely masks racist and classist attitudes, many have argued that the presence of youth in the area is an impediment to attracting the family oriented demographic that was originally envisioned.

The Absentee Mayor and Citizen Young

Both the Presidential Parkway and Underground Atlanta seem to represent failures for Young's administration and thus also for the reconvened governing regime. Part of the explanation for this is that both projects seemed to hearken back to a time when Atlanta was a powerful but merely regional city which could be governed effectively by a handful of powerful leaders. By the 1980s, however, Atlanta had become much more decentralized and it began to look far outside its city limits for new investment. While Young was willing to work closely with the downtown business elite - almost to the point of exhausting any good will he may have had with the city's residents - he also seems to have been very aware that it would be unwise to focus solely on this traditional relationship. At the same time he was throwing his support behind the Presidential Parkway and Underground, he was actively courting international business through the connections he had established during his time at the United Nations.

Young was so active in this endeavor that he earned the reputation of being an "absentee mayor" because he spent so much time traveling around the world promoting Atlanta as a business friendly city. His efforts seem to have paid off. During the 1980s, Atlanta attracted massive amounts of foreign capital in the form of both new offices and real estate investment. Rutheiser reports that "by 1984, foreign companies had invested over \$3 billion in their metro Atlanta operations" (Rutheiser 1996, 181). All of this new investment resulted in a building boom in Downtown which crept up Peachtree Street into Midtown and Buckhead as well.

The 1996 Olympics and Municipal Debt

While the sheer number of building projects completed during Young's administration had a dramatic effect on the city, Young's most ambitious attempt at making Atlanta an international city came after he left office in the form of the 1996 Olympics. Energetic, some would say shameless, boosterism is nothing new in Atlanta's history but the Olympics promised city leaders literally weeks of non-stop international promotion and they fully intended to make the most of it. Faced with public fears that the city's taxpayers were going to be stuck with the massive bill of hosting the games, Olympic promoters were quick to argue that, even if the games did not simply pay for themselves (and they assured the city that they would), the Olympics would pay off in terms of prestige in the long run. Billy Payne, the real estate attorney turned public face of the Olympic organizing committee claimed that the games would establish Atlanta "as one of the top cities in the world; right up there with the Parises, and the Tokyos and the New Yorks and the Moscows and the like" (Rutheiser 1996, 285).

Whether or not the games succeeded in this goal is up for debate. For the residents of Atlanta, however, the games were a decidedly mixed blessing. While many residents felt a rush of civic pride at the honor bestowed on them by International Olympic Committee, their support was worn thin by the preparations. The mad dash to complete a long list of construction projects, including several road projects, resulted in frequent road closings which further complicated the already difficult task of driving in the city for the two years leading up to the games. Furthermore, legal action had to be taken on behalf of thousands of renters in the city who faced temporary but criminally excessive rent hikes - and in many cases eviction - as property owners sought to cash in on the influx of visitors who were willing to pay a premium for apartments during the

games. Also, over 1,300 units of public housing were destroyed at Techwood Homes to make way for the Olympic Village. While a handful of the residents were relocated, most were simply left to fend for themselves and the city has yet to make good on its promise to replace the units. Further down the socioeconomic ladder, the city famously passed out bus tickets to the city's homeless population in an attempt to get them as far away from the events as possible. Whenever gripes arose from city residents or community activists about the social costs they were paying for the games, promoters would dutifully recite the pro-business dictum that "image, prestige and pride are the real residuals" (Rutheiser 1996, 285).

This idea, that such immaterial "residuals" could be transformed into very real gains for the city's residents seems to be the very indirect logic behind city projects during the 1980s and 1990s including the Presidential Parkway, Underground Atlanta and the Olympics and can be seen in terms of a long tradition that includes the construction of the city's subways. Because such investments do not pay off immediately, if at all, the city had to come up with lots of start-up capital to get the balls rolling. In a move that seems paradoxical, early in Young's term as mayor he cut property taxes much to the delight of the property-rich business community and, in effect, shifted some of the tax burden on to local consumers and visitors in the form of increased sales tax.

However, by the time the city began to gear up for the Olympic Games, it realized that it was going to need much more cash than taxes alone would be able to bring in. The answer was to increase the city's debt load in the arguably reasonable hope that the city would be able to pay it off with revenue from the games. Scholars at Research Atlanta, a think tank housed at Georgia State University, found that "the long term debt burden of

the city of Atlanta is not significantly out of line with comparable cities around the county, even though it is higher than other metro area jurisdictions (Sjoquist and Layton 1999, 21). These findings were similar to the ones reached by national bond rating agencies which consistently deemed the city's debt "investment grade (Sjoquist and Layton 1999, 21). However, shortly after it was announced that the city would host the 1996 Olympics, Atlanta's total debt soared from about \$750 million in 1989 to almost \$2 billion by the start of the games. Once again, most analysts found this debt to be acceptable as they were, like the Olympic boosters, convinced that revenue from the games - and the long term effects of the international exposure - would easily cover the costs. However, Research Atlanta pointed out in a report that this debt, as large as it was, did not include the city's commitment to provide pensions for its employees. The report stated that "At well over \$400 million, and requiring \$50 million and more in annual funding, they [the pension obligations] constitute a significant strain on city operating funds" (Sjoquist and Layton 1999, iii).

The story of Atlanta's turn to market based solutions, such as tourism, to civic problems is similar to the story David Harvey tells of New York's investment bank-directed recovery in the 1970s (Harvey 2005). However, unlike New York, which answered creditor demands for austerity measures with massive cuts in city employment and social services, Atlanta had relatively little that could be cut. Having been governed throughout the post war period by the extremely business friendly regime, Atlanta had never really built up the kind of public infrastructure that New York had been forced to dismantle. So, despite the fact that the city could not demonstrate radical cuts to the budget, Atlanta was able to maintain consistently investment-grade ratings on its debt

based on its tradition of willingness to accommodate business. However, because the city was now obligated to a massive amount of debt service, it was forced to continue these policies at the expense of public works. While this governing model based on a close partnership between the city government and local business leaders had undeniably been the engine behind the dramatic amount of activity and development inside the perimeter since the Olympics, it has also been at the heart of some of the most complex problems the city and its residents face.

Conclusion

Shirley Franklin became mayor of Atlanta in 2002 and inherited numerous problems. Her predecessor, Bill Campbell left office amid allegations of corruption and was later convicted of tax evasion. More broadly, the city government had developed a culture of dependence on the private capital whereby the city government functioned largely in support of the business community. However, in contradiction to the promises of Third Way politics, this arrangement had not taken care of the needs of the public sector. The years of neglect had played a part in creating a failing public school system, a nearly bankrupt public hospital and a utilities infrastructure in dire need of repair. Almost completely unplanned development had resulted in an archipelago of fortress like developments that seemed better suited to a sprawling suburb than the world city its leaders had promised. The resulting car dependency had led to city's famous traffic problems and a troubling public health problem in the form of air pollution.

Furthermore, the development that had occurred in the city in the wake of the Olympic Games, which included new and much needed retail opportunities in many of

the city's neighborhoods, had created new service sector jobs. However, while the new jobs were certainly welcome, they generally paid too little in relation to the quickly rising cost of living in the city. Though it would not have done much for those working in the service sector, an attempt was made to address the widening gap between the rich and poor by a grass roots movement for a living wage. The activists convinced the city council to adopt relatively modest legislation that would have required all business that held service contracts with the city to pay their employees at least \$22,000 per year.⁹ However, the measure was ultimately defeated by the State Legislature who argued that a living wage ordinance would kill business and, using rhetoric reminiscent of the white flight era, represented unjustifiable government demands on business owners.¹⁰ The result for the city has been the continued widening of the gap between the richest and poorest residents which is threatening to squeeze poorest out.

Faced with these pressing civic problems which require money, and locked into the tradition of the city's pro-business governing regime, which has expanded over the years into a general partnership between the city and (now global) capital, Franklin has found market based solutions, such as the Brand Atlanta campaign, to be the only politically acceptable ones at her disposal. The following chapters will focus in detail on what this business friendly, proto-Third Way approach to civic government has meant for the residents of Atlanta.

⁹ Ernie Suggs, "Atlanta OKs Ordinance That Requires Living Wage," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, March 27, 2003, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed September 13, 2008].

¹⁰ Ernie Suggs, "Legislature 2004: 'Living Wage' Ban Passes in House," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, March 19, 2004, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed September 13, 2008].

CHAPTER III

PRODUCING AND ENFORCING DOWNTOWN ATLANTA

The literature connecting cities and globalization generally acknowledges the centrality of the urban crisis of the post-war era. At a time when cities were in dire need of some kind of plan to save them from divestment fueled poverty and crime, radical market-based strategies were enacted. These included dramatic concessions to the private sector in the form of tax cuts and anti-labor standards and, at least in the short term, this helped build confidence in the city among investors. Furthermore, the interest on the part of the public sector in outsourcing and developing partnerships with for-profit, private sector corporations went some way toward increasing the amount of economic activity in urban areas even if they did result in fewer protections for the common good.

As chapter two demonstrated, Atlanta followed its own particular path toward making the city more global in its orientation with its history of regime politics which has been characterized by an intimate relationship between local government and the business community. This partnership has often been tested and became particularly aggressive in the 1980s, during Andrew Young's administration, once the toll of suburbanization and, to a much lesser extent, deindustrialization became obvious. This partnership could be characterized as a kind of proto-Third Way arrangement as the urban political economy of Atlanta favored government backed market based solutions such as the Brand Atlanta campaign to public problems such as the deteriorating infrastructure. Additionally, the city sought to spatially consolidate a business-friendly environment within the perimeter to facilitate capital flow and private accumulation.

This chapter will explore two additional, though intimately connected, demands placed on the city; the promotion of market friendly cultural production and aggressive enforcement of market values. Given its transformation since the early 1990s from a glorified office park into an international tourist destination and the extraordinary lengths to which the city has gone to address crime – real or perceived – in the area, Downtown Atlanta will be the focus of this chapter.

There are very few parts of the city where the struggle to meet the demands of the market cannot be detected. However, given its history, visibility and potential for profit, Downtown has been the site of some of the most dramatic efforts of Atlanta's governing regime. Bounded by North Avenue on the north, Memorial Drive on the South, Northside Drive on the west and Boulevard on the east, Downtown has been, since the earliest days of the city, the center of commerce and government for the city as well as the state and, to a lesser extent, the region. Additionally, downtown is home to a massive convention infrastructure comprised of restaurants, hotels and conference centers and thus represents many visitors' primary impression of the city as a whole. As a result, city leaders have invested heavily in downtown in an attempt to generate both profits for themselves and what they see as a good reputation for the city.

Downtown has, at least since its destruction during the Civil War, been the focus of numerous plans for revitalization. Post-World War II plans, however, became much more ambitious as they began to be influenced by the growth of the surrounding areas. In the 1980s, reeling from the success the suburbs were having at attracting new corporate tenants that in some idealized urban past would have chosen to make their homes in the city center, the downtown elite turned to the tourist industry to recreate the area. The

effort saw a major victory when Atlanta was chosen as the site of the 1996 Olympics and its organizers managed to center the games relatively tightly on Downtown in the so-called “Olympic Ring.” Rather than the culmination of this effort to re-imagine the city center, the Olympics, in many ways, represent a symbolic beginning (or at least the commencement of a new phase) of a restructuring process that is still developing. A key part of this restructuring has been an attempt to link downtown with global flows of people and money by developing a tourist and convention infrastructure. This chapter will focus on the resulting Downtown developments, the context that has produced them and the impact they have had on life in the city.

Central Area Study I and II

In the late 1960s, Atlanta’s business and political elite responded to the challenge of suburbanization by establishing an organization called Central Atlanta Progress (CAP) as a way to coordinate plans for Downtown development (Stone 1989, 137). They immediately commissioned a study of the central area in order to understand the business, housing and social situation in that part of town. Released in 1971, the first Central Area Study exhibits all the optimistic boosterism Atlanta’s elite had become famous for. The researchers wrote, “there is strong evidence that Atlanta, among only a few U.S. cities so fortunate, can avoid the dominant cycle of declining investment that has seriously affected the viability of central areas in recent years” (Leary 1971). This strong evidence seems to come from projections for continued job growth in the region. However, this characterization is misleading because the report’s authors seem to have willfully conflated the metropolitan area with Downtown. While it is true that the Atlanta *region*

was rapidly gaining jobs, *Downtown* was not keeping pace with the suburbs and would soon begin losing jobs at an alarming rate. Census data shows that this city's population shrank by 71,951 in the 1970s and by another 31,262 in the 1980s.¹¹ With a population that peaked at 496,973 in 1970, this shrinkage was dramatic.

While the rosy predictions of the Central Area Study seem tragically optimistic in retrospect, it is important to remember that they were made before the reality of white flight was fully understood by anyone. Also, because the report was commissioned by the wealthiest downtown property owners and would be made public, there may have been some pressure to put the most positive spin on the situation. However, a look between the lines of the Central Area Study reveals a real fear that the Downtown was in danger of losing both its economic viability and its political importance as a result of sprawl.

The report argued that a top priority for Downtown should be making travel – particularly automobile travel – into downtown more efficient. In addition to extending the region's network of expressways, the CAS also recommended several work projects for the downtown streets. The proposals ranged from relatively minor (modest street widening) to pure science fiction (elevated and enclosed sidewalks over Peachtree Street). Furthermore, a part of this plan that seems to have genuinely excited the researchers was the development of the recently approved plans for MARTA. They wrote that “the reality of central Atlanta's strategic importance underlies the plans for a massive rapid transit system centered on downtown Atlanta with spokes extending to outlying parts of the metropolitan area” (Leary 1971, 1). However, with the exception of

¹¹ Ambrose, Andy, “Atlanta,” *New Georgia Encyclopedia*.
<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/ngc/Article.jsp?id=h-2207&hl=y> [accessed 14 September 2009].

neighboring DeKalb county, the plans for the extension of MARTA into the suburbs were blocked by racist and classist suburban leaders who equated mass transit usage with violent criminality and feared that the black residents of Atlanta would take the train to their towns to terrorize the locals or, even worse, try to move to their exclusive communities. Kevin Kruse, in his book *White Flight: Atlanta and the Rise of Modern Conservatism*, reports that Cobb County commissioner Emmett Burton “endeared himself to many of his constituents when he promised to ‘stock the Chattahoochee with piranha’ if that were necessary to keep MARTA away” (Kruse 2005, 249). Kruse writes that the issue was such a dramatic concern for white suburbanites that, as recently as 1987, nearly twenty years after the plan’s inception, bumper-stickers stating “Share Atlanta’s Crime: Support MARTA” could be found in Cobb county (Kruse 2005, 249). As a result, the CAS plans for extending the expressways in the metropolitan area became the most fully realized of its plans for facilitating travel into Downtown.

The amazing ambition and optimism exhibited in the first Central Area Study seems all the more tragic with the benefit of three and a half decades of hindsight. From a contemporary perspective, it is easy to see the seemingly inevitable loss of both people and money the city center experienced throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Furthermore, it is clear that some of the concrete recommendations of the study took much longer to enact – or proved to be impossible either physically, financially or politically. Despite the study’s characterization of surface parking lots as “asphalt deserts” the city continued to pave space Downtown to make way for parking for the increasingly automobile-dependent region. The push for greater automobile access to the city center turned into a bitter fight over the East Side expressway, addressed in Chapter Two. Additionally, the

study's explicit desire for mixed use developments in downtown took decades to be embraced by the rapidly suburbanizing metropolis and even then it was Midtown, rather than downtown, that fully embraced this urban design principle.

In the 1980s, CAP decided to conduct a second Central Area Study. Perhaps the writers felt the same pressure to praise the city's leadership and to be as optimistic as possible in their assessments and predictions. This would explain the apparent inconsistencies and questionable conclusions made in the report. Choosing to ignore the dramatic toll suburbanization took on downtown, the report's writers state that "in retrospect, the 1970s and early 1980s have been boom years for Central Atlanta" (Central Atlanta Progress 1988, 12). Furthermore, in a bold attempt to either spare its forbearer or placate its funders, the report states that "planning for the Central Area Study II was begun in 1984, when individuals who implemented the first Central Area Study saw its recommendations were near completion" (Central Atlanta Progress 1988, 12). The report announced that the emphasis of the Central Area Study II is "not so much on building new buildings, transportation or infrastructure but rather on improving on what we have through maintenance, marketing and design" (Central Atlanta Progress 1988, 16).

These introductory comments can be read as creative spin doctoring in that they tacitly acknowledge that the dreams expressed in the first CAS were unattainable due to the lack of a cohesive and realistic vision as well as the city's failure to anticipate trends in business, politics and culture. Where the first CAS naively assumed that the city of Atlanta would inevitably and naturally grow into a major urban center and serve the same functions – despite the fact that it was written at a time when most major cities in North America were experiencing rapid and largely negative changes – the new CAS started

from the assumption that the function of downtown Atlanta needed to be radically re-envisioned.

Like the previous Central Area Study, the second report stressed the importance of more housing and retail in downtown. However, CAS II differs from CAS I in the emphasis it places on tourism and entertainment. Even projects that, arguably, would enhance residential life, such as sidewalk beautification, are described in terms of making the area more welcoming to visitors. While cities have always been home to attractions and entertainment, the researchers who prepared the CAS II identified a cohesive tourist industry as vital to the health of downtown Atlanta. The numbers they give to support this claim explain their excitement. They quote the U.S. Travel Data Center who reported that, in 1985, visitors to Atlanta spent \$872 million, created 20,500 jobs and generated almost \$3.3 billion in economic activity (Central Atlanta Progress 1988, 32).

While these numbers seem to have impressed the researchers, they saw that there was a significant amount of work that needed to be done in order to encourage more growth in this sector. In addition to creating more tourist destinations, they stressed the necessity of a central marketing agency that would be responsible for packaging Atlanta's image to potential visitors and promoting the city internationally. While this plan did not really take shape until almost 20 years later when the Brand Atlanta Campaign (described in Chapter Two) began, the CAS II outlines its general intentions. The report states,

A central organization is needed to coordinate the activities of all of the Central Area attractions and the marketing efforts of public groups, such as the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau (ACVB), the Georgia Department of Industry and Trade, the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce and others. ... There is a need to develop a national and international campaign to market Atlanta as a fun place to visit. Because of its strength as a regional business center, the presence of professional sports and its

reputation for southern hospitality, Atlanta has a sound base on which to build a perception for “funness.” (Central Atlanta Progress 1988, 32).

That “funness” would become a goal for the city’s traditionally buttoned-up center of business and government indicates how radically this re-visioning of the district was. However, that this “fun” would be coordinated by committee and administered in the service of the city’s bottom line is proof that the game itself had not actually changed.

Tourism, Themed Spaces and the New American City

Atlanta was not the only city to begin to re-imagine its central business district as a tourist destination. Furthermore, this radical shift in the way the city’s elites began to understand the function of downtown did not just appear out of thin air but was rather the result of much larger processes. Thus, the interest in developing tourist attractions in cities needs to be understood in its political, economic and social context. In the second half of the twentieth century, the ever more complex networks of highways and interstates made greater levels of consumption possible and they were the result of (and also facilitated) suburban living for urban workers. In Atlanta particularly, the popularity of suburban living began to lure offices and businesses out of the city center to be closer to both their workforce and their customers. After decades of this, cities had to look for ways to attract economic activity to urban areas left embarrassingly vacant and, often, dangerously depressed. Shopping and tourism were often seen as the solution because these sectors could take advantage of the cultural industries that most cities had developed. However, whereas cultural institutions like museums and theatres had been

developed as an auxiliary industry to serve the leisure time of city residents, by the 1980s they began to shift their focus to attracting tourists from out of town.

David Milder's *Niche Strategies for Downtown Revitalization* describes the process by which many urban centers tried to pull themselves out of the so-called "urban crisis" by ceasing to think of downtown retail as a support industry targeted at local residents and workers and to start seeing retail as a primary industry that could attract individuals, and thus consumer activity, by itself. Milder encourages civic and business leaders to revitalize existing commercial spaces by looking for ways to concentrate consumer activities that embrace specialization by focusing the business energy of an area on a particular sector of the market or a particular target market within the overall urban population. "If downtowns must continually face some kind of 900-lb. retail gorilla [big box, strip mall retail outlets]," he writes, "then a niche analysis can identify the parts of the bed the gorilla isn't sleeping on" (Milder 1998, 1-2). The goal of such an analysis is not only what products the target market would be interested in buying but also determining how to make the consumers identify with the space: what kind of "shopping environment" will they find most attractive (Milder 1998, 2). Tourism and Family Friendly Entertainment became the niche markets many urban areas, including Atlanta, decided to go after by enhancing the consumer infrastructure and reorienting itself toward visitors.

This trend toward the commercialization of space has been documented from a more academic perspective in Mark Gottdiener's book *The Theming of America: Dreams, Visions and Commercial Spaces* which explores the idea that consumer spaces, made up of a variety of shops and restaurants, can achieve an identity, and that the identity can be

consumed. Gottdiener argues that spaces such as malls and theme restaurants offer not only products but also *identity* to consumers. Gottdiener sees such consumption as active, rather than passive, as consumers “self-actualize within the commercial milieu by seeking through the market ways of satisfying desires and pursuing personal fulfillment that express deeply-held images of the self” (Gottdiener 1997, 7). Atlanta’s relative youth, future orientation and tendency to radically remake itself every so often enhances (or exacerbates) its capacity to serve this function of being a place for reimagining the self.

Thus, deindustrialization, suburbanization and commercialization can all be seen as just some of the related processes and trends that make up the context of downtown Atlanta’s attempt to remake itself as a tourist destination. Furthermore, as Gottdiener points out, these have each impacted – to greater or lesser degrees – the fabric of everyday in that they make possible certain ways of being while limiting others. Scholars have tried to capture the totality of these trends and the processes which produce them with concepts like late capitalism, consumer capitalism, global capitalism, post-modernism, post-industrialism, post-Fordism and neo-liberalism. While each of these terms emphasize specific aspects of the interrelated systems they describe, they all deal in one way or another with the increasing centrality of the market place in social life and the instability of the subject who is increasingly compelled to use acts of consumption, among other activities, for the purposes of self expression and even self creation. David Harvey sees a major factor – possibly *the* major factor – in these transformations as a shift from *Fordism*, characterized by top down industrialization and state intervention, to what he calls *flexible accumulation* marked by niche markets, decentralization and

privatization (Harvey 2001, 123). This shift in the character of capitalism, he argues, has given rise to the “ways of thinking and operating” that are ostensibly based on heterogeneity and indeterminability (Harvey 2001, 123).

While Gottdiener uses a similar conceptual framework for his discussion of themed spaces, in that he also assumes that identity is unstable and can be both produced and consumed in the global marketplace, Harvey is less inclined to see this as active and pleasurable self-creation or as the satiating of deep desires but rather as the result of the “process of capital accumulation” (Harvey 2001, 122). For Harvey, the marketing strategies behind the changes in downtowns are an expression of the tendency of capitalism to fragment populations and spaces into groups of consumers. He reminds us that, “capitalism has ... always thrived on the production of difference” (Harvey 2001, 121).

As Gottdiener admits, “mass advertising conditions much of this actualization of a *consumer* identity” [emphasis mine] (Gottdiener 1997, 7). As this self-actualization takes place in the service of capital, many critics, including Harvey, have been skeptical of rosy claims about the empowering potential of the marketplace to fulfill desire and allow for a more authentic realization of the self. As identities are increasingly expressed through consumerism in ways that constantly change and fragment, Harvey fears the resulting mass identity crises will produce not only insular groups of likeminded (or, at least, like-consuming) individuals – increasingly defined as target markets – but also insular individuals who, while able to identify with their target market, are hard pressed to think socially in any broad sense (Harvey 2001, 126).

In themed spaces like the ones described by Gottdiener, citizens are encouraged, first and foremost, to think of themselves as consumers of both commodities and commodified space because it is only through consumption that individuals are able to self-actualize and exercise any degree of power. Furthermore, as the functioning of public space becomes dictated by the rules and values of the marketplace, it privileges the people who are most able to take advantage of this system and the desires that are most profitable. The only role for the poor in such spaces is as service workers who, because of their low status/income, are unable to consume the empowering identities their employers sell. Furthermore, whereas the right of access is generally assured to truly democratic public spaces, the market place often reserves the right to refuse service to anyone it sees as unwanted.

The story of Downtown Atlanta since the early 1990s is the story of a proliferation of tourist spaces that are neither historically nor socially connected to the actual city, its history or the bulk of its citizens. As such, they represent exactly the kinds of spaces described in the scholarship on postmodernity. However, whereas some authors such as Gottdiener explain this lack of connectedness as appropriate to a post-Fordist political economy, it does not follow that history and its consequences have, as Fukuyama claimed, ended, been resolved or have otherwise vanished. To the extent that the redevelopment of Downtown has allowed citizens to imagine themselves as subjects free from historical constraints, they are increasingly constrained by market forces that reward some subject positions (whether they be real or simply performed) while disciplining others.

While it is clear that downtown Atlanta has, under the direction of business and political leaders and organizations such as CAP, undergone some dramatic changes since the 1996 Olympics, the details of these changes, taken as a whole, and the effects they have had on social, cultural, political and economic life of the city remain undocumented. Thus, the remainder of this chapter will target downtown development projects and locate each within the context of Atlanta's market-centered urban development. While this list does not begin to capture all of the activity in the central business district over the past decade, it does contain the most publicized and most aggressively pursued projects undertaken in downtown by the city's political and economic ruling elite.

Underground Atlanta and the World of Coca-Cola

In an early move to make good on the promise to bring "funness" to Downtown Atlanta, Mayor Andrew Young announced plans to open a revitalized Underground Atlanta in 1989. Containing some of the oldest buildings in the city, Underground Atlanta is a five block area of Downtown underneath viaducts the city built to reroute automobile and pedestrian traffic over the rail lines. After experiencing a brief second life in the late 1960s as a nineteenth-century themed entertainment district, the area was virtually vacant for much of the 1980s. Based on the formula developed for Baltimore's Harbor Place, Young's Underground was more of a tourist-oriented mall than either of the area's previous incarnations.

As Clarence Stone points out, Underground was theoretically a very good idea. Downtown lacked public space, restaurants, entertainment and tourist attractions which made it a virtual ghost town at night and on the weekends. Located in the center of

Downtown and just a short walk from the junction of the city's two public transit lines, Underground would answer to each of these concerns. Furthermore, it was hoped that the development would inspire other projects and begin a new phase of life for the city center which had been drained by suburban expansion. However, if this had been the case, why did the first Underground fail accomplish these goals? Also, why had an even more elaborate development at the Omni complex failed so miserably?

It would seem that business investors did ask these questions and did not like the answers. Undaunted, the city moved forward with the same "field of dreams" optimism they had for MARTA. However, unlike MARTA, the city did not work through the legislative process of referendums and instead created a complex package of partnerships, agencies and financing deals to pay for the project. The point of this structuring was two-fold: one, it made available the money necessary for the project and, two, it allowed the city to use massive amounts of public funds – including \$85 million in revenue bonds – without having to gain voter support. When the project was finally completed, the city wound up holding the lease on much of the facility and was thus responsible for making sure it made money.

After a couple of years of operation, it became clear that the city had overestimated the profitability of the project. By 2007, Atlanta taxpayers were paying eight million dollars a year on eighty-five million dollars of bonds the city held for the development. Furthermore, the only money the city was getting out of Underground was coming from two parking decks since many of the tenants were operating rent free.¹² This suggests that the city had gone to dramatic lengths to encourage businesses to open

¹² Scott Henry, "Redefining Underground," *Creative Loafing* (Atlanta). December 27, 2006, http://atlanta.creative loafing.com/gyrobase/redefining_underground/Content?oid=175134 [accessed September 22, 2009].

and stay in the area. However, even such unheard of acts of landlord generosity had failed to make underground a success.

The history of the site, since its reopening in the late 1980s, has been marked by significant tenant turn-over and – except for times of major convention activity and, later, the Olympics – it has consistently failed to draw the number tourists that had been hoped for. Atlanta architect and urban planner John Skach said in an interview with *Creative Loafing* that “since it’s [Underground] opened, it’s been programmed to be a tourist, single-use thing. It hasn’t worked; it probably won’t work in the future. Tourism would be a great complement to a diversity of uses.”¹³ Rutheiser attributes at least part of this failure to the unattractiveness of the area. Whereas similar projects in Baltimore and Boston had been able to draw on the natural beauty of waterfront locations, the “dim, claustrophobic spaces beneath the viaducts” did not give the Atlanta development much to work with (Rutheiser 1996, 199). This, combined with the lack of focus on the needs of downtown workers and local residents, meant that Underground eventually developed a reputation as a tourist trap and not a terribly popular one at that.

An exception to the otherwise disappointing performance of Underground was the World of Coca Cola, a combination museum/theme-park/advertisement which opened in 1990 adjacent to Underground. The facility itself includes a number of exhibits chronicling the history of the one of global capitalisms best known brands and a massive exhibit that allows visitors to sample Coke products from around the world, the facility amounts to a very elaborate – if stationary – advertisement for the soda manufacturer. Corporate museums are not exactly rare and are generally not worthy of a discussion of a

¹³ Scott Henry, “Ally of Broken Dreams,” *Creative Loafing* (Atlanta). January 24, 2007. <http://atlanta.creativeloafing.com/gyrobase/Content?oid=oid%3A188415> [accessed September 22, 2009].

city's culture. However, given the scale of Coke's operations and its long and deep influence in the city (not to mention the sheer size of the thing), the World of Coke plays an inordinately crucial role in Downtown's cultural landscape and, since its opening, has been a central part of the ongoing attempts to recreate the area as a tourist destination.

Though the museum was originally located near Underground so that it would attract visitors, it soon became clear that the relationship was indeed the other way around and that Underground was benefiting more from its neighbor. Thus, in 2006, when Coca-Cola announced that it would move its tourist facility to the new Georgia Aquarium site, most commentators expected that, as Creative Loafing put it, the bottom would fall out of Underground.¹⁴ The article reported a study that predicted a 20 percent drop in revenue at Underground without the World of Coke there to draw visitors. However, these dire predictions may have placed too much importance on Coke; not because Underground was capable of surviving alone but because it was struggling even in the presence of its successful neighbor. Its failure, though, was not due to an unwillingness to try new things.

In 2003, Underground went through yet another phase of redevelopment with the opening of Kenny's Alley – an entertainment complex comprised of several variously themed bars. Envisioned as a strategy to move Downtown closer to the dream of a twenty-four hour urban area, this new development was poised to take advantage of a new city council ordinance which would force bars to close at 3 a.m. – an hour earlier than the previously mandated closing time – with the exception of designated entertainment zones. That Underground was the only such entertainment zone led many to speculate that the ordinance was actually an aggressive attempt on the part of the city

¹⁴ *ibid.*

council to simultaneously curb the rowdy behavior associated with bars in other parts of the city – particularly in the affluent Buckhead neighborhood – and position Kenny’s Alley to bring in some much needed cash.

Like most plans for Underground which seem to make perfect sense on paper, the reality of the Kenney’s Alley plan was underwhelming. In 2006, after all but one of the original Kenney’s Alley bars had closed, Creative Loafing ran an article on one of the only successful ventures; a night club called The House. While the other establishments – which included a sports bar, an Irish pub, a Caribbean restaurant and bar and an ambiguously “Latin” themed dance club – struggled to attract people even on weekend nights, The House routinely had lines of people waiting to get in. The owner credits the success of the club to her decision to switch to an exclusively R&B and Hip Hop format and to target what the article calls “buppies” – Black Urban Professionals.¹⁵ The initial make-up of Kenny’s Alley, with its mix of themed bars, was an outgrowth of the constantly stated goal of making Underground a place where a diverse group of people could meet. This is not the straightforward nod to multiculturalism that it sounds like because, in a city that is majority African American, official appeals to diversity tend to mean taking steps to make an area attractive to white consumers. This is clear in comments made by Tom Cook, a partner in the R&B and neo-soul club Sugar Hill. He is quoted as saying "It would be nice to think that Underground could eventually become a

¹⁵ Scott Henry, “Redefining Underground,” *Creative Loafing* (Atlanta), December 27, 2006 http://atlanta.creative loafing.com/gyrobase/redefining_underground/Content?oid=175134 [accessed September 22, 2009].

more integrated environment, but the last few attempts to market it to a primarily white crowd haven't worked.”¹⁶

The Creative Loafing article reports that the owners of The House met with resistance to their decision to change the format of the club. Andrew Adler, co-owner of the rock themed club The Alley Cat is quoted as saying "There was never any secret that they didn't want hip-hop.”¹⁷ Presumably the “they” Adler references is the private management company, O’Leary Partners, which oversees Underground and is answerable to its largest financial stakeholder, the City of Atlanta. When questioned about this, the general manager of O’Leary Partners – Dan O’Leary – argued that his organization does not have a "plan to target a certain segment of the population," and that, "We're simply looking for the best operators we can find.”¹⁸ This response, however, does not explain why each of the three club owners interviewed for the article contradicted his statements.

There is a tangled and contradictory logic behind the latest incarnation of Underground which defies easy explanation. If the managers were just interested in making the area profitable, why had there been resistance to the one strategy that actually seemed to work which was targeting the relatively untapped entertainment market in the city for middle class African Americans? Assuming that truly incompetent management is not to blame, it would appear that a fair amount of attempted social engineering was behind the management of Underground which tried to simultaneously make the area profitable and to change the perception of Downtown Atlanta from a predominantly

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸ *ibid.*

African American area to a diversely middle class entertainment zone. From the perspective of the Third Way, it would seem that there is far too much public interference in the business side of the operations and from the tax payers perspective it would seem that there is far too much public money involved. However, the political and business leaders seem to have agreed on a particular vision of how downtown can be vibrant and profitable and establishments like The House and Sugar Hill were not it.

The 1996 Olympics

In their book, *Olympic Dreams: The Impact of Mega Events on Local Politics*, Matthew Burbank, Gregory Andranovich and Charles Heying argue that “consumption-oriented_development” such as malls and so-called “festival marketplaces” have become very common in American cities but that a unique variation of them has also developed which they call the “Mega-Event Strategy” (Burbank, Andranovich, and Heying 2001). Whereas consumption-oriented development attracts consumers over time, the mega-event – such as a World’s Fair, World Cup or Olympics – attracts massive numbers of tourist-consumers in a highly concentrated time and generally results in direct and indirect publicity for the host city. While there is great potential for the host to benefit greatly from this strategy, the writers argue, there is also potential for loss as the cost of securing the event, preparing for it and insuring that it goes smoothly can sometimes eat up any revenue generated by the event. Furthermore, the net financial gain for the host city that results from publicity is notoriously difficult to determine because much of the supposed benefits come in the form of intangible, and frequently uncontrollable, publicity. That being said, the authors argued that the 1996 Olympics, hosted by Atlanta,

had been a success in that they resulted in a 10 percent increase in tourism for the city over the previous year which, they argue, translated into “nearly \$4.2 billion in total economic effect” (Burbank, Andranovich, and Heying 2001, 45). However, the financial benefits to the city were and remain a point of disagreement for researchers and the social, political and cultural effects are even more difficult to assess.

The story of how a real estate lawyer from the suburbs, Billy Payne, brought the games to Downtown Atlanta has been told numerous times so, for the purposes of this project, it is most useful to focus on the roles and responsibilities of The Corporation for Olympic Development in Atlanta (CODA) and The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) concerning how the Games would eventually affect the city. CODA was a project championed by then mayor Maynard Jackson and other politicians that sought to insure that the games would serve to “uplift the people of Atlanta and fight poverty in the process” (Burbank, Andranovich, and Heying 2001, 88). ACOG, conversely, was the private, non-profit organization that was charged with identifying funding, developing merchandise (through its marketing arm, Atlanta Centennial Olympic Properties) as well as staging the Games. In other words, CODA was to make sure the Games benefited the people of Atlanta while ACOG was in charge of making money. In theory, these two goals were not mutually exclusive. In reality, the two agencies became rivals.

Reminiscent of his first terms as mayor in the 1970s, Jackson was seen as somewhat antagonistic toward the business community in that he intended for CODA to make sure profits from the Olympics served the public good and not only private wealth by proposing several civic projects to be completed as part of the Olympic planning process. High on his list of projects for CODA to handle were infrastructure

improvements and, in particular, the sewer system. However, the business community – supported by ACOG and the State legislature – resisted measures to fund these projects. In addition to this resistance, the mayor faced both health problems for which he had bypass surgery and political and organizational problems which diminished his ability to fight for CODA. Another blow to the Mayor’s plans came when the president of CODA, future mayor Shirley Franklin, resigned her post to become a senior policy advisor for ACOG. Faced with these hardships, and dogged by an apparent inability to gain public support for his causes, Jackson decided not to seek another term and was succeeded by the more business-minded Bill Campbell. Whether it was due to Campbell’s close ties to the business establishment, his restructuring of CODA or the fact that the potential for Atlanta’s crumbling infrastructure to embarrass the city during the Games was starting to dawn on everyone, Coke CEO Roberto Goizueta, in a speech made at the Commerce Club was able to convince the city’s business community that they needed to help fund a number of large civic projects. Ultimately, many of the projects Jackson has championed received the attention he had asked for years earlier. However, with the civic improvement projects now in the hands of the business community, rather than publicly elected officials, the projects tended to be mainly structural and the social goals Jackson had championed were largely ignored. As a result, the city’s downtown residents were not paid as much attention by the new CODA and neighborhood groups were routinely left out of the decision making processes that would radically change their communities.

The Effect of the Olympics on Intown Neighborhoods

Between 1990 when the International Olympic Committee announced it had selected Atlanta as the site of the Centennial Games and the summer of 1996 when the Games actually took place, Atlanta witnessed dramatic and sometimes frustrating changes. Though the entire metropolitan area was affected by the games, the focal point of the activity was the so-called “Olympic Ring” which was the name given to the three mile radius which spread out from the center of Downtown. This is a particularly interesting fact because the 1996 Games were remarkably centralized despite the fact that Atlanta itself was, and remains, famously de-centralized. This was by no means an accident and represented a major victory for downtown’s business and political elite.

While the city and its residents no doubt enjoyed the honor of having been selected for the Games and were understandably excited the chance to show themselves off for an international audience, there were some very practical concerns which led to the decision to pursue the Games in the first place. First, the games represented a golden opportunity to the political and business elite who had sought for years to attract this kind of attention to the downtown area. Furthermore, and more concretely, a study commissioned by ACOG from the Selig Center, an economic think-tank and the University of Georgia, estimated that the games direct spending by ACOG would generate \$1.1 billion in earnings for the state while visitor spending would generate an additional \$814 million. Furthermore, the same study predicted the games would add 77,000 jobs to the state across a variety of industries (Humphreys and Plummer 1995).

ACOG promised state and local politicians that the costs of preparing for the games – including administration, promotion and construction – would be covered by sponsorships and they tried their best to make sure this happened by initially charging

\$40 million for exclusive sponsorship deals though they later had to drop the price when corporations were unwilling to pay (Rutheiser 1996, 258-259). However, Larry Keating argues, in his book *Atlanta: Race Class and Urban Expansion*, “a careful analysis of exactly how much money federal, state and local governments actually spent on preparing the city and putting on the games reveals that the cost to taxpayers exceeded Olympic-generated government revenue by a wide margin” (Keating 2001, 143). According to Keating’s calculations, which took into account thirty discreet public funding sources and fourteen categories of expenditure, the total public cost of the Games reached over \$1.05 billion (Keating 2001, 148). Exactly how to understand this figure is tricky because it must be measured against the revenue that has resulted from the increased publicity and international prestige the games brought to the city and this figure is almost impossible to honestly calculate.

While the debate over the actual financial bottom line of the games will most likely continue as long as anyone cares to take it up, an equally contentious debate continues in tandem with it over the effects the Games had on the social geography of the city. Of particular concern are the effects the Games had on Downtown residents in Summerhill which is the neighborhood nearest the Olympic Stadium. Furthermore, the communities at Techwood and Clark Howell Homes; two public housing projects just west of the central business district and right in the middle of the “Olympic Ring” were not only changed but totally removed. Each of these areas were sites of massive construction projects related to the Games and, in Keating’s assessment, one of the lasting impressions of the Games was the “arrogant disregard displayed by ACOG for those adversely affected by the facilities it built” (Keating 2001, 143).

Summerhill

The neighborhood of Summerhill is south, and slightly east of Downtown. Historically a working class neighborhood, it has perhaps suffered the most from Atlanta's growth over the years. In the 1960s, blocks of structures were demolished in Summerhill to make way for, first Fulton County Stadium and, a few years later, the construction of Interstate 20. In the 1980s, Interstate 75/85 – the so-called “Downtown Connector” – was directed away from Downtown and right through the middle of Summerhill. In preparation for the Olympics, Summerhill was once again selected as the home of a new stadium, the Olympic Stadium, which would later become Turner Field and home of the Braves after the older stadium was demolished.

Neighborhood residents formed an advocacy group called Atlanta Neighborhoods United for Fairness (ANUFF) to organize against the stadium's construction. They argued that more construction and more traffic would further disrupt their community. However, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution “accused ANUFF of NIMBYism [Not In My Back Yard] and lack of public spirit” (Burbank, Andranovich, and Heying 2001, 104). This seems particularly callous given that the neighborhood had sacrificed so much for the city's development over the previous three decades.

In addition to being attacked by the media, Keating reports that the partnership that had formed between ACOG and the Braves concerning the construction of the new stadium “would not allow representatives from the neighborhoods adjacent to the stadium to participate in their planning sessions and the plan they came up with did very little to limit the damaging effect of the stadium on these low-income black neighborhoods”

(Keating 2001, 144). Having been relegated to the role of junior partner in the Olympic planning process, the city could do very little to help the people of Summerhill.

Ultimately, the stadium was built at the cost of several blocks of homes and commercial structures in at least three neighborhoods. At the time, Summerhill could claim a small victory in that they were able to secure a pledge of \$450,000 for neighborhood redevelopment and job training programs. Furthermore, Greenlea Commons, a townhome development in Summerhill, was constructed for the games and the units were rented to Olympic officials – at a cost of \$20,000 each for the duration of the games – which allowed the homes to be sold at affordable rates after the games were over.

Burbank et al. posit that “Greenlea Commons became an anchor for neighborhood revitalization” (Burbank, Andranovich, and Heying 2001, 105). However, in Atlanta, neighborhood revitalization generally means higher prices and resident displacement as well as the disruption of longstanding social networks. In this sense, the authors are absolutely correct.

The Olympic Village and Olympic Park

Construction of the Olympic Village and Centennial Olympic Park follows much the same plot as the construction of the stadium. Both the Village and the Park lie just north of Downtown and just south of Georgia Tech. Before the park was built, the sites were home to the oldest public housing project in the country, and one of the most notorious in the city, Techwood Homes, as well the Clark/Howell housing project and a small commercial district called Techwood Park. Sitting just to the west of Downtown and right in the middle of the so-called “Olympic Ring,” the sites were targeted for

massive constructions projects. The plan called for the demolition of the public housing to make way for the “Olympic Village” which would act as home to the Olympic athletes and then be converted into dorms for Georgia State. Additionally, the plan called for the construction of a massive park just a few blocks to the south of where the commercial district Techwood Park had been.

According to both Keating and Rutheiser, these plans were made almost entirely without input from elected officials or residents. In fact, ACOG was so secretive about the plans for the park that the Mayor and City Council did not hear about them until word leaked in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution in November of 1993 (Rutheiser 1996, 262). Rutheiser suggests that the Jackson administration were kept out of the loop concerning the park because ACOG was “resentful of what they saw as Maynard Jackson’s efforts to muscle in on their Olympic action” (Rutheiser 1996, 262). By fully developing the plan in secret and then announcing it as a gift from ACOG to the city, the mayor and city council could do little other than act appreciative and embrace the proposal.

Furthermore, it was not as if the proposals were anathema to the Jackson administration. Just as he had in the 1970s, Jackson did not want to destroy the public housing but he did want to see the area revitalized. Jackson’s interests, however, would not matter much to the project because as these plans were being made he was on his way out of office. Bill Campbell, his successor, proved to be far less mettlesome in ACOG’s plans and, in keeping with Washington’s new attitude concerning public housing – as a result of the Republican Revolution of 1994 – both Techwood and Clark/Howell housing projects were demolished and both the Olympic Village and the park were built. In addition to the dorm building, 900 new units of housing were built to “replace” the 1,100

units of demolished housing. However, only 360 of these would be designated as public housing. The remaining units could either be financed through tax credits or simply purchased at market rate.

When seen within the context of the two Central Area Study reports, it is clear that the 1996 Summer Olympics were not simply a one-time, isolated event but were rather a part of an ongoing strategy on the part of business and political leaders to recreate downtown Atlanta into a more profitable economic engine. Nor were the Olympics the culmination of the city's plans for Downtown. In fact, after the Olympics left, there were still very few reasons for most people to be Downtown after six in the evening. The business travelers that did find themselves in one of the handful of hotel convention centers Downtown would often complain there was virtually nothing to do in the area aside from the work which had brought them there. There was the constantly-being-tinkered-with Underground Atlanta and the nearby Museum-like World of Coca-Cola but it was generally believed that this was not enough. The area mostly languished throughout the rest of the decade following the Olympics despite the dramatic changes going on all around it – most perceptibly just up Peachtree Street in Midtown. Thus, when the billionaire co-founder of The Home Depot, Bernie Marcuse, announced that he was going to build a world class Aquarium just north of the Centennial Olympic Park, those who had bet on a revitalized – and tourist/consumer friendly – Downtown were overjoyed.

The Georgia Aquarium

On May 21, 2002, the front page of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported that the site for the Georgia Aquarium would be Atlantic Station. Described as a gift to the people of Georgia from Marcus, the proposed aquarium had been generating buzz since Marcus announced his intention to commit \$200 million of his own money to the project the previous November. At the time, the developers of Atlantic Station, Jacoby and Associates, were involved in a flurry of announcements about the projects future tenants but seemed eager to make room for the tourist attraction. Jacoby told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, “[w]e’re relocating tenants planned on the west side. We have a long standing relationship with them so we are trying other things.”¹⁹

In a departure from its generally approving coverage of major projects in Atlanta, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution’s coverage of the May 21st announcement reported on numerous concerns about the proposed location of the aquarium. City Council member Debi Starnes voiced her cautious optimism about the proposal stating that “They’re not going to get a blank check. I have a lot of questions, but I think [the foundation] is committed to working with everyone.”²⁰ Residents of the surrounding neighborhoods, perhaps still smarting from their experience with Jacoby and the Atlantic Station rezoning process, were less diplomatic. West Side resident Courtney Kaylor stated her intention to distribute one hundred yard signs which read “Bernie, Go Fish Elsewhere” to express her concern about the impact of even more traffic around her home.²¹ Mike Koblenz,

¹⁹ David Pendered, “Georgia Aquarium Site: It’s Atlantic!,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 21, 2002, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed September 14, 2009].

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ *ibid.*

another West Side resident, said he was concerned about the smell created by fish waste, feed and the massive water purification system the aquarium would require.²²

Three months later, these concerns became moot when Marcus announced that he would abandon the Atlantic Station plan and build his aquarium in Downtown, on a site just north of the Centennial Olympic park, on land donated by Coca-Cola. That the land was being donated to the project is probably justification enough for the change of plans but the announcement in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution went on to list a number of reasons for the aquarium being lured further south. According to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution article that announced the change of plans to the city, Marcus, like several developers who had been interested in doing business in Atlantic Station, indicated that “his foundation was having difficulty working through the legal and financial issues” that were caused by the complex tangle of ownership and jurisdiction involved in the Atlantic Station project.²³ Furthermore, Coca-Cola stood to benefit from the move as well. The site had been purchased in the mid-nineteen nineties for use during the Olympics and had been virtually dormant since the end of the games. The company had wanted to move the World of Coke out of the failing Underground Atlanta District but the Olympic site was far too large. With the announcement of the aquarium’s relocation, Coke officials announced that it would move the World of Coke to the same site and share parking. This led some observers to question the public story that the location change had been Marcus’ idea. Today, the two attractions face each other and are separated by a grassy open space that acts as a park.

²² *ibid.*

²³ Maria Saporta, “Coca-Cola Donates Land: Aquarium Finds Downtown Home; Atlantic Station Surprised at Losing Tourist Attraction,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, August 15, 2002, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com>, [accessed September 14, 2009].

Four days after the new location was announced, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution announced its enthusiastic approval of the new location. Business columnist Maria Saporta wrote an editorial piece for the paper arguing that Downtown was, as the headline read, “the best place for the aquarium to shine bright.”²⁴ For Saporta, the suitability of the downtown location had less to do with financing and more to do with strategy for building a tourist infrastructure in the heart of the city. “A major tourist attraction,” she wrote, “needs to be downtown, close to other tourist destinations. Atlanta has always lacked a critical mass of places where visitors can go when they’re downtown, giving the central area a reputation as a boring business center.”²⁵ For Saporta, and many in the downtown business and political elite, the aquarium represented a major opportunity to change that perception.

By most matrices of interest to the business community, the aquarium met their expectations. In its first year, the facility reported 3.6 million visitors with an average of 14,000 visitors on Saturdays alone.²⁶ However, the aquarium also attracted criticism from a variety of perspectives. Animal rights activists argued that it would be inhumane to keep wild animals in captivity. They were particularly concerned about the large whale sharks who typically swim hundreds of miles in a day in the wild. While aquarium scientists dismissed these concerns early on, the sudden death of both sharks within the two years caused some to reevaluate the objections.

²⁴ Maria Saporta, “Downtown the Best Place for Aquarium to Shine Bright,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, August 19, 2002, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed September 14, 2009].

²⁵ *ibid.*

²⁶ Mark Davis, “Aquarium celebrates its first birthday,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, November 21, 2006, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed September 14, 2009].

In addition to the ethical concerns about the treatment of animals, advocates for the poor and homeless were also angered by the aquarium. Arguing that Atlanta had much more pressing concerns, activists protested the aquarium holding signs which read “House People Before Fish.”²⁷ While these early protesters argued that Marcus and other aquarium supporters were ignoring the plight of the poor and homeless in the city, they soon found reason to argue that he was actively opposing them when he became a prominent spokesperson for a proposed ban on panhandling in Downtown.

Security: Panhandling Ban

On July 23rd 2005, Bernie Marcus was once again on the front page of the Metro section of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, but this time his newsworthy actions were only indirectly related to his aquarium. The headline read “Beg Ban Call a Must; Marcus: Life of City At Stake.” Marcus’ comments referred to a proposed ban on panhandling in the so-called tourist triangle which encompasses most of Downtown and, specifically, the hotel district along Peachtree Street, the Centennial Olympic Park area (including the Aquarium and World of Coke) as well as Underground and the Sweet Auburn district. From Marcus’ perspective, failure to pass the ordinance would result in “actual financial and physical damage to this city.”²⁸ This article seemed timed and placed in such a way as to reinforce the newspaper’s position on the ban which it had expressed just two days earlier. In an editorial titled “Gateway Needed; So Is Begging Ban,” the newspaper urged the city council to adopt the legislation arguing that

²⁷ Ernie Suggs, “Rallies push for animals, homeless,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* November 22, 2005, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com>, [accessed September 14, 2009].

²⁸ Jim Tharpe and Ty Tagami, “Beg Ban Called a Must; Marcus: Life of a City at Stake,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 23, 2005, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com>, [accessed 14 September 2009].

downtown is “overrun with aggressive hustlers who often prey on the public's legitimate concerns for the homeless and truly destitute.”²⁹

The Gateway referred to in the article’s Headline is the 24/7 Gateway Center, a 300 bed facility for homeless residents of the city which opened in early August. Marcus himself donated six hundred thousand dollars to the project, an act that seems more calculated than charitable given his very public support for the panhandling ban. Signed into law by Mayor Franklin on August 15, 2005, the ban required police officers, first, to give panhandlers a warning, then to refer them to the Gateway Center and, upon a third offence, to arrest them. The legislation was hailed by local and national media outlets as, in the words of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution’s editors, “a balance of common sense and compassion.”³⁰ While similar laws had been passed in other cities, the Atlanta plan tried to sidestep First Amendment issues by allowing individuals to hold signs asking for money and many saw the addition of the referral to the Gateway Center as a more compassionate alternative to simply locking up offenders.

As Marcus’ comments suggest, the ban was proposed by business people and other supporters of Downtown development because, they argued, panhandling scared off customers and made downtown a less desirable place to live. Ted Mitchell, who works as a Downtown Ambassador for Central Atlanta Progress, told that Atlanta Journal-Constitution that he supported the ban despite the criticisms. He said, "People speak out about rights and respect, but respect is earned. But what about the rights of the business?"

²⁹ “Gateway Needed; So Is Begging Ban,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 21, 2002, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed September 13, 2008].

³⁰ *ibid.*

The rights of the property owners? The rights of the tourists?"³¹ This sense that the rights of the two groups are mutually exclusive and that poverty is little more than a barrier to commerce characterized the ban's supporters' position.

The ban passed through the city council on a 12 to 3 vote and was signed into law by Mayor Franklin on August 19, 2005. Though the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* described the vote as a "slam dunk" for the ban's supporters, there was forceful opposition to it which was dramatized when seven people were arrested following the emotional reaction to the vote.³² Those arrested included former member of the City Council, Derrick Boazman. Advocates for the homeless saw the ban as an attempt to criminalize the homeless. Some opponents said the law was based on fear of the poor and African Americans. Highlighting her sense that race was an important part of the city's actions, Elisabeth Omilami, daughter of the civil rights leader Hosea Williams and director of the Hosea's Feed The Hungry organization, tearfully told a reporter "I am glad he [her father, Hosea Williams] is dead, because he would be crying his eyes out. This is black-on-black crime. The people who are gonna be arrested are black, and the people passing the laws are black."³³

On June 30th 1995, advocates for the homeless and other opponents of the ban held a demonstration in Woodruff park to commemorate the death of Enestae Kesse, the

³¹ Ernie Suggs, "Panhandling ban stirs emotion," *Atlanta Journal- Constitution*, August 18, 2005 http://atlanta.creativeloafing.com/gyrobase/redefining_underground/Content?oid=175134, [accessed September 22, 2009].

³² *ibid.*

³³ *ibid.*

25 day old son of homeless parents who starved to death.³⁴ Lauren Cogswell, an advocate for the homeless, told a reporter from the Atlanta Journal-Constitution “no one asked the questions about what are the structures that caused this to happen,” Cogswell said. “So today we’re calling the city to a day of conscience and to a day of memory. To not forget. So that we might learn from our history and be transformed by it.”³⁵ This was to be the tone of much of the criticism directed at the panhandling ban. While the city crafted the ordinance in such a way as to conform to the letter of the law, most clearly evident in their willingness to allow people to hold signs asking for money and thus not completely deny their right to free speech, critics of the ban frequently made appeals to, as Cogswell said, “the structures” that generate poverty and homelessness.

In Atlanta, it is not hard to trace the outlines of these structures. With its strict adherence to market-based governance, public officials tend to take on the task of facilitating private sector plans rather than keeping their inevitable excesses in check. This can be seen in the city’s eager willingness to minimize government oversight over developers who have plans to attract tourists to downtown while bringing the full repressive force of government to bear on anyone – in this case, the poor and the homeless – who might make the city less “business friendly.” Though true motivations would be hard to prove, the rhetoric that justifies this stance is not one of meanness or cruelty but rather appears as the result of a strong conviction that poverty - and one its most desperate outcomes, homelessness – is a natural and inevitable process which results from some mental or moral deficiency and is an inevitable, if regrettable, part of

³⁴ Robert Miller, “Group protests city’s stance toward poor,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 1, 2005, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com>, [accessed 14 September 2009].

³⁵ *ibid.*

life. As a result, these issues of poverty are only a concern for the political and business elite in so far as they threaten normal business activity. Thus the supporters of the panhandling ban, including Marcus and the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, felt that it was sufficient – even generous – to simultaneously support the Gateway Center. However, the same individuals and institutions did not feel compelled to address systemic issues which get closer to the root causes of poverty and homelessness. No proposals were made to strengthen weak labor protections or to help the failing public schools. No measures were considered to address the persistent lack of opportunities in poor communities which, combined with ineffective education and persistent racism and classism, perpetuates cycles of poverty. No attempts were made to shore up the currently inadequate mental health care system which leads many poor residents to self medicate with drugs and alcohol. The explanation seems to be that the profits from the city's many tourist attractions will eventually create an economy robust enough to support such services. This apparent attitude toward poverty may be the reason why the city has such a hard time building an institution dedicated to honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the Nobel Prize winning champion of racial and economic justice, who is arguably the city's most celebrated son.

Civil Rights Museum?

In May of 2007, the World of Coke moved to its new location across a grassy lawn from the Aquarium just north of Centennial Olympic Park. The media interest this event generated also sparked some public interest in a proposed Civil Rights Museum because Coke had recently offered to donate a parcel of the now sprawling tourist campus

for such a facility, perhaps as a counterbalance to the undeniably frivolous museum-like advertisement. Formal interest in an institution that would draw from the city's rich history as a center of civil rights activism began in 2003 when Evelyn Lowery, Juanita Abernathy and Andrew Young – all veterans of the Civil Rights Movement – approached Mayor Franklin with a proposal.³⁶ The mayor quietly put together a research team and in December of 2007, the team recommended the city move forward with the idea.³⁷

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, however, was much less supportive. Amidst the numerous articles surrounding the opening of the World of Coke, most of which found it necessary to mention Coke's proposed donation of land, an editorial titled "A Call to Live King's Legacy with Charity, Not Museums" appeared which seemed to be a preemptive strike against a civil rights museum.³⁸ The editorial focused on Jaqueline Smith, the Memphis, TN resident who has made a career of demonstrating against her city's Civil Rights Museum which is housed in the former Lorraine Hotel where Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in 1968. Smith's problem with the museum is that it diverts money which could be used to directly help the poor. It is not that Smith is opposed to the idea of honoring the civil rights movement but, rather, she feels that there are more direct ways that her city could do this.³⁹ Though the proposed Atlanta museum is never mentioned in the article, it seems clear that the paper attempted to draw a

³⁶ Ernie Suggs, "Questions Surround Civil Rights Center; Rush Into Unknown: Project Planners Boast 'Aggressive Timeline,' But Don't Know What the Center Will Contain, Where It Will Be Built Or How Funds Will Be Raised," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 23, 2005 <http://www.lexis-nexis.com>, [accessed September 14, 2009].

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ Rheta Grimsley-Johnson, "A call to live King's dream with charity, not museums," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, July 1, 2005, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com>, [accessed September 14, 2009].

³⁹ *ibid.*

connection between the two institutions and to appear to take a moral high road by arguing that city funds and energy could be put to more direct use to help those who King fought for. Because the paper had previously celebrated the tax-break enabled Atlantic Station project, the a-historical Aquarium and the decidedly uncharitable panhandling ban, this justification for their objection seems dubious at best.

With both Coke and Mayor Franklin in support of a Civil Rights Museum, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution refrained from directly attacking the proposal but continued to be either subtly critical or silent in its coverage of the issue. In the article announcing the city's dedication to the project, the paper highlighted the numerous obstacles the planning committee faced in no less a prominent space than the headline. The article, clumsily titled "Civil rights museum plans unveiled; Organizers say they will focus on human rights, and not just in Atlanta, but location, funding still uncertain," hinted at a complex controversy that has been going on since the project was first announced. While Coke had indeed offered to donate land near the World of Coke and the Aquarium for the facility, there continues to be a debate as to whether or not this is a suitable location.⁴⁰ The paper itself has remained uncharacteristically silent on the issue but national news outlets such as CBS.com and the Christian Science Monitor both ran an article by CSM reporter Patrik Jonsson on the story. As this story made clear, the controversy stems from the concern that there are more suitable locations for the facility than the corporate/tourist district around Centennial Olympic Park.⁴¹ Many commentators are

⁴⁰ Eric Stirgus, "Civil rights museum plans unveiled; Organizers say they will focus on human rights, and not just in Atlanta, but location, funding still uncertain," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, December 12, 2002, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com>, [accessed September 14, 2009].

⁴¹ Patrik Jonsson, "In Atlanta, a Split Over the Plan For Civil Rights Museum," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 15, 2006, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com>, [accessed 14 September 2009].

particularly fond of finding a place on Auburn Avenue which is Dr. King's old neighborhood and has been a center of African American life in the city for over a century.⁴²

One commentator who opposed the Coke location was local architect Timothy Harrison. In a column for *Creative Loafing* he argued that not only is the Coke site inappropriate but that it is also symbolically offensive.⁴³ Pointing out that Coke was donating a mere 2.5 acres for the museum – a small parcel in relation to the nine acres it donated for the Aquarium and the 5.5 it used for its own World of Coke – and that the land itself is not visible from the nearby park as it is tucked behind the existing facilities, he argues that the site would not convey the seriousness he feels the civil rights museum deserves.⁴⁴ Add to this spatial symbolism of the fact that the museum would be in close proximity to the demolished Clark-Howell and Techwood Homes site and the plan to use the land for a Civil Rights museum dedicated to the study of social justice issues seems even more unsuitable. Harrison suggested that Coke should donate the land to the city and then allow them to sell it in order to generate some funds for developing a more suitable location.⁴⁵ However, no official comment has been made regarding this plan.

Harrison also speculated in his column that Coke's interest in donating the land and having the civil rights museum literally in its backyard was a self serving gesture meant to enhance its own facility. He writes, "it's no secret that after failing to draw

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ Timothy Harrison, "Coke's Gift Not the Real Thing," *Creative Loafing* (Atlanta), November 15, 2006 http://atlanta.creativeloafing.com/gyrobase/coke_s_gift_not_the_real_thing/Content?oid=155330, [accessed September 22, 2009].

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

crowds at its current location near Underground, the soda-pop emporium is eager to surround itself this time with high-powered attractions. Thus the ‘generous’ land gift to the aquarium and now the Civil Rights museum.”⁴⁶ Even if Coke’s motives behind the donation are pure, it is almost certain that the Downtown supporters at CAP would prefer the facility be built within easy walking distance from the tourist attractions it has gathered around the Olympic Park site.

At first glance, the difficulties surrounding the Civil Rights Museum may seem puzzling. On one hand almost every power broker in Atlanta came out in strong support of an Aquarium for landlocked Atlanta, to the extent that they were willing to risk court intervention by adopting a panhandling ban for the facility’s backer, Bernie Marcus. On the other hand, many of the same individuals (Mayor Franklin and Coke being very notable exceptions) remained either silent or cautious when presented with a proposal to create a museum building on the one thing besides traffic and burning that the city is internationally known for. There seems to be at least two answers for this. First, the Aquarium, at least as it was first pitched, was to be a real bargain for the city. With land donated by Coke and the facility itself donated by Marcus, the city got one more item to list on its tourist destination resume. Such financing seems very unlikely for a Civil Rights Museum. While Coke has offered to donate land the concern that the space is inappropriate will most likely remain. With no cheap and/or easy solutions on the table the museum’s advocates will have a hard time.

A second reason for the difficulties surrounding the proposed museum have to do with the fact that a Civil Rights Museum in Atlanta, if done seriously and sensitively, will be a very different kind of institution than those favored by the Downtown business

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

community. It must not be a media circus like the Olympics, an entertainment zone like Underground, a family fun center like the Aquarium or an advertising spectacle like the World of Coke. A Civil Rights Museum will be neither a strictly commercial venture nor a tourist destination in the Disney sense. Thus it is hard to understand a civil rights museum within the city's traditional rubric of commerce. Furthermore, embracing such a museum will involve simultaneously embracing the project of remembering and confronting the city's history of race relations – something the notoriously forgetful power brokers are loathe to do. While it is true that Atlanta was a center for civil rights activism, this is because there was much in the city to protest. While it is also true that the city weathered the turmoil of the 1960s and 1970s with less violence than other places this is due more to the local leaders' commitment to pragmatism and public relations than to widespread, multiracial idealism. Furthermore, though the city is now known as a place where African Americans can succeed, this success is still overwhelmingly defined by the market which has led to continued neglect for the city's poorest residents.

For these reasons, and perhaps a few others that only the most powerful city leaders know about, the city presents itself in public statements and in the newspaper as cautiously supportive of the project. It would clearly be unwise to be openly hostile to the plan – the Atlanta Journal-Constitution was only able to launch an attack when it wrapped its objection in the righteous story of an African American activist in Memphis – but aggressive support appears equally painful for the powerful elite. The impression that remains is that official Atlanta would much rather ignore the past and get on with the business of business and dreaming of the future.

Conclusion

Since the mid 1960s, when it became clear that postwar suburbanization would be a threat to the city center, Atlanta's Downtown power-brokers have worked steadily – though with mixed results – to reconfigure the physical, social and economic structures of the area. After suffering through the 1970s and 1980s which were characterized by slumping occupancy rates in both commercial and residential property and a general sense of decline, Downtown started the 1990s preparing for the 1996 Olympic Games. The result was a massive amount of activity all over the metropolitan area and Downtown – as the center of the Olympic Ring – was the focus of much of this.

Far from being the culmination of their efforts, the Olympics marked the beginning of a wave of radical changes in Downtown and most of these changes had been targeted at bringing more free-spending tourists into the area. The theory behind all of this was that, due to a lack of heavy industry and stiff competition from the suburbs for office space tenants, Downtown's best hope for remaining viable lay in its ability to market its loosely defined culture. Using Centennial Olympic Park as a hub for this tourist district, the business and political elite – with the support of the city's only daily newspaper, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution – began to assemble a variety of attractions to the area including a new and expanded World of Coca-Cola, The Georgia Aquarium and, though it is far from a sure thing, possibly a Civil Rights Museum.

While political and business leaders worked together to create this tourist district in Downtown in the hopes of attracting more consumer activity to the area, they also worked very hard to eliminate people and institutions which were seen as barriers to commerce. Whether it is reality or not, poverty is consistently equated with danger. As

such, any sign of poverty – public housing, homelessness, “panhandling” – was treated as a threat to the overall plan to remake Downtown into a tourist destination. This project began with the demolition of several blocks of public housing to make way for Olympic construction and continued through the controversial ban on panhandling which was aggressively and publicly supported by the Aquarium’s primary benefactor, Bernie Marcus.

Taken together, these attempts to enhance the consumer culture of the city and to repress those who are unable to participate in it represent an active and, in some senses, novel role for the public sector. Whereas classical economic liberalism demanded little state intervention in trade and Keynesianism demanded active state protection for citizens from the excesses of the market in the form of regulations, the Atlanta’s model demands that the state focus its power on facilitating the market process. While this has probably always happened in some under-the-table way, what seems new is a sense that this is not corruption but, rather, the proper role for the city government. Downtown Atlanta, and particularly its life since the early 1990s, represents a very clear example of how this decidedly global theory of governance can play out in even a relatively small area. While public-private partnerships have certainly succeeded in encouraging more economic activity in Downtown Atlanta, the repression of – and in the case of the panhandling ban, the criminalization of – the city’s poorest residents exposes the theory to the criticism that it is unable to actually solve social problems but is rather only capable of moving them someplace else.

In the midst of these broad plans to reinvent Downtown Atlanta, the relatively modest Georgia State University has emerged as a major force in the neighborhood and

has, since the early 1990s, been working to contribute to a Downtown urbanism based on residents rather than tourists. For much of its life, the University catered to part-time and continuing education students from all over the metropolitan area and the campus, though located in the middle of Downtown, tended to be fortress like with buildings that faced inward and were connected by elevated walkways above the streets. However, when the entire Georgia university system experienced a massive influx of students as a result of the lottery-funded HOPE scholarships in the mid-1990s, Georgia State began to morph into a more traditional institution with full time students living in dormitories located near its urban campus.

Along with the changes to the student body, the University's administration also began to change and with it the relationship between the school and its neighborhood. Carl Patton became President of GSU in 1992 and immediately gave up the Buckhead mansion that had been the traditional home of University Presidents and moved into a Downtown loft near campus.⁴⁷ In 1995 he announced a radical new philosophy for the institution which would focus on engaging the city around it. Part of this was new curriculum focuses on Urban Studies and Urban Services and another part was a reevaluation of how the physical campus interacted with Downtown. Patton described the previous philosophy as one to "elevate and separate" the campus and stated that it was his intention to "be a part of the city."⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Christina Cheakalos, "Building a Better GSU In Six Years: Georgia State University President Carl Patton Has Increased Research Funding and Taken the Lead in Downtown Revitalization," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, September 7, 1995 <http://www.lexis-nexis.com>, [accessed September 13, 2008].

⁴⁸ Reagan Walker, "GSU Changing Philosophy; Downtown Partner: New Campus Plans to be Revealed Today Embrace its Urban Surroundings and Depart from its 'Elevate and Separate' Approach," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, June 8, 1995, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com>, [accessed September 14, 2009].

At the time of this announcement, there were very few concrete plans about how Patton intended to do this. By 2005, however, the university had built a new classroom building, the Aderhold Center, and had refurbished the historic Rialto Theatre which stages both student productions and events for the community. Both of these projects also included street level retail space making the buildings more connected to the street life of Downtown. Furthermore, the University Lofts building, also completed in 1995, provides housing for almost 500 graduate, international and married students in a building overlooking Woodruff Park.⁴⁹ The project that will have the greatest impact on Downtown is University Commons, a 4.2 acre dorm complex which comprises four separate buildings, and was completed in 2007. Located two blocks north-east of campus, this facility alone will bring two thousand full time residents Downtown.⁵⁰

Georgia State's efforts at Downtown revitalization differ greatly from those championed by the Downtown business and political elite because they start from very different perspectives. CAP devised its revitalization plan around free-spending – if fickle and skittish - tourists and sought to create colorful yet unsubstantial attractions. Georgia State, in contrast, focused its energy on those who live and work in Downtown and looked for ways to increase their numbers and serve their needs while enhancing the neighborhood in the process. So far, CAP's plan has displaced and criminalized the city's poor and Disneyfied large swaths of the city. Georgia State, on the other hand, has increased the number of Downtown residents, created a variety of jobs and enhanced the street culture of Downtown. Interestingly, each of these accomplishments were stated

⁴⁹ Catherine Fox, "GSU blends with urban neighbors," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, August 17, 2002, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com>, [accessed September 13, 2008].

⁵⁰ *ibid.*

goals of CAP's plan. While it is true that CAP has arguably achieved these things with their plan, its achievements are overshadowed by the tourist spectacle in to which they have put so much of their time, energy and (often public) money.

CHAPTER IV

THE POLITICS OF GENTRIFICATION IN POST-OLYMPICS ATLANTA

Between 1994 and 2004, census data compiled by the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce revealed that the Atlanta Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) grew by approximately 37.6 percent (Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce n.d., 3). This in and of itself was not particularly striking since the area had been rapidly expanding since the end of the Second World War. However, the same study reported that in the same period the population of the city of Atlanta had grown by 6.5 percent. While this number is dwarfed by the growth of the suburbs, it is a dramatic figure given that, throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the same area lost thousands of residents (Atlanta Department of Planning: Demographics 2003). What was more astonishing for some observers was that many of these new city dwellers were white. The Atlanta Department of planning reported that census figures show the City of Atlanta's White population grew by 13 percent in the 1990s while the Black population decreased by 3 percent (Atlanta Department of Planning: Demographics 2003). The New York Times reported that "in 1990, the per capita income in the city of Atlanta was below that of the metropolitan area as a whole, but in 2004 it was 28 percent higher, the largest such shift in the country, according to a University of Virginia urban planning study."⁵¹

The 2001 city council race for district five presented Atlanta with a look at what the political consequences of these changes could be like. The race was a rematch of the 1997 election between the incumbent Sherry Dorsey and Natalyn Archibong. Dorsey,

⁵¹ Shaila Dewan, "Gentrification Changing the Face of New Atlanta," *New York Times*, March 11, 2006, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/11/national/11atlanta.html?_r=1, [accessed August 17, 2009].

whose husband was the powerful, if controversial, Sheriff of DeKalb county, was an aggressive advocate for the long term residents in her district. However, she had alienated many of the district's new arrivals due to her often racially divisive tactics. Archibong was a local lawyer and life-long resident of the district. While she had little experience in public service, she came from a politically well connected family and proved to be much more diplomatic in her campaign in so far as she presented a willingness to embrace the district's new residents and, by extension, the changes their arrival heralded. While Creative Loafing located Dorsey's political personality within the archetype of the Southern demagogue, Archibong was clearly taking a cue from the more local tradition of racially moderate peacemakers.⁵²

District Five encompasses the largely residential area between downtown Atlanta and downtown Decatur on the city's east side and had been, since the 1960s, a predominantly working class African American area. The neighborhood of Kirkwood, located in the center of District Five, had made the occasional headline throughout Dorsey's term due in part to the actions of the Rev. Amos Moore, a local minister. In 1998, Rev. Moore began hanging up signs around Kirkwood calling on African American residents to attend a meeting to discuss how they could, in his words, "put an end to the homosexual and lesbian take-over of our neighborhood."⁵³ Though Rev. Moore failed to energize a large following and was soundly criticized by many long time residents of the neighborhood who found his willingness to preach hate in the name of Christianity repugnant, his efforts put a fine point on the growing tension in the neighborhood.

⁵² Kevin Grifis, "Sherry Dosey Plays the Race Card," *Creative Loafing* (Atlanta), June 20, 2001, <http://atlanta.creativeloafing.com/gyrobase/Content?oid=oid%3A5118>, [accessed August 17, 2009].

⁵³ "Kirkwood Turns Corner 10 Years After Gay Gentrification," *Southern Voice* (Atlanta), June 15, 2007, <http://www.sovo.com/2007/6-15/news/localnews/7064.cfm?page=1>, [accessed August 17, 2009].

Whereas racial divisions between residents have traditionally been seen as negative and dangerous by Atlanta's political leaders, Dorsey seemed to be willing to exploit them – rather than bridge them – in her district. She created the Kirkwood Commercial Task Force, an exclusively African American group of business people who clashed frequently with the predominantly white Kirkwood Neighbors Organization. One such clash took place at a meeting of the two groups which was to determine how a grant should be spent in the neighborhood's commercial core. In what Creative Loafing concluded was an attempt to reduce public comment on the issue, Dorsey changed the location of the meeting at the last minute and did not alert residents.⁵⁴ When Creative Loafing staff found the meeting and tried to report on it they were told that the meeting was not open to the press and escorted out of the venue. Because the meeting was set to determine the use of public money, it was indeed open to the press; a fact that was not missed by the reporter who used it as further ammunition against Dorsey.⁵⁵ Reports of the meeting indicate that it devolved into a screaming match between the two groups who only agreed to vote on members of a board. At one point, Creative Loafing reported that a representative from the Commercial Task Force stated that she didn't understand why the Neighbor's Organization wanted to be involved in the process saying that "None of you all are going to come up there to purchase anything anyway."⁵⁶ While this prediction was unsupported and most likely an exaggeration, it does point to a degree of interracial mistrust in the neighborhood.

⁵⁴ Kevin Grifis, "Sherry Dorsey Plays the Race Card," *Creative Loafing* (Atlanta), June 20, 2001, <http://atlanta.creativeloafing.com/gyrobase/Content?oid=oid%3A5118>, [accessed 17 August 2009].

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

It is important to note that the tensions that became evident in the 2001 District Five city council elections bear striking similarities to events in Kirkwood's not so distant past. Kevin Kruse's book, *White Flight*, tells the story Kirkwood which, in the 1950s, was an overwhelmingly white neighborhood and had been for decades. Kruse reports that the nationwide housing shortage in the years just after the War and, more importantly, the racist reaction against integration was rapidly changing the racial makeup of many of Atlanta's neighborhoods. These changes were seen most dramatically in working class white neighborhoods such as Kirkwood. White residents who lived on the so-called border lines separating white from African American areas – zones defined by both common practice and official segregation – found it difficult to sell their homes to new white residents who did not want to be on the “front lines.” As these homes were sold to African American families, the “front line” would move back a block and the process would repeat. In some areas, the transition from an all white neighborhood to an all black neighborhood was as short as a couple of months (Kruse 2005, 86-92).

In white, working class Kirkwood, residents tried to resist these changes first with appeals to city leaders, then with the creation of community associations like Eastern Atlanta Inc. which tried to buy property “at risk” of being sold to African Americans and ultimately by resorting to acts of terrorism including protests by angry mobs, arson and bombing (Kruse 2005, 91-92). As dramatic as all of this was, these tactics only slowed the expansion of African American residents into the neighborhood and the flight of white residents out of the city. By the late 1960s, Kirkwood, as well as most of the east side neighborhoods were majority African American and as this process repeated itself

throughout the city, the stage was set for Atlanta to elect its first black mayor, Maynard Jackson, in 1973.

Ultimately, Archibong won the 2001 city council election, by playing the role of mediator and by appealing to diversity. Several newspaper articles, in both the Atlanta Journal-Constitution and Creative Loafing, argued that she won primarily because she was not Sherry Dorsey indicating that even those who were not turned off by Dorsey's divisiveness were angered by allegations, many of which were well founded, that her administration had been corrupt. Whether it was tactical or not, this coverage created a narrative – for the election and the district – about gentrification and the people affected by it in which critics of gentrification were characterized as hateful reactionaries and where gentrification itself was seen as a progressive force. However, just as homosexual newcomers to Kirkwood were treated as scapegoats by Rev. Moore, Dorsey became a scapegoat for the pro-gentrification camp. In both cases, gentrification became a simplified way for people to talk about other, much more complicated issues. For new white residents, moving to an Intown neighborhood can be an act of resistance against the perception of the suburbs as homogenous and a chance to remake themselves as urban dwellers. However, for older residents their arrival often highlights and exacerbates ongoing problems such as a lack of affordable housing for the working poor, the unhealed scars left by decades of racial strife and the failure – even aversion – of government to protect the most vulnerable residents of the city.

Gentrification: Global Trend

These changes in the character of some Intown communities in Atlanta, and their identification as gentrification, came about just as the process itself was being identified as a decidedly global phenomenon. The word was first used in 1963 by the urban sociologist Ruth Glass to describe a then curious residential phenomenon in London. She observed that some large Victorian houses which had previously been “down graded” and divided into multiple units had been restored to single family homes and that the “modest” homes of the city’s working class had been taken over by middle class residents and transformed into “elegant,” “expensive” residences in several central London neighborhoods (Glass 1964, xviii). Though Glass considered this gentrification at the time to be unique to London, it has since become quite common and her description of it has formed the basis of its definition. That definition is made up of the following criteria: (1) an influx of residents with perceived “higher” social status into a relatively “low” status area, (2) a perceived upgrading of the housing stock by those residents and (3) the displacement of the previous residents.

Since Glass first identified gentrification, it has repeatedly been studied by sociologists within the context of middle class identity evolution and fragmentation. In an attempt to work out some kind of scientific understanding of gentrification as a strategy of a new middle class, Gary Bridge turns to the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. "Gentrification," he argues, "represents one form of restructuring of the symbolic orders of time and space in class relations. It emerges out of the rational coordination of action around a focal point that develops into a self-conscious class habitus" (Bridge 2001, 211). In contrast to what he sees as a traditional middle class characteristic of reproducing its culture tacitly, Bridge argues that "the aesthetic practices

of the new middle class are public, discursive and self-conscious" (Bridge 2001, 211). In gentrification, it is the urban center that is the "stage" for this performance of a new and self-conscious middle class identity. As a result, gentrification does not just mean the displacement of individuals but also the expansion of the sensibilities and values of the increasingly hegemonic new middle class. As Bridge makes clear, this is not just the reproduction of a monolithic middle class but it is in no way the preservation of local culture and community of the people who are displaced either.

Other scholars have argued that gentrification can be seen as an attempt by the middle class to articulate an entirely new kind of identity which fits their position in the global economy. Tim Butler, drawing on research he has done in London, has argued "that gentrification is a 'coping' strategy by a generation which, whatever its other differences, is reacting not only to changed social and economic circumstances but also against its own familial upbringing" (Butler 2002, 1.9). Butler characterizes the socio-cultural and personal psychological condition of gentrifiers as one which is, despite their assumed upward mobility, marked by fear and insecurity in a rapidly changing world which is compounded by a tendency to reject the alienated suburban lifestyle created and championed by their parent's generation. As a result, Butler argues that the gentrification he studied in London "can be seen as an attempt to reconcile this [discomforting] view of the present with a somewhat nostalgic view of their own [pre-suburban] past. This is manifested by a desire to build a local community within the global city that maps onto their particular set of values, backgrounds, aspirations and resources" (Butler and Robson 2003, 1795).

Bridge and Butler present an image of gentrification as a rather haphazard process of middleclass fragmentation as it constructs new and distinct forms of identity performance which are a reaction to the perceived instability of middle class status in a globalizing economy. Mathew Rofe, on the other hand, has argued that gentrification is actually a manifestation of an emerging global middle class that actively chooses neighborhoods in city centers so they can feel connected, not too the neighborhood *per se*, but to the global network of cities and what he calls the "transnational elite" that make their homes there. Drawing on Benedict Anderson's work, Rofe argues that this transnational community, which is not held together by consistent face to face interaction, can be described as an imagined community. "The spatial occurrence of the gentrifying class in a number of prominent cities around the globe," however, "lends this group a spatial geography" (Rofe 2003, 2512). For Rofe, this accounts for the surprisingly predictable types of changes associated with gentrification.

Neil Smith and Gentrification as a Critical Rhetoric

A notable exception to the trend towards seeing gentrification in terms of middle-class identity is Neil Smith who is responsible for developing a critical rhetoric for gentrification in that it is seen not just as an opportunity for the middle classes but also as a problem for the older residents of gentrifying neighborhoods. Smith has been one of the most prolific scholars of gentrification and has done more than any other scholar to insist on a critical edge to the concept. His ground-breaking work on the gentrification of New York, particularly his book *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*, has highlighted the seemingly now predictable displacement of poor

residents as a characteristic of this process. One of the most influential, if still controversial, contributions Smith's work has made to the study of gentrification is what he calls the theory of "the rent gap." This theory argues that gentrification will occur when potential middle class residents see that there is a significant – and potentially profitable – gap between actual housing costs and potential housing costs in a given area (Smith 1996, 65). As a result, the so-called middle class "pioneers" are investing not so much in what the area is but what they hope it could be. As with any sort of speculative investment, the new residents will often be very active in transforming the neighborhood so as to protect their investment by making what they see as aesthetic improvements, agitating for greater social control (particularly in the form of heightened police presence) and encouraging greater amenities such as more shopping and entertainment options. Smith is quick to point out that, for the most part, such developments do not actually solve any of the problems associated with the neighborhood but only displace them along with many of the older residents to other, less desirable locations.

Far from characterizing this displacement as simply an inevitable, if regrettable, part of market expansion, Smith argues that gentrification amounts to a concerted attack on the working poor, artists and bohemians who had become the primary inhabitants of the city during the "urban crisis" years of the 1960s and 1970s. In *The New Urban Frontier* Smith compares the experience of New York gentrification with the return of the monarchy in France after the Revolution. "The revanchists in late nineteenth century France," Smith writes, "initiated a revengeful and reactionary campaign against the French people, and it provides the most fitting historical pretext for the current American urbanism" (Smith 1996, 207). Sighting the pervasive frontier mythology that casts

gentrifiers as urban pioneers and older - generally poorer - urban inhabitants as uncivilized savages, Smith insists that gentrification is not only a property issue but also a political and ethical issue which recreates and reproduces the characteristics and contours of uneven development. This conception of gentrification as a critique of relationships of power in urban areas which are the result of specific economic and political circumstances became attractive to community activists in Atlanta as a result of radical changes that took place in the city beginning in the 1990s.

Atlanta's Intown Neighborhoods in the 1990s

In 2000, the Brookings Institute released a report called *Moving Beyond Sprawl: The Challenge for Metropolitan Atlanta*, which detailed the explosive growth the Atlanta metropolitan region - which spreads out over nineteen counties - had experienced over the previous three decades. Though this growth had been the focus of much excitement in the region, the report focused on the more sobering indicators that its benefits had been unevenly distributed. Drawing heavily on census data, the report revealed that by every measure, the city of Atlanta and its residents had been disproportionately left out of the economic boom that had brought new jobs and new residents to the northern suburbs. While the City of Atlanta was home to only 16 percent of the region's population, it accounted for forty 3 percent of the region's poor (Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy 2000, 10).

Not surprisingly to anyone familiar with the area's history, the report also found, that race was an important factor in the uneven distribution of growth. By the end of the 1990s, seventy 2 percent of the region was white and most of the non-white residents

were African-American. However 74 percent of the non-white, predominantly African American, population of the region lived in the two counties - Fulton and DeKalb - that are closest to the urban core. To highlight the racial segregation of the area, the report stated that, in sharp contrast to the rest of the region, by 1999 Fulton County was 48.2 percent African American and DeKalb was 48.9 percent African American (Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy 2000, 14).

Brookings found that there was a very clear correlation between location, income and race in the metropolitan area. According to 1990 census results, "over 88 percent of the residents of extreme poverty neighborhoods [defined as neighborhoods where 40 percent or more of the residents live at or below the poverty line] in the city of Atlanta were African-American" (Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy 2000, 14). This statistic reveals just how starkly the city was divided along the nearly parallel lines of race and class. As the report concluded, "Atlanta residents tend to be extremely rich or extremely poor - not many of them are middle class" (Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy 2000, 20). This assertion was supported by statistics regarding the existing housing stock in the city which included acres of stately mansions in the north and vast tracts of neglected - often substandard - housing in the south. This lack of middle-class housing had contributed to suburban sprawl which was often the only place middle class workers could find acceptable and affordable homes.

The effects of this wildly uneven development in the region posed serious problems for the city. The legendary traffic in Atlanta was of course exacerbated by the large numbers of workers who had to drive into the city from the surrounding suburbs

every day. Aside from the pollution related to the regions dependency on cars, city leaders were worried about what all this would mean for Atlanta's future as a vital - and lucrative - urban center. Investors seemed less likely to show interest in the city because of its reputation for high poverty, high crime and a general appearance of neglect. Therefore, after years of focusing on attracting occupants for the downtown office buildings, Mayor Bill Campbell's administration arrived at the conclusion that what Atlanta really needed was more middle-class, full-time residents in the city.

HUD Empowerment Zone

In 1994, fueled by the buzz of activity and optimism surrounding the Olympics, the city applied for and received an Empowerment Zone designation from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for a section of the city located near the Central Business District which consisted of 23 census tracts with poverty rates of 35% or more (Dockeray-Ojo and Velarde n.d., 2). This designation came with a \$100 million federal grant and \$150 million in tax incentives and was awarded based on the city's plans for neighborhood and city development and business partnership. The goal of this plan was to increase the number of middle class residents by helping neglected neighborhoods create opportunities for the people who lived there to pull themselves out of poverty.

The city has been particularly proud of the Empowerment Zone project and highlights what it sees as the high level of resident participation calling it "one of the most citizen intensive processes in the history of planning in Atlanta" (Dockeray-Ojo and Velarde n.d., 2). According to the plan, city employees worked closely with

neighborhood representatives from the Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU) involved. On top of this, the city created a Community Empowerment Board which consisted of 69 neighborhood representatives who were charged with oversight of the ten year life of the project.

While this attempt on the part of the city to include more citizen input was a turn away from the tradition of back room dealing that characterized the practices of the governing regime since the 1940s, Clarence Stone has argued that the "lack of central coordination by the city proved to be a weakness" (Stone and Pierannuzi 2000, n.p.). Additionally, Stone argues that the lack of involvement from the business elite "was both surprising and ultimately disabling" (Stone and Pierannuzi 2000, n.p.). In interviews he conducted for a project meant to evaluate the fate of the governing regime he had identified and studied in his book *Regime Politics*, Stone found that there had been little coordination of the competing interests that wished to be part of the Zone" (Stone and Pierannuzi 2000, n.p.). This was further complicated as tensions between neighborhoods rose over where the boundaries of the Zone would be set.

Ultimately, the plan was successful at stimulating construction of middle class housing within the zone. However, because the plan failed at the more challenging task of increasing the number of good paying jobs within the zone, the result was resident displacement rather than self sufficiency. Putting the best possible spin on its lopsided success, the city stated that "we have exceeded expectations and now have to revise and develop new policies and programs to ensure Empowerment zone residents can afford to stay in the inner neighborhood" (Dockeray-Ojo and Velarde n.d., 2). Despite this publicly announced intention, in late 1996 the city embarked on an even more aggressive

plan for increasing the number of middle class in the city. Unlike the Empowerment Zone project, this plan included no plans for helping the neighborhoods achieve self sufficiency and focused exclusively on attracting new and wealthier residents.

Renaissance Atlanta

As the previous chapter explained, the 1996 Olympic Games were enthusiastically supported by the city's business and political leaders because they saw it as a way to generate more interest - and thus more investment - in the city and, specifically, in the Central Business District. However, after the games ended, it was clear that they had not magically solved all of the city's problems. Once again, mayor Campbell's office was under pressure from the business community to spur economic growth. Building on the plans developed for the Empowerment Zoned application, and adding a little civic muscle, a new initiative was announced in late 1996 called Renaissance Atlanta. Like the Empowerment Zone project, the focus of Renaissance Atlanta was on the previously neglected neighborhoods closest to downtown where leaders thought new middle class residents would be most likely to want to live. Simplifying the goals of the plan, and revealing a conspicuous lack of interest on the part of the city to help current residents improve their situation, one of Campbell's officials told journalists "what we are trying to do is build nice houses so that people will move back to the city."⁵⁷ Renaissance Atlanta hoped to accomplish this goal by seizing abandoned property in the city and selling it cheaply to developers who would then build

⁵⁷ Darryl Fears and Charmagne Helton, "Atlanta Seeks Neighborhood Renaissance; City Wants to Develop Attractive Housing, but Poverty and Crime are Still Problems," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, October 21, 1996, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com>, [accessed August 14, 2009].

affordable - but solidly middle-class - homes to be sold for between \$85,000 and \$137,000.

This plan angered neighborhood activists and at least one city council member, C.T. Martin, who did not think the plan did enough for the city's poorest residents, who typically rent rather buy, and would thus still be unable to afford the homes.⁵⁸ Furthermore, it cut the elected members of the city council out of the process of neighborhood development by turning the actual construction and selling of the new homes over to the private sector. Of course, this was precisely the point of the project. In keeping with the city's tradition of Regan/Andy-nomics, Renaissance Atlanta was conceived as a strategy to encourage the market and those most able to take advantage of it to remake Atlanta in their own image and for their own benefit. Much like the city's experience with the HUD Empowerment Zone, the result of the Renaissance Atlanta project was much more middle class housing near the downtown business district but very little progress toward the stated goal of helping the existing residents pull themselves out of poverty.

Urban Revitalization

Though it started as a fairly heavy handed push on the part of the city - hundreds of millions of dollars in federal grant money and land seizures are hardly organic - the influx of middle class residents, and the changes this has brought, has, over the past ten years, developed a life of its own and has turned into perhaps the biggest story for most parts of Intown Atlanta and is not confined to the small areas around the CBD that were originally targeted for development. In its 2007 Urban Explorers Handbook, Creative

⁵⁸ *ibid.*

Loafing promoted the shopping, dining and entertainment activities in neighborhoods that only a few years ago had no such attractions or, in the case of Atlantic Station, did not exist at all.

Each year Creative Loafing, Atlanta's largest weekly alternative newspaper, presents its "Urban Explorer's Handbook" as a pullout supplement sometime in the spring. The Handbook amounts to a list of restaurants, museums, galleries, music venues and stores broken down by neighborhood. Typically, this supplement is little more than an elaborate advertisement for the businesses it reviews. However, in 2007, the editors tried something more ambitious and introduced the Handbook as a Declaration of Independence for Atlanta from the rest of the state. In addition to promoting the various businesses, the writers sought to promote the city as a whole and some of its neighborhoods in particular. The letter from the editor that introduced the Urban Explorer issue states,

There's just a lot more going on now inside the Perimeter than there had been for generations, and the quality of the goings-on matches the quantity. Whole neighborhoods – from the Old Fourth Ward to the Westside – weren't nearly as interesting then as now. And areas that already were cool have gotten cooler.⁵⁹

The editor sums up his perspective writing that “Atlanta is flowering. Georgia is going down the tubes.”⁶⁰

One word that comes up over and over again in the guide and in press coverage of neighborhood change all over Atlanta is revitalization. While the term revitalization is

⁵⁹ Ken Edelstein, “Urban Independence,” *Creative Loafing* (Atlanta), March 28, 2007, http://atlanta.creativeloafing.com/gyrobase/urban_independence/Content?oid=220708, [accessed August 18, 2009].

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

accepted shorthand for the process of economic development within cities, it is a loaded term rhetorically. It implies that, either, there was no life in a particular neighborhood and that now there is or that the kind of life that did exist was somehow inappropriate and that now a new, more acceptable, life can be found there. In either case, the implication is that there is a sharp distinction between the old and the new and that, in so far as life is preferable to its opposite, the change is unquestionably a good one. Furthermore, as this rhetoric articulates itself with the life process, it allows the process to assume a natural character. Neil Smith has argued that as urban revitalization and regeneration are linked rhetorically with natural processes "the advocacy of regeneration strategies disguises the quintessentially social origins and goals of urban change and erases the politics of winners and losers out of which such policies emerge" (Smith 2003, 445). While the drama and chaos that characterized the explosion in new home construction since the Olympics - and which characterized the Atlanta housing market in general - may appear inevitable and irrefutably good, it is important to keep in mind how it was all preordained by the business and political leaders who saw the city's ability to attract new middle class residents, often at the expense of older residents and their communities, as vital to its future.

The Gentrification Task Force

While those who are eager to praise the changes that have taken place in Atlanta stick to the rhetoric of "urban revitalization," the same changes have been called gentrification by more critical voices. In 2000, in response to loud protests from neighborhood activists – among them, local urban planning scholar Larry Keating - the

city council created the Gentrification Task Force to examine the emerging problem. The following year, the task force submitted its report, titled "A City for All," which argued that, "the residential renaissance that resurgent gentrification brings to the City of Atlanta carries with it a broad range of indirect effects that significantly and dramatically harm both the lives of large numbers of residents in the City and profoundly alter the composition of the City" (Atlanta City Council's Gentrification Task Force 2001, 1). In order to address this issue, the Task Force recommended forty steps the city should take to fulfill its stated goal of "permit[ing] market forces to continue the process of gentrification" while shifting the focus of public policies to the encouragement of affordable housing rather than its elimination (Atlanta City Council's Gentrification Task Force 2001, 2).

The sheer number of recommendations made by the Task Force reflects their understanding of gentrification as a complex situation with many challenges and opportunities for residents and that creative ideas are needed to face them. The plan called on the city to adopt clear and aggressive regulations that would protect low income housing and encourage more new construction of affordable housing. They recommended that the city modify zoning rules and implement tax incentives to achieve these goals. They also asked the city to be more active in working with residents to help them understand and take advantage of the various programs available to them and also to create new ones aimed at helping low income residents secure adequate housing. Most importantly, the Task Force, understanding that the lack of good paying jobs in the targeted neighborhoods was perhaps the greatest cause of resident vulnerability, urged the city to "support programs designed to increase the employment capacities of low-income

individuals" (Atlanta City Council's Gentrification Task Force 2001, 9). In the end, however, the city only adopted five of the recommendations. As a result of this failure to act, Keating said "There's more public awareness than before, but all indicators say that gentrification is resurgent" (Korber 2004, np).

The Limits of Gentrification as a Critical Rhetoric

The result of this increased awareness has been that gentrification is now widely – though not invariably – recognized as at least unfortunate in so far as people are aware that part of its definition is the displacement of older residents and the disruption of communities this tends to cause. Yet, while the understanding of gentrification has drawn attention to certain community issues, there are limits to how effective it can be in addressing the actual concerns of residents - both old and new - who are dealing with rapid community change. These limits are the result of some of the basic assumptions about the process.

First, the narrative of gentrification that is employed in most academic accounts tends to assume a high degree of irreconcilable difference between more or less monolithic classes. While some of the work discussed above does attempt to account for variations amongst *gentrifiers*, very little is done to present a similarly complex picture of the *gentrified* and all accounts seem to assume a rather hard line that marks a firm boundary between the different classes. In so far as difference is perceived as a challenge rather than an opportunity – and it generally is – the comfortable coexistence of older residence and newcomers is rarely considered as a possibility.

Furthermore, as Smith indicated, the geographic dimension of gentrification tends to overshadow its historical emergence. When gentrification is noticed in a neighborhood, its designation as a "working class neighborhood" is assumed to be historically persistent going back as far as it matters. One problem with this is that gentrification is often presented as primarily a property issue and that the new residents and real estate agents are often held responsible for its consequences. While it is certainly true that the loss of affordable housing is a consequence of gentrification and that new residents and real estate agents are often insensitive to the changes they represent, in order to address the problems associated with gentrification it is necessary to address the historic processes that made it possible for large chunks of a city's residents to be unable to find affordable housing.

Ultimately, the problem with the accepted critical narrative of gentrification is that it seems impossible to do anything besides lament its negative consequences. While the story of a reasonably coherent middle class moving into areas that had been exclusively occupied by an equally coherent working class causing predictable changes is straight forward enough, and accurate enough at a very general level, it tends to limit the debate about the complex problems that result to one of who should live where. As such, the only solution to gentrification that is available in this narrative is for the middle class to simply stay out of the neighborhoods in question. Because neither neighborhoods nor residents - both new and old - can be so simply defined and because their ability to choose where they live is often greatly exaggerated, this solution is entirely unworkable.

In order to broaden the discussion of gentrification in the hopes of finding different ways to address the issues that result from it, it is useful to de-center

gentrification in the discussion. While gentrification is a complex and dynamic process itself, it is not independent of larger processes and, thus, cannot meaningfully be addressed in isolation. Conceived as a symptom, rather than the problem itself, new avenues for understanding and dealing with gentrification may emerge. In order to ground this discussion of gentrification as part of a larger process in a concrete example, the remainder of this chapter will focus on East Atlanta, a neighborhood three miles east of Downtown Atlanta and located in Atlanta City Council District Five. The neighborhood's experience with gentrification was the most widely publicized in the city and it remains one of the most dramatic examples of gentrification since the Olympics. As such, it is a rich source for understanding how gentrification plays out within the context of post 1996 Atlanta.

Places, Spaces and Networks

While gentrification has become more or less typical throughout the city of Atlanta, the process in East Atlanta was aided and accelerated by the relatively large – and architecturally quaint – commercial district located near the neighborhood's western edge, known locally as the East Atlanta Village or EAV. Between 1995 and 2000, the commercial property in the area went from being primarily vacant or used as storage space to comprising a trendy restaurant and bar district. The village primarily services local residents and has positioned itself as a kind of Bohemian enclave and, as such, it stands as an arguably conscious alternative to the tourist spectacle of downtown (discussed at length in chapter three). Despite the differences, the changes in the EAV took place within the same social, political and economic contexts as other changes in the

city and were similarly directed by market demands which sought to connect the space to local, regional and ultimately global networks of capital. In order to understand how the EAV is connected to this larger context, and how it differentiates itself from other spaces in the same context, it is helpful to review the work of Manuel Castells on space and power in the era of globalization.

Manuel Castells' book *The Rise of Network Society* tries to come to terms with the amazing changes in global society at the end of the twentieth century. While the book takes the internet as its primary example, his argument is that the logic of the web – the network – is not confined to computers but expresses a social reality for a shrinking world where even the most mundane aspects of everyday life can be caught in the global system of relationships or shut out from it almost completely. “Networks are open structures,” he writes, “able to expand without limits, integrating new nodes as long as they are able to communicate within the network, namely as long as they share the same communication codes (for example, values or performance goals)” (Castells 1996, 501). In one of the most nuanced sections of the book, Castells describes how this network logic shapes the development of space in the age of intensified globalization. Just as computer terminals serve as nodes in the flow of electronic information, the increasing interdependence of nations, cities, communities and businesses means that these places will increasingly take on the role of nodes for the flow of information, capital and labor in a global and decentralized society.

“Spaces of flow” as Castells calls them, organize and channel “purposeful, repetitive, programmable sequences of exchange” and therefore rely on standard symbolism – protocol – for basic communication but otherwise seem to rely on their

apparent lack of signification to facilitate efficient flow (Castells 1996, 442). While “the space of flows is not placeless” Castells asserts that “its structural logic is” which means that nodes in the network are more similar to one another than a particular node is to the non-networked places that may be physically closer to it – at least in the ways that are important to the network (Castells 1996, 443). For example, the vanilla blandness of chain hotels, rather than being “silent” due to their lack of what could be called personality or character, actually speak volumes in that they present themselves as clean, efficient and, most importantly, *connected* places of business where the flow of information, capital and/or labor is uninterrupted and unimpeded by extraneous signification that may situate the space with some spatial and/or temporal specificity and therefore possibly outside of the network. This is the case for hotels, airports and office parks from Warsaw to New York to Cape Town. Spaces of flow work because they cannot be tied down in place or time and because they have personalities but only the kinds that are useful to the network.

The sterility of these spaces reflects a lack of particularity. As the space of flow is in no way independent from other nodes in the network, it can have no history or assertive individuality. As he says, the design of such spaces supersedes “the historical specificity of each locale” (Castells 1996, 447). This does not mean that such spaces have no history or that there are not real people who pass through them. Rather it means that the network is uninterested in such issues except in so far as they may help or hinder flow. The result, for Castells, is a “tendency ... toward a horizon of networked, a-historical space of flows, aiming at imposing its logic over scattered, segmented places increasingly unrelated to each other, unable to share cultural codes” (Castells 1996, 459).

While he may have over dramatized the separation of spaces of flow from local places, at least for the time being, his point that this new kind of space is emerging and his description of them is strikingly satisfying. Even though it is easy to see this argument as a simple aesthetic one, the way the network and its nodes look is far less important than the way they act.

For Castells, like any other kind of space, spaces of flow cannot be considered separately from the social practices that take place simultaneously within them. As spaces of flow are produced for profit maximization and the efficient flow of resources, the social practices that take place there are largely reproductions of capitalist social structure(s). The increasingly efficient flows of capital and labor through these spaces both cause and are the result of the compression of time and space and creates, according to Castells, the delirium of being stuck in a very fast present which is moving with such momentum that you hardly have a chance to consider the world and your place in it within a historical context. In other words, it is hard to tell exactly when and where you are in a network society.

Like Fredric Jameson, argues that these spaces create a sense of schizophrenia (Jameson 1992, 1-54). But while Jameson's description of schizophrenia in postmodernity is disconcerting but ultimately sublime, Castells refuses to be so ambivalent. He argues that this kind of schizophrenia is the condition that makes possible "the fundamental form of domination in our society": the confusion of the class interests of the vast majority of people – labor – for the interests of the elite (Castells 1996, 445). If you don't know where or when you are, how do you understand your place in struggle?

While the depthless-ness and superficiality of such spaces provides a slick surface for flows, they also deny certain conversations particularly ones that are based on the material history of the spaces and the material reality of the people passing through them. Castells writes, “the functions to be fulfilled by each network define the characteristics of places that become their privileged nodes” (Castells 1996, 444). The result is a reorganization of the history, and experience of places in the service of commerce. The spaces that are the product of networked (colonized) places are the lean, no-nonsense nodes that are connected to the increasingly uncontested power structure of global capitalism. While Castells answer to this chicken and egg situation is debatable (does the need for flow produce the space or do spaces produce the flows or are they developing in tandem, directed by another force or other forces?) the result certainly is not. While it is now seemingly impossible for power to be concentrated in one particular node because interdependence is the name of the game, the global network society, led by capitalist enterprise, has insured that the structures of capitalism’s market logic are present everywhere and dominant almost everywhere. Nodes may rise and fall but the network remains.

The flat and placeless world of undifferentiated airports, conference centers, hotels and office parks was the world that Castells had in mind while working through these ideas. However, this network logic can also be seen in other places that appear much less flat. Though chain restaurants, malls, gated communities and gentrified neighborhoods are each literally bursting with gaudy signification, and seem to be the exact opposite of the barren, white office parks, the studied, crafted and synthetic nature of the proliferation of signs in these spaces both result from and reproduce the kind of

schizophrenia Castells alludes to. The endless signification is so disassociated from the material history and reality of the place that the admittedly colorful surfaces remain slick enough and unproblematic for the flow of power.

The idea of the network with its nodes, hubs and “discarded places” may sound so extra-human that one may be surprised to see actual people flowing through them along with all the capital. To a certain extent, this is reasonable as the logic of the network serves the network, not necessarily people. The network is unconcerned with who exactly inhabits its nodes as long as flow is facilitated. But while the network may be ambivalent, the engine of its movements is struggle for power between real people. The key to taking power in a network society – and, by extension, the global market economy - is figuring out how to sustain your node and keep it relevant to the network.

A Brief History of East Atlanta

The history of how East Atlanta became a node in the global network of spaces of flow begins on Thanksgiving Day 1889 when J.S. McWilliams opened a general store near the intersection of Glenwood Avenue and Flat Shoals Avenue. Seven years later, while the roads were still unpaved and basic utilities were unavailable, another general store, Marbut and Minnor opened across the street (Gaddis 1997, 9-14). At the turn of the century this store had grown into five businesses – dry goods, feed and seed, a black smith, livery stable and a grocery store. Commercial development would continue to gradually fan out from this intersection over the next fifty years.

By 1928 the streets were paved, street lights were installed and city directories indicate that the commercial district contained thirty three business including five grocery

stores, three service stations, three pharmacists and three feed stores. The development of a residential area south of Glenwood had begun several years earlier with a grid of streets and a park. While many of these early residents most likely worked in the businesses, shops and factories that were in operation on the east side of town, and shopped in the commercial district, the number of feed stores indicates that people were coming to the area from more remote agricultural areas to the east near Panthersville and Lithonia.

Census data from 1930 indicates that the neighborhood of East Atlanta was remarkably average in almost every respect. Statistics on such things as houses with electricity and plumbing and the number bedrooms per unit indicate that homes in east Atlanta were certainly not as luxurious as those in the northern suburbs but were not as impoverished as those in the nearby neighborhood of Cabbagetown or the downtown residential areas either (United States Work Projects Administration, Georgia 1939). Crime was present but the neighborhood was relatively safe compared to others (United States Work Projects Administration, Georgia 1939). By and large, the adult residents of East Atlanta were young and the area was in the second highest group for birth rates (United States Work Projects Administration, Georgia 1939). Charles Gaddis, a long time resident and self-appointed neighborhood historian, indicates that the Depression of the thirties and the rationing during the Second World War were hard on the neighborhood but the city directories indicate that few stores remained vacant for long and turn over in the area was not nearly as dramatic as it would become.

In the post-World War II era of the late 1940s and 1950s East Atlanta enjoyed the prosperity that came with the nation-wide economic boom. This is evidenced by the

construction of more commercial space in the EAV and the high number of housing starts in the adjoining residential areas. However, the 1960s brought two developments that would put a halt to this prosperity. Many residents lost their homes to the construction of Interstate 20 which was directed through the north end of the neighborhood and many more abandoned the neighborhood for the newly accessible suburbs. According to the East Atlanta Community Association (EACA) relocation out of East Atlanta at this time was exacerbated by would-be slumlords who encouraged white residents to sell their homes – often at a loss – by scaring them with scenarios of integrated businesses and schools (East Atlanta Community Association n.d.). As this was happening, the neighborhood was targeted by civil rights groups for increased integration as the Fair Housing Act made such moves possible.

Despite the dramatic white flight, the neighborhood remained remarkably integrated – 60 percent black, 40 percent white/other, according to the EACA – until the 1980s. At this point, low property values, a dangerous reputation and the preponderance of poorly maintained homes – largely due to slumlord neglect – took a toll on the neighborhood. The EACA reports that through the 1980s as much as 60 percent of the shops in the village were “vacant or used as storage space.” Trust Company (later bought by SunTrust which was then bought by Wachovia) decided to close its East Atlanta branch in 1988 because it had made no home-purchase loans and only eight home-improvement loans since 1985. Before closing, the branch had taken the drastic measure of hiring off-duty Atlanta SWAT police officers as security guards due to the area’s rising crime rates (Wyly, Coole, Hammerl, and Holloway 2000, n.p.).

The East Atlanta “Renaissance”

By the 1990s, the area was very depressed. In keeping with the traditional narrative of gentrification, young white people including many artists began to move into the neighborhood – some after being priced out of earlier gentrified neighborhoods like Virginia-Highlands, Inman Park and Candler Park – lured by cheap rent and, for those looking to buy, a plethora of low cost “fixer-uppers.” In 1995 a young entrepreneur and his mother opened a restaurant in the East Atlanta Village called The Heaping Bowl and Brew offering an eclectic mix of entrees served in bowls. The following year a coffee shop called Sacred Grounds (Later re-named Joe’s) and a branch of Grant Park’s popular Grant Central Pizza opened in the EAV. Then in 1997 a bar/restaurant/concert venue opened called The EARL (East Atlanta Restaurant and Lounge) along with two restaurants: Town Hall (later re-named The Flatiron) and Burrito Art (latter re-named Burrito Delight). The relatively upscale Fountain Head Lounge (later re-named the East Side Lounge), the trendy Echo Lounge and the gritty Gravity Pub each opened for business in 1998 though the very successful Echo Lounge closed in early 2005 after it was revealed to have an improper liquor license. The next year, the lounge Hi-Tops and two restaurants – Kiva and Cameli’s Pacifico – opened, though all three have undergone significant changes since then. Hi-Tops changed its name to the Village Sports Bar and abruptly closed in mid 2004, Cameli’s changed to a vegetarian/vegan menu in the economic crunch after 9/11 and Kiva went out of business but was replaced by the family friendly Good News Café which closed and later reopened as the new location of the popular Decatur lesbian bar, My Sisters Room. In 2000, a gay dance club called Mary’s opened. Two restaurants, the gourmet Iris and the idiosyncratic I Love Thai Cafe (later

renamed Thai and Sushi: East Atlanta), opened in 2003 and a French bistro followed in late 2004.

Today, the EAV is home to seventeen cafes, restaurants and bars as well as a variety of boutique shops. In total there are seventy five businesses operating in the EAV today and the only ones that predate the changes that began in 1995 are a barber shop, a florist, a metal working shop and a hardware store. In a marked difference from the 1980s, there are only seven vacant storefronts in the EAV today and each of them appear to be undergoing some sort of renovation. Additionally, the Fannie Mae foundation reports that “Twenty-eight LMI [low-moderate income] borrowers secured mortgages in East Atlanta in 1998, with average loan values of \$72,150” (Wyly, Coole, Hammerl, and Holloway 2000, n.p.). In 2008, it is rare to see homes in East Atlanta selling for less than \$300,000, though the market is in the process of “rationalizing” as a result of the sub-prime mortgage crisis. These rapid developments in the area and the relative stability they have brought to the EAV seem to indicate a new period in the history of the neighborhood that many call the “East Atlanta Renaissance.”

While these developments have clearly been shaped by forces within Atlanta, national and global forces have also played a role. The increasing scale of businesses in the national and international markets helped to set Atlanta up to be a major regional hub for corporations with expanding interests particularly in the banking, technology and transportation sectors. The new white-collar jobs that this opened up has attracted large numbers of professionals from all over the county and the world on a much larger scale than the historically isolated South has been accustomed to. Stan Stalnaker, in his book *Hub Culture*, writes that “the grandchildren [of the fifties era] are moving back to ...

urban centers ... because the suburbs are becoming the new ghetto” (Stalnaker 2002, 4). Continuing, he argues that while the city was once considered a “place of anonymity ... today ... the suburbs are becoming anonymous, while the hubs offer visibility, and increasingly, identity” (Stalnaker 2002, 5). Thus, the influx of young professionals with dreams of living in the city – and dreams of what that means – has fueled the momentum and, more importantly, the character of East Atlanta’s transformation from a depressed in-town neighborhood into one of the city’s – and indeed the region’s – most booming housing markets and entertainment districts.

Despite this argument that hubs offer individuality, Stalnaker acknowledges that they tend to be similar to one another even as they are distinct from the non-hub areas immediately surrounding them. He writes that a hub, “must contain its own brand of creative imprint ... unique in terms of geography but which share a common feel to other cities ... bound together by their creative uniqueness and attractiveness as a destination for visitors” (Stalnaker 2002, 6). While the EAV is distinct from other neighborhoods in Atlanta, it shares a “common feel” with other in-town, Bohemian enclaves like Detroit’s Ferndale, Brooklyn’s Williamsburgh, Toronto’s Queen Street, Chicago’s Wicker Park, London’s Shoreditch and Berlin’s Kreuzberg. The “creative uniqueness” of the EAV has drawn quite a bit of attention from residents, entrepreneurs, journalists and food critics. Everyone who writes about the neighborhood seems compelled to paint a picture of it using words like “unpretentious,” “eclectic,” “SoHo style,” “Fun,” “Funky,” “laid back,” “grungy,” “rough around the edges” and “easy going.” How this character has been crafted is the focus of the following section.

East Atlanta: Themed Space and Themed History

The most striking feature of the re-imaged (re-imagined?) EAV is this theme that is realized through its more or less coherent identity. The space has become the geographic location and manifestation of this image that serves the niche strategy of the area's revitalization. However, a distinction needs to be made between the kind of highly orchestrated theming that has guided the development of Downtown as a tourist attraction and what has happened in the EAV. Whereas the changes to Downtown are the result of careful market analysis and oversight – led by organizations like Central Atlanta Progress – the changes in the EAV seem to be the result of a much more organic process in that all the factors that create the EAV's new identity have been developed with no discernable evidence of a detailed master plan. While there is an East Atlanta Business Association, new entrepreneurs are drawn to the area's image and start businesses that fit in. The frequent tweaking of names, menus and owners reveals the experimental nature of the commercial development in the EAV. That they all come together to form a more or less coherent identity only shows how pervasive the ideas of themed space and niche marketing have become. It is *the* prevailing logic of businesses small and large.

In place of strict, centralized image control, the EAV's identity, which is attractive to entrepreneurs and consumers alike, is the result of many factors. In the remainder of this section I look at each of these factors. I will focus the public relations efforts of the EACA (particularly their website), the village's physical appearance, the kinds of restaurants and bars in business and the available forms of entertainment in the EAV.

The East Atlanta Community Association: Of all the entities that influence the identity of the EAV, the EACA is in many ways the most conservative and simultaneously the most idealistic. It is conservative in that it is adamantly concerned with ensuring safety and increasing property value. This makes sense in that most of the members are residents and business owners. Its idealism comes through in its constant appeals to an arguably liberal utopian vision of community for the area. This can be seen in the Association's by-laws that state its goals are to:

promote a high quality of life for all residents of East Atlanta regardless of race, age, sex, or economic status. EACA encourages well planned residential and business development, and the renovation of existing dwellings and businesses. EACA insists on a safe community where residents do not fear crime or an environment of intimidation. EACA requires that the Atlanta Public School System meets the broad educational needs of the Community. EACA seeks for its residents the highest quality of city services. Above all, EACA seeks the development of a sense of community pride and belonging within the East Atlanta community. (East Atlanta Community Association n.d.)

In an attempt to develop this kind of community pride, the EACA has created a content-heavy website with many surprisingly busy discussion boards. As this is the most comprehensive and coherent source of information about the organization and what they do, it is useful to spend some time looking closely at it.

The history of East Atlanta that can be found on the website – mentioned in the previous section – is not only a helpful reference source but it also provides a revealing look into the perspective of the organization. The author lashes out at the racism that exacerbated the white flight in the 1960s while romantically presenting the resulting influx of new black residents as the achievement of the “dream of home ownership in a nice neighborhood with yards for the children and good schools nearby.” The author also applauds the white residents and business owners who “remained refusing to give-in

determined to live in harmony with their new neighbors” as well as the “many good people,” who continued “to raise their families and go about their lives in admirable ways” (Boutwell 2004).

The tone of this account and the romantic valorization of the underdogs of the area’s history, while certainly sincere, also have the effect of presenting the association as the sensitive good guys. However, for all the attention and admiration of marginalized people there is no mention of those who were displaced in the gentrification of the late 1990s – specifically working class and/or elderly blacks. In fact, hardly anything is said about the remarkable changes in the neighborhood since 1995 beyond the self-affirming observation that “improvements have been made in the last twenty years.” The effect here is to present the history of the neighborhood as continuous and, most importantly *progressive*, through gradual evolution when the reality appears to be marked by ruptures.

Though I could not find any reference to the problems of gentrification at all on the website there were several hints of the tensions created by the changes since 1995. This tension was the most apparent in a lively debate on the community’s online message board (now abandoned) about the presence of graffiti in the neighborhood and particularly in the EAV. One resident started by suggesting that members of the community should form teams that, with funding from business owners, would clean graffiti in a timely manner. Then it was noted that while some “tags” were the work of so-called vandals, others were the result of business owners asking artists to create mural art. From there someone argued that such art whether in the name of decoration or tagging is considered a “blighting factor” if it is not in keeping with the standards of the

community according to city law . The definition of community standards then is at the heart of this argument. While some see graffiti has a dangerous first step in the decline of the neighborhood, others pointed out that even though they may not like it, such things as graffiti contribute to the charm and personality of the neighborhood. One person commented that if people wanted a vanilla neighborhood there “are places called suburbs” that may be more to their liking. To this, several of those who had opposed graffiti said that it was unfair and insulting to compare them to suburbanites (“What do you think about graffiti in the village?”, 2003).

Thus, while the level of debate about this issue indicates that the EAV is a contested space that is far from determined, there is a common understanding that at some level it stands as an alternative to the suburban gated communities that proliferate further out toward Interstate 285 and that this distinction is expected to be defended regardless of personal opinion. Furthermore, the participants in the discussion seem to see their neighborhood in opposition to the wealthier “in-town” neighborhoods like Druid Hills and Virginia Highlands where it is hard to imagine that graffiti – commissioned or otherwise – would be tolerated much less defended.

The Village’s Physical Appearance: With or without graffiti, the physical appearance of the EAV is a major contributor to the district’s identity as hip and edgy. Though many renovations have been made to several of the buildings, it is interesting that very few have undergone radical overhauls. In fact, many of the restaurants appear to be fixed up enough to be “up to code” but the apparently intentional “under construction” or, as several journalists have said, “shabby chic” aesthetic of many storefronts is an integral part of the EAV’s look. Interestingly, the fact that so many of

the store fronts share this aesthetic means that even buildings that have not been recently renovated actually complement those that have been in that they reinforce the area's gritty look.

Additionally, a much publicized bicycle rack project adds to this physical manifestation of the EAVs identity. First, the fact that a civic issue was made of the need for bike racks – something that is sorely lacking throughout most of the city – indicates not only the desire of many in the neighborhood to be active in community issues but that this community, or at least certain active elements of it, are interested in traditionally progressive ideas like traffic calming and alternative transportation. But, more remarkably, the bicycle racks themselves were created by local artists and they double as public art. The South East Atlanta Bike Users Group (SEABUG) commissioned the artists, who received \$700 each, with money they raised with various events like “Fun Rides” through the city. The project, completed in early 2003, consisted of thirteen bike racks/sculptures located in and around the EAV.⁶¹ Some of the racks seem to respond directly to their location. For example, the rack placed in front of the old neighborhood grocery store which recently became an antique mall is an oversized bar code while the one in front of Joe's Coffee Shop is a tilted coffee mug. The playfulness of these bike racks is consistent with the image of the EAV.

Restaurants and Bars in the EAV: The “shabby-chic” and artsy aesthetic of the neighborhood is not just limited to the storefronts and sidewalks along Glenwood and Flat Shoals but extends into many of the businesses. In some cases this look is certainly necessitated by lack of funds but others embrace it as a design philosophy. For example,

⁶¹ Mara Shalhoup, “Bike racks double as public art in East Atlanta,” *Creative Loafing* (Atlanta), October 16, 2002, http://atlanta.creative loafing.com/2002-10-16/news_brief3.html, [accessed April 20,2003].

The EARL, which has only been open since 1997, is decorated with a myriad of antique signs, knick-knacks and artifacts which give the appearance of a place that has been opened for much longer. Additionally, the basement of The Gravity Pub, a bar known for its bargain cans of beer, seems to have been left virtually untouched by revitalization efforts. The bare walls, exposed pipes and rafters on the ceiling and thrift store furniture makes this downstairs room seem more like a college student's apartment than a bar. Even Thai and Sushi East Atlanta – which is decidedly more chic than shabby – has incorporated this look with similarly exposed duct work on the ceiling though the work is much more “finished” here than at any of its neighbors.

Furthermore, there is a surprising amount of variety of food available in the neighborhood which reinforces the hip, quirky aesthetic. Affordable meat pies are popular at the Australian bakery, while Hass serves faux-tapas and Cinci is an all vegan establishment. Even places like The EARL, The Flatiron and The Gravity Pub that exhibit much less culinary adventurousness have their creative sides. The EARL serves popular veggie burgers in addition to its even more popular hamburgers, The Gravity Pub specializes in what could be described as elementary-school-lunchroom-chic with their huge baskets of tater tots and The Flatiron offers falafel in addition to their standard fried pub grub. While the menu of Thai and Sushi: East Atlanta is standard, the restaurant itself is thoroughly American contemporary with only a couple of Eastern looking elephants on the shelf behind the bar signifying anything about the culture where the food comes from. Besides, Thai food is still regarded as edgy for its taste and foreign-ness by most of America whether it is found in an “authentic” restaurant or not. Only Grant Central Pizza offers what could reasonably be described as a conventional restaurant

experience though pizza itself – at least as it is served in North America – is perhaps the quintessential example of culinary pastiche.

As many of the restaurants in the EAV also serve as bars, alcohol consumption needs to be seen as a connected yet separate expressive act. While almost every bar in the EAV is as well stocked as most other's in Atlanta, Creative Loafing accurately described Pabst Blue Ribbon as “the de facto official beverage of East Atlanta.”⁶² It is available on draft at almost every establishment though it is most commonly consumed in so-called sixteen ounce “tall-boys” (Grant Central also serves the frighteningly large twenty-four ounce cans). Either way, Pabst is invariably the least expensive beer available. Obviously there are financial considerations that fuel its popularity with customers in the EAV but, in addition to its relatively minimal cost, the sign value of Pabst should not be neglected. The love of kitsch, sarcasm and irony that inspires the decor of establishments like The EARL and the Heaping Bowl has also influenced the bohemian cooption of this traditionally working class beer. In this sense, affinity for PBR should be seen as a counter point to rising popularity of expensive micro-brews, imported beers and malt beverages (Smirnoff Ice et al.) but also connected to the articulation of identity through alcohol consumption that underlies all of this.

Entertainment: In addition to the boundary blurring cuisine in the EAV, experimentation is also important to the live music found in the EAV. With the opening of The EARL and The Echo Lounge as venues for independent music, (and the simultaneous demise of other area venues, particularly The Point in Little Five Points) the area has become the hub of the alternative/underground music scene. While recently

⁶² Andisheh Nourae, “You can call me Earl,” *Creative Loafing* (Atlanta), April 3, 2002, http://atlanta.creative loafing.com/gyrobase/you_can_call_me_earl/Content?oid=8429, [accessed September 22, 2009].

closed Echo Lounge tended to attract more national acts with larger fan bases and The EARL tends to have smaller bands including more local groups, both have remarkably eclectic performance schedules that include most genres of popular music including country, hip-hop, punk and electronic though it should be noted as evidence of the pervasiveness of eclecticism that it is not uncommon for both venues to book bands that include elements of each in their line ups. The only standard shared by the two venues is their nearly exclusive commitment to booking non-“mainstream” bands (this is not a distinction based on sound but rather one based on popularity). This is partially due to the costs and complications of booking widely popular groups and the limited size of the venues, but there is also an undeniable cultural cache associated with alternative and/or experimental bands that is in keeping with the EAV’s image.

The third music venue, also recently and unexpectedly closed, is The Village Bar and Grill. This was a very small bar that, like The EARL, doubled as a restaurant and booked local musicians to perform several nights each week. In many ways this business did not fit with the theme of the rest of the EAV. Unlike the music performed at The EARL or The Echo Lounge, The Village tended to book more blues and soul bands as well as some local hip-hop performers. For the most part, the staff and the customers are African American and the crowd tended to be older than at the other bars in the EAV. Both are a sharp contrast to the crowds at the other bars and concert venues. All of the customers I spoke to in The Village live in the neighborhood which is not the case for places like The EARL or the Echo Lounge which are destinations for people living all over the city.

The presence of the Village brought the unofficial racial segregation of the EAV into focus and underlines the problematic racial dimension of the changes since 1995. It is telling that, even though The Village has only been open since 1999, many people assumed it must have been much older and think of it as a survivor from the pre-gentrification days. However, race is not exclusively the determining factor here as The Village was conspicuously frequented by the area's middle aged residents. While there were very few young, white people in the bar, there were few young, African Americans as well. However, there were few people of color of any age in the other bars as well. This highlights the apparent paradox that while Atlanta is known as a kind of Mecca for the emerging black middle class, they are not the ones moving into neighborhoods like East Atlanta. Like the yet-to-be renovated buildings in the EAV, The Village seemed to add to the theme of the space as an authentic urban neighborhood. Toward the end of its run, The Village began to book some of the local bands who usually perform at The EARL. It is hard not to see this as an attempt to “get with the program” of the rest of the EAV.

All of these factors collide to produce an image and a theme for the EAV as an entertainment district/Bohemian enclave that is implicitly – if not officially or exclusively – white. This is the result of two paradoxically interrelated processes. One pushes the space to differentiate itself from other spaces in Atlanta through the logic of the niche market while the other encourages the EAV to link up with other similar spaces around the world. The same kinds of processes are at work at the individual level as well. The target marketing of identity encourages individuals to differentiate themselves through consumption while simultaneously showing commonality with others. What impact does

all this have on everyday life, what does it mean and how can it be put into perspective? These are the questions I deal with in the following section.

The Death and Life of a Place

The distinguishing features of the EAV's identity are visible, edible and audible everywhere. In many ways, this identity is remarkably similar to those of the successful urban spaces that Jane Jacobs has glorified in her famous writings on the city. Though it was written as a scathing attack on urban planning by an industry outsider, her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* has become one of the most influential books in urban planning. She writes passionately, romantically but, above all, practically about how cities work and how they can work better. Specifically, this book responds to the so-called "Urban Renewal" movement that transformed the central business districts of many American cities – including Atlanta – in the 1950s and 1960s. Appalled by the anti-human scale of the huge interstates, gigantic skyscrapers and vast yet conspicuously vacant green spaces urban renewal called for, Jacobs celebrated the crowded, gritty sidewalk culture of urban neighborhoods.

The scale of the EAV is very human, there is much activity on the streets and sidewalks and something approaching a distinctive East Atlanta culture seems to be emerging there. However, the thrust of Jacobs' argument is that the retention or re-creation of such spaces will increase safety, enrich community life and generally engender the foundation of a dynamic and just society. While this seems to be the goal of the EACA, what is found in the EAV is different in subtle but very important ways from the kind of place Jacobs depicts.

The similarities between Jacobs' description of bustling sidewalk culture and the current appearance of the EAV are, for the most part, entirely superficial. Whereas Jacobs argues for the "intricate, and close-grained diversity of uses that give each other constant mutual support," development in the EAV has been narrowly focused on one segment of the population (Jacobs 1961, 14). While there is diversity of options for this market, and the various businesses certainly provide "mutual support" for one another, any broader kind of diversity is unavailable and unlikely to develop because the ability to participate in the East Atlanta Renaissance is dependent on one's ability to participate in an increasingly upscale marketplace. Furthermore, Jacobs argues for community activism and compassionately progressive civic planning focused on maintaining small vibrant communities. However, it is the constantly fragmenting market – inherently prone to crisis and based on inequity – that has driven the development of the EAV. Furthermore, the "improvements" of the so-called East Atlanta Renaissance have been predominantly defined in terms of the greater number of consumer choices that now abound in the area. Greater food choices, increased opportunities for musicians and other artists – as well as their fans – and more convenient urban living are all improvements to the *consumer* culture of the area but this should not be confused with improvements to the quality of life for residents.

In fact, the East Atlanta Renaissance has caused severe problems for many residents, particularly residents who have lived in the area since before 1995. Larry Keating, director of the Atlanta City Council's Gentrification Task Force, says that three of the greatest problems resulting from gentrification are "loss of affordable housing, displacement of poor residents and the destruction of indigenous sociological

communities” (“Current Gentrification” 2003, n.p.). The impact on these communities creates hardships for people who depended on the networks of mutual aid they make available. Families who depended on one another for child care, car sharing and any number of other cooperative arrangements are now forced to make other arrangements in an increasingly unfamiliar social context.

Furthermore, though it is widely believed that the neighborhood is safer now than it was before 1995 – an argument usually supported by references to the apparent decline in drug dealing and prostitution and the quicker-than-ever police response time – this argument needs to be critically assessed. It is not as though the drug dealers and prostitutes were able to find “proper” jobs in the new businesses. It is more likely – though difficult to prove – that they have moved on to other areas if they were able to avoid arrest. That certain kinds of crime are no longer as common in East Atlanta as they once were is the result increased community pressure on law enforcement for more officers from new residents with more privilege, perhaps more political clout and a greater sense of entitlement.

Thus, rather than the kind of romantic return to richly nuanced, self-sufficient communities with thriving street culture that Jacobs describes in her writing, the changes in the EAV represent something else: the creation of a consumable image driven for the most part by market structures and primarily benefiting those who are most able to take advantage of those structures. This image, this space, created as a hip, gritty, edgy entertainment district rests on top of and, in some sense, separate from the drastically less stable set of dynamic and contradictory material, historic, economic and social forces that are the *place* East Atlanta. It is tempting to say that there are now at least two East

Atlanta's: one that is a constantly evolving geographic *place* and another that is a themed *space* of a more or less standardized type – the Bohemian enclave. But, while it is important to recognize this apparent separation to get a handle on what is happening, it is too simplistic to leave it at that. The EAV depends upon not only its national and local context but also the neighborhood for its image of urban authenticity. Likewise, the neighborhood has been radically changed along with the developments in the EAV – particularly by the influx of young, white professionals. Thus the relationship is highly dynamic and the distinctions should not be overstated.

Nor should it be concluded that the themed *space* of East Atlanta referred to by college students planning a night out, young professionals looking for a starter home or food critics writing for Creative Loafing is any less real or dynamic than the historical *place* called East Atlanta. The two exist as one. What should be recognized though is that the image that began to develop within the neighborhood in the mid 1990s was not randomly generated but is the result of fairly specific local, regional, national and global conditions that have arisen from the transformations in the social, political and financial economy in the second half of the twentieth century. While it may seem overly dramatic to link the changes in one intersection in one neighborhood in Atlanta, Georgia to massive and decidedly global trends, this is only because these global trends are very dramatic themselves.

Though the EAV, with its run down, bohemian look is worlds apart, at least aesthetically, from the corporate sterility of the spaces of flow that Castells describes, the kitschy pastiche, synthetic authenticity and quirky forgetfulness that characterizes the space are all productions and reproductions of prevailing market logic. While the EAV

in some sense remains a more or less contained *place* that serves many of the material needs of the community surrounding it, it is now also a *space* that constitutes a node in the local (and thus regional and thus national and thus global) economic network.

Though there are clearly differences in scale here, what is at issue is not the dominance of this hub over that one or even this network over that one but the global dominance of *the network* and its logic as tool, reality and global cultural system that persuades even the smallest places and practices to link up under its rules of operation which simply demand profit. Though there are seemingly infinite ways to fulfill this obligation, the network's demand is non-negotiable unless you are willing to be turned off. Castells is clearly aware of this possibility as he writes "everything and everyone which does not have value is switched off the networks and ultimately discarded" (Castells 1996, 134).

This all paved the way for the East Atlanta Renaissance in that the place was reconfigured as a network space, a node, beginning in 1995. By focusing on the "underserved" bohemian market, the EAV has found a way to reconnect itself to the financial network that brings with it new flows of residents, consumers and, most importantly capital. But in the process, a kind of destructive creation had to take place, as the Gentrification Task Force concluded. The apparent stability of this new image that has emerged in the EAV also seems to preclude, at least for the foreseeable future, the opportunity for other kinds of development that could serve people who currently do not identify with the space – namely teens, the elderly and the poor.

With the logic of the network – which is also the logic of the market – being the ascendant way of operating throughout the world it is not surprising that references to material history and the problems that the network creates are marginalized, sanitized

and/or silenced. Evidence of all three are evident in the EAV. The problems of gentrification – particularly displacement – are ignored in official statements and only taken up by critical journalists. The troubled histories of racism and classism in the neighborhood are not dealt with but are sanitized by the EACA who valorize those few who fought against it but ignore those who struggle with it today. The material history of the area, which, except for a few memorials to the Battle of Atlanta during the Civil War, is all but absent from the physical EAV – no names, no references, no markers – is practically silenced and possibly doomed to be forgotten. So in a sense, East Atlanta is still “turned off” though its new manufactured image is certainly connected and is indeed glowing brighter than at any other time in recent memory. This is how the Castells’ network makes good on its promise to raise the standard of living through open markets. In return for increased safety, more fluid flows of capital and a presence in the network, a would-be node must give up its specificity – some of its people, values and institutions – and history: in short, its sense of place. A sense of place may involve thoughts and feelings that are extraneous or even hostile to the mandates of a space in a network. Even the seemingly oppositional values that are assumed -to be embodied in such a “bohemian enclave” – values like rebelliousness, creativity and community – are pressed into service of the niche strategy as aspects of the target market.

Conclusion

On Thursday August 2, 2007, a resident of Emerson Avenue in Ormwood Park, just across Moreland Avenue from East Atlanta, was at home recovering from surgery. In the middle of the day, he saw two young men looking into his window. When they

began trying to break in, he fired his gun toward the door and then called police. Two young men were arrested later that day in connection to the attempted break in. While in custody, one of them made a call to the family of James Motley, who he said was with them at the time of the incident, and asked if anyone had seen him. That evening, Motley's family led a group of twenty people in a search of the neighborhood, looking for him. The team found nothing. Two days later, on Saturday night, Debbie Matani was in her back yard when she found the body of James Motley with a gunshot wound in his chest. Police found no blood near the home where the alleged break-in took place and neither of the men arrested had any injuries. However, both the police and the Atlanta Journal-Constitution felt there was enough evidence to link Motley's death to the events of the previous Thursday.⁶³

The incident was reported in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution but the focus was not on the attempted break-in or even on the mysterious death of James Motley but rather on the gentrifying neighborhood in which the events took place. The headline read, "East Atlanta Shaken by Break-In, Discovery of Body," and the lead mentioned neither the shooter nor the would-be burglars but rather a neighbor who had recently moved into the neighborhood. "When Susan McKay moved into her East Atlanta neighborhood about two years ago," the story began, "she accepted that gentrification often came with a price: break-ins, vandalism, car thefts." At the end of the article, the reporter described neighbors going about their Sunday evening business and talking to one another about the

⁶³ Saeed Ahmed and Juanita Cousins, "East Atlanta Shaken by Break-in, Discovery of Body," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, August 6, 2007, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed August 14, 2009].

activities of the past few days. One of these residents, Brownlee Currey, told the reporter, “You expect this kind of thing when there's gentrification.”⁶⁴

Though gentrification is evoked in the first and last sentence of the story, it remains unclear exactly how this horrific situation is connected to the process. Nothing is said about the identity of the shooter or the would-be burglars that would tell a reader anything about social or economic status and thus allow them to place the events within the context of racial or class-based tensions in the community. There is nothing about how long the shooter lived in his home or whether or not the young men involved were even residents of the neighborhood. If this ambiguity is not simply the result of sloppy reporting, either the reporter assumed a context for the story or expected the reader to do so. It is as if by saying gentrification, the story could reveal aspects of what happened that could not be politely said otherwise.

By placing this shooting within the context of gentrification, the article locates what is otherwise an exceptional course of events within a larger and much more familiar and sensible narrative for residents of Intown Atlanta. The perpetrators are not merely desperate and/or foolish youngsters but bogey men of the urban middle class whose crimes are not a symptom of structural issues but, rather, are carried out as a form of retribution and are a defining characteristic of their identity. The shooter is not a trigger-happy paranoid who “shoots first and asks questions later” but a Bernard Goetz-like defender of his home who was forced into a bad situation by the evil that surrounds him. Told in this way, this is not about an attempted burglary and a shooting but about the slow and dangerous – but ultimately necessary – process of neighborhood re-development in Atlanta.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*

Thus the story of the gentrification of East Atlanta specifically – and most of Intown Atlanta generally – highlights the positive changes associated with the process. Simultaneously, it conflates legitimate critiques of gentrification with bigoted hatred, embodied by Rev. More, and violent criminality, embodied by the would-be burglars in Ormewood Park. Just as there was no secret master plan that directed the so-called East Atlanta Renaissance, there is no evidence that there is a media conspiracy to create a pro-business narrative for neighborhood change. Both are simply the result of the existing narrative about race, class and neighborhood development in post Olympics Intown Atlanta.

CHAPTER V
ATLANTIC STATION: COMMUNITY, CONSUMERISM AND ATLANTA'S NEW
URBANISM

Against Suburbia: Riverside and the Birth of Atlanta's New Urbanism

The gentrification of Atlanta's Intown neighborhoods was in large part due to the relative affordability of the homes and their close proximity to the central business district. Another factor which seems to have made these neighborhoods attractive is their overall design which marks them as products of older - and, in the case of Atlanta, rare - principles of urban planning. Lot sizes in these neighborhoods tend to be smaller with homes close to public right of ways - sidewalks and streets. Small front yards, generally coupled with front porches (a necessity in pre-air conditioning Georgia) create at least the possibility of neighborly interaction. The blocks of these streets tend to be small in size and form tight grid patterns that facilitate walking. This street design also provides multiple possibilities for traffic flow which becomes important when a road is blocked for one reason or another. Furthermore, many of these neighborhoods generally contain small commercial areas - generally no larger than a block or two - where stores could serve the daily needs of the residents within walking or biking distance. While many of these old commercial blocks became vacant and/or dilapidated during the 1970s and 80s, there has recently been interest in redeveloping them. The East Atlanta Village is just one example of this.

However, the design of these neighborhoods is in sharp contrast to the rest of the metro area. As the city expanded outward from downtown, establishing new suburban focal points and swallowing older communities as it did so, the kinds of developments

that emerged tended to reflect the planning fashions of their time. As most of this expansion took place in the post World War Two period, Atlanta's suburbs were built out according to the car-dependent subdivision model which sought to approximate an ideal of country life for residents who had grown tired of the increasingly dirty and overcrowded cities. In these developments, large homes sit far back from the road on large lots. Rather than the traditional grid pattern, these newer neighborhoods are often arranged around *cul de sacs* and long, winding roads that feed traffic onto "collector" roads which generally leads to one of the interstate highways. The commercial needs of the residents are usually met at large malls or strip shopping centers which line the collector roads and are generally miles away from most homes.

However, what the residents of these neighborhoods gain in terms of increased privacy and space, they tend to pay for in time largely due to the vast distances they have to travel and the massive amounts of traffic this causes. Though suburban life - with its expressways, strip-malls and drive thrus - offers the promise of convenience, one accident on a collector road can result in dozens of the suburban *cul de sacs* being temporarily cut off from the interstate. An accident on the interstate could mean long delays for thousands of commuters who, finding themselves stuck between exits, have no alternative but to wait for the wreckage to be cleared. Alternatives to driving are almost nonexistent in Atlanta's sprawl except for the most determined - or desperate - pedestrians, cyclists and public transportation riders. Sidewalks are scarce, distances between destinations are vast and traffic is either too dense or too fast (or both) to be safely navigated in anything other than a car. Rail service is almost entirely absent from these areas and bus service is infrequent if it exists at all.

By the 1990s, as a result of this car dependent and largely unchecked suburbanization, Atlanta was almost as well known for its suburban sprawl as anything else and this became a source of concern for city leaders. In addition to the white flight – and the concurrent capital flight – to the suburbs, jobs also had been leaving the city for decades. In the mid 1960s, downtown had been home to more than two thirds of the metropolitan area's public, corporate and private offices but by the mid 1990s, this had shrunk to only 13.3 percent (Lewyn 2003, 190). After two decades of building premium office space downtown, this trend was disturbing both for the property owners and for the city which depended on their property taxes. While increased gentrification was, for the most part, seen by business and political leaders as a positive trend in terms of increasing the middle class population of Intown Atlanta, the continuing lack of attractive housing stock (combined with other concerns) inside the perimeter presented a barrier to the city leaders' dreams of increasing economic activity in the city. The few medium to high density developments that had been built in the previous decade tended toward the "neighborhood-as-fortress" model made up of inward facing structures, often apartments or condominiums, surrounded by high fences and controlled by gates. This design reflected the urban paranoia of the times. Not only were these developments anti-urban in that they contributed little to the street life of the city, they were also staggeringly unpopular. While the units may have been occupied, the high turnover of occupants confirmed their status as temporary housing for people on their way to something that more closely resembled a home. Such housing was, for the most part, simply unavailable to middle class families in the city.

Then, in the late nineties, John Williams, CEO of Post Properties, the successful purveyors of gated and landscaped suburban apartments and condominiums, decided to try something new. On a parcel of land pushed up in one of the corners where Interstate 75 intersects Interstate 285, Williams partnered with the New Urbanist architecture firm Duany, Plater-Zyberk & Company to develop a small town that would include homes, shopping, restaurants and office space all within walking distance of one another. Because such plans had been made virtually illegal by zoning regulations and building codes developed at the height of suburbanization, Williams spent almost as much time acquiring all the necessary variances as he did building (Kunstler 2001, 70-71). Despite some very real barriers to creating a true urban neighborhood – the site’s distance from downtown, the absence of MARTA service and the impossibility of multiple connection points to the surrounding roads - Riverside quickly became a huge market success and was treated like a tourist attraction by city dwellers and suburbanites alike because of its unique design. Today the neighborhood is seen as the first baby step Atlanta took toward the then novel architectural movement known as New Urbanism.

In the years since Riverside opened, several New Urbanist-inspired projects have sprouted up around the city and the ambitious Atlantic Station is at least the most publicized, if not most successful, example of this. Built on a lot previously occupied by a steel mill, Atlantic Station incorporates a variety of residential units, office spaces and retail including a mall and the wildly popular IKEA furniture store and has quickly become a local - and regional - destination for dining and shopping. Despite the complexity of developing sites like Atlantic Station, the idea seems to have captured the imagination of developers. Since it opened, several development plans, both inside and

outside the perimeter, have been described as hoping to be the next Atlantic Station. These plans include the soon-to-be closed Fort McPherson and the long vacant Ford Taurus factory in Hapeville. All of this interest in New Urbanism represents not only a drastic change from the historic neglect of Intown Atlanta but also to the regional trend toward suburban planning styles. Furthermore, because a major component of the rhetoric of Atlantic Station (and New Urbanism in general) revolves around everyday use by residents, it seems to have generated a great deal of excitement in the general public towards the usually dry subject of urban planning.

Though praised by some as a rational and responsible model for urban development, the city's eagerness to embrace New Urbanism has also raised concerns similar to those raised by gentrification. Primary among these concerns is that, despite its claims about creating diverse and dynamic community, New Urbanism has very little ability to determine social outcomes and, more frequently, attempts at constructing these kinds of communities wind up reproducing existing social hierarchies. Furthermore, as the case of Atlantic Station shows, the utopian rhetoric of New Urbanism can easily be pressed into service of developers at the expense of civic involvement in urban development.

A Brief Overview of New Urbanism

New Urbanism - or neo-traditional planning, as it is sometimes called – is an architectural and urban planning movement that gained momentum in the early 1980s. Taking inspiration from older American and European towns and cities, New Urbanism favors pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use developments that decrease car dependency and

allow residents to, as the mantra says, “live, work and play” within a relatively small space. New Urbanism is pointedly a reaction against both the modernist Urban Renewal project and suburban sprawl. The New Urbanists argue that the Urban Renewal programs of the 1950s and 1960s destroyed the human scale of many central cities, including Atlanta, which had originally been built out according to a tight grid pattern and included small blocks of apartments, stores and offices all within easy walking distance of each other. Urban Renewal called for the construction of vast skyscrapers, separated by large – though often underused and generally hard to secure – green spaces and connected by high speed expressways.

At the same time that Urban Renewal was transforming downtowns, suburbanization was taking over large tracts of land surrounding the cities. Like Urban Renewal, suburbanization also assumed a car dependent population (and cheap fuel) and located residential areas far from work and shopping. Furthermore, large lots characteristic of these residential developments made possible a degree of privacy that was desirable to a generation that came of age in overcrowded urban settings but it also left little chance for casual, incidental interactions between neighbors. The New Urbanists claim that, as a result of these prevailing planning habits, people were more isolated, spent more time in traffic and experienced less of the diversity that is frequently cited as an advantage of traditional urban life. Thus, the New Urbanist critique was not only aesthetic but also sociological, psychological, environmental and political as they argued that their principles of design could work against these trends.

During the 1980s a handful of architects and planners began to rediscover these older approaches to design. The fledgling movement’s coming out party was the

construction of a beach resort village at Seaside Florida. While Seaside was built as a vacation destination and not as an actual city, its development allowed the architects to experiment with updating older design principles that encouraged walking and emphasized public spaces. Seaside soon won many awards and it remains both a popular vacation destination as well as an oft cited example of New Urbanist design.

In 1993, the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) was established as a kind of professional organization for the wide range of people who are part of the town and urban planning process and who support the principles of New Urbanism. Though the organization's first conference attracted just 100 people, CNU now claims over 3000 members internationally including architects, planners, politicians, lawyers, community activists, educators and students. Many of these members exhibit a nearly evangelical zeal for promoting their philosophy in numerous articles, books and conferences. The basic principles, however, are contained in the manifesto-like "Charter of the New Urbanism."

In keeping with New Urbanism's self image as much more than a design fad, the Charter begins with what it sees as an interrelated laundry list of societal ills that it hopes to rectify. "The Congress for the New Urbanism," it begins, "views disinvestment in central cities, the spread of placeless sprawl, increasing separation by race and income, environmental deterioration, loss of agricultural lands and wilderness, and the erosion of society's built heritage as one interrelated community-building challenge" (Congress for the New Urbanism 1999). The charter then explains the general goals of New Urbanism which are, "the restoration of existing urban centers and towns within coherent metropolitan regions, the reconfiguration of sprawling suburbs into communities of real

neighborhoods and diverse districts, the conservation of natural environments, and the preservation of our built legacy” (Congress for the New Urbanism 1999).

In contrast to more conventional architectural movements, New Urbanism aspires to being dramatically holistic in its scope and identifies three interlocking levels of scale which it is concerned with. It begins with “the region, the city and the town” and then “the neighborhood, the district and the corridor” and finally “the block, the street and the building” (Congress for the New Urbanism 1999). At each level, New Urbanism urges planners to adhere to its 10 design principles which are; walkability, connectivity, diversity, mixed housing, quality architecture and urban design, traditional neighborhood structure, increased density, smart transportation, sustainability and quality of life (Congress for the New Urbanism 1999). While these principles are little more than catch phrases which are further elaborated on elsewhere, they indicate a substantial shift away from the kinds of development which had been common in the previous decades.

Like any movement worth the name, New Urbanism has generated its fair share of celebrities who sit for interviews with journalists, act as experts in documentaries and publish general interest books on the topic of planning. Thanks to numerous television appearances, speaking engagements and magazine articles (not to mention their outsized personalities), the two most widely visible celebrity New Urbanists are Andres Duany and Howard Kunstler. Duany’s New Urbanist credentials go back to Seaside which his architectural firm, Duany, Plater-Zyberk and Company, designed. An architect by training, his specialty is explaining the nuances of New Urbanist design and proselytizing for its benefits. He is perhaps best known as the primary author of *Suburban Nation*, an unlikely classic amongst disaffected Generation Xers who, having largely grown up in

suburbs, were attracted to Duany's critique of sprawl as inauthentic and boring. Typical of his matter-of-fact style (and tendency to oversimplify the social aspects of his design philosophy), Duany concludes the introduction to *Suburban Nation* by presenting what he sees as the choice contemporary America is faced with: "either a society of homogenous pieces, isolated from one another in often fortified enclaves, or a society of diverse and memorable neighborhoods, organized into mutually supportive towns, cities and regions" (Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck 2000, xiv).

While Duany often comes across as the professional popularizer of a revolutionary new way of living (though he is susceptible to arrogant hardheadedness thanks to years of battle against the prevailing habits of his industry) Kunstler, tends to play the role of the sharp tongued prophet of doom. A novelist and journalist, Kunstler exhibits a flair for the dramatic. In interviews for the documentary, *The End of Suburbia*, he predicts the end of interstate commerce as highways become too costly to maintain and the reemergence of family farms in the once manicured front lawns of outer-ring suburbs as the current methods of food production and distribution prove to be unsustainable. His technical term for the culture of suburbia is "a cluster-fuck" and he warns against the coming "shit-storm" which will be brought on by the end of plentiful oil (*The End of Suburbia* 2001). Though both Duany and Kunstler have been frequently criticized for oversimplification and hyperbole, they have at least broadened the parameters of what concerns developers need to address and have proposed alternatives with which a wide range of people have felt the need to engage.

Though their tone may be different, both Duany and Kunstler write breathlessly about the social desirability of their movement. In addition to their arguments about the

benefits of facilitating walking and the superior aesthetics of New Urbanism, Duany and Kunstler make emotional appeals to what they consider an innate human desire for community and argue that New Urbanism is the way to create and maintain it. In *Suburban Nation*, Duany writes,

We live today in cities and suburbs whose form and character we did not choose. They were imposed upon us by federal policy, local zoning laws, and the demands of the automobile. If these influences are reverse – and they can be – an environment designed around the true needs of individuals, conducive to the formation of community and preservation of the landscape, becomes possible. Unsurprisingly, this environment would not look so different from our old American neighborhoods before they were ravaged by sprawl. (Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck 2000, xiii - xiv)

Kunstler makes a similar, if more dramatic, appeal to the socio-political necessity of New Urbanism in a short article he wrote for the *Planning Commissioners Journal*. He writes,

The knowledge necessary to build really great towns that people would delight to live and work in, was fully in place, was fully possessed by Americans in our grandparents' day. We have thrown it all into the garbage can. It is as much of a struggle for us to regain this lost knowledge as it is for a stroke victim to learn how to speak all over again. We are also in the unhappy position of learning that without a regard for the public realm, for civic art, or civic life, we will probably not have much of a civilization. The future will require us to do things better, or the future will belong to other people in other societies. (Kunstler 1995, np)

Such appeals to “true needs” may sound dubious, threats about the end of civilization may be overly dramatic (even xenophobic) and the reactionary nostalgia may seem simplistic. However, the ideas espoused by Duany, Kunstler and their New Urbanist friends have caused a sensation in the planning industry – either as a philosophy to be embraced or an invader to be repelled.

Questioning and Critiquing New Urbanism

Scholars who have tested the claims of the New Urbanists have found that, generally, there is support for some of their more concrete claims. The American Planning Association published two brief articles intended to question the assumptions that New Urbanism is more environmentally friendly and facilitated walking rather than driving. The researchers found substantial, if qualified, support for both claims. Philip Berke reported that of the 54 developments his team studied (half New Urbanist, half conventional),

new urbanist developments do considerably better than conventional developments on various environmental measures. The new urbanist projects are at least twice as likely to protect steep slopes (56 percent versus 28 percent) and natural drainage depressions (53 percent versus 19 percent). (Berke 2006, 38)

However, the same article also pointed out that New Urbanism is not a good idea for fragile ecosystems where the movement's characteristic density would likely exhaust resources and cause more, not less, environmental damage than low density development. This amounts to a real problem for New Urbanists because, to date, most of their projects have been suburban subdivisions, so-called "green field" sites, and not urban infill.

Likewise, Susan Handy found some support for the claim that walking trips will increase in neighborhoods designed according to New Urbanist principles. In a limited study of New Urbanist developments, Handy found that there was considerably more walking going on than in more conventional suburbs. However, she acknowledges that these walking trips may not actually be substituting for driving trips. "When a town center is nearby and the streets have sidewalks," she writes, "residents may walk more because they can. They may make trips that they wouldn't have bothered to make if they

didn't have the option of walking to their destination" (Handy 2006, 36). Furthermore, she concedes that this increase in walking could be attributed to the types of people these neighborhoods attract. "People who are uninterested in walking may choose neighborhoods designed for easy driving, while those who prefer walking and would rather drive less may consciously choose neighborhoods designed for easy walking" (Handy 2006, 37).

A more detailed and focused study conducted by Hollie Lund found similarly conditional support for the claims of New Urbanists. Specifically, Lund examined the claims about increased access to goods and services, pedestrian travel and social interactions ("neighboring behaviors") in Portland, Oregon. In her study of eight neighborhoods, Lund found that,

there is some credibility to at least two of the claims of smart growth or new urbanism: (1) when combined with pedestrian friendly streetscapes, locating everyday amenities such as parks and retail shops within a neighborhood can increase pedestrian travel and neighbor interaction within a community and (2) people who walk around the neighborhood are more likely to interact with and form relationships with their neighbors. (Lund 2003, 428)

However, like Berke and Handy, Lund found that there is no necessary correlation between the neighborhood design and this behavior. Rather than the design, Lund argues that this could be attributed to the "self-selection of residents into neighborhoods that enable them to continue their *existing* behaviors" (Lund 2003, 428).

Lund does acknowledge that it is possible that New Urbanist developments could increase the net number of pedestrians if the people who moved to them had previously wanted to walk more but were unable to because of the design of their previous neighborhood. However, her findings, along with Berke and Handy, point to a thorny

problem for advocates of New Urbanism who often seem to rely on a kind design determinism which posits a belief that “better” design will create “better” communities and healthier social relations. Unfortunately for the New Urbanists, it seems more likely that social relations will determine design (or at least the use of existing design) and not the other way around. While it is certainly true that New Urbanist design will make the kind of community they advocate *possible*, there is no research to support a claim that design will make community *inevitable*.

Accordingly, with the exception of a hand full of libertarian New Urbanists who argue that the market can be depended on to create dense, walkable and sustainable cities, most scholars argue that more civic engagement and even government intervention is needed to realize the interrelated goals of sustainable, flexible and socially open neighborhoods. Writing in the Virginia Law Review, Jeremy Meredith argues that the New Urbanists have created an innovative solution to the problem of sprawl “at the neighborhood level and below” but states that “Efforts to combat urban sprawl ultimately must work on a number of levels” (Meredith 2003, 499-500). Though the New Urbanists have spoken often about the need for urban planning to be considered within the regional context, what they call “transect-based planning,” Meredith is referring to the tendency of their plans to become increasingly vague as the discussion moves further away from the individual building and toward the regional hinterlands. Meredith recommends actions at the federal level that “can force people to internalize the costs of suburbanization through its transit, tax and housing policies” (Meredith 2003, 499). “At the same time,” he writes, “regional governments can link municipalities together by coordinating actions that affect the region as a whole, such as exclusionary zoning and spatial mismatch” (Meredith

2003, 499-500). Without government support, Meredith argues that “New Urbanist neighborhoods will not aggregate into towns, cities and regions” (Meredith 2003, 502).

That many of New Urbanisms proponents continue to make utopian claims about its sociological merits – despite their lack of solid sociological evidence, comprehensive regional plans and legislative power – has inspired a kind of backlash from a wide variety of scholars and activists. While most critics accept the New Urbanists’ criticism of Urban Renewal and suburban design, they find that, in practice, New Urbanism fails to deliver the kind of richly textured urban experience that is so often held up as an ideal. Indeed, some scholars have argued that the ideal of community deployed by New Urbanism is little more than a rhetorical device used to market their design products.

Thomas J. St. Antoine, a communications scholar, identifies that the particular kind of rhetoric used by New Urbanists as a “refutative enthymeme” which is related to satire in that it mocks and rejects the claims of its opposite (in the case of New Urbanism this is suburbia) in order to construct its own ideal. In particular, St. Antoine argues that the rhetoric of New Urbanism seeks “to reduce tension between individualism and solidarity with others” (St. Antoine 2007, 134). As the proponents of New Urbanism mock suburbia, citizens are left “with an ideological compromise between the suburb and the city, but it does not provide a true alternative space to stand in contrast to suburbia” (St. Antoine 2007, 135) “Rather than offering a genuine alternative to suburban life,” he argues, “new urbanists offer individualistic, suburban developments with a veneer of community” (St. Antoine 2007, 135).

The success of this community rhetoric stems from the same kinds of insecurities identified in the previous chapter on gentrification. Paul Clarke, in his article “The Ideal

of Community and Its Counterfeit Construction” argues that “[t]oday, when many are realizing that employment is likely to be a series of different careers made necessary by corporate reorganizations, mergers, and realignments, and by state retrenchment from Keynesian expenditures, the individual compensation of stable home and place becomes a more desperate yearning” (Clarke 2005, 47). The result, for Clarke, is an attraction to the image of community that New Urbanism presents despite the fact that this community may be little more than superficial.

David Harvey also criticizes New Urbanism for its tendency toward design determinism which he identifies as a “persistent habit of privileging spatial forms social processes” (Harvey 1997, 2). However, Harvey’s real problem with New Urbanism is that its conception of city life falls into what he calls the “communitarian trap.” He writes, “Community has ever been one of the key sites of social control and surveillance, bordering on overt social repression. Well founded communities often exclude, define themselves against others, erect all sorts of ‘keep out’ signs (if not tangible walls)” (Harvey 1997, 3). Thus, Harvey senses a contradiction in New Urbanism’s insistence on building community while at the same time maintaining diversity because the two are often mutually exclusive. “All those things,” he writes, “that make cities so exciting – the unexpected, the conflicts, the excitement of exploring the urban unknown – will be tightly controlled and screened out with big signs that say ‘no deviant behavior acceptable here’” (Harvey 1997, 3). If by diversity, the proponents of New Urbanism simply mean sociological categories like race, class, ethnicity and sexuality then New Urbanism can certainly accommodate it. However, if the question of diversity entails differences in values, tastes, behaviors and lifestyles – in short, the kinds of diversity that

attract people to cities in the first place – then the “community” sought by new urbanism may be threatened.

In place of New Urbanism’s desire for community, Harvey proposes an understanding of “urbanization as a group of fluid processes in dialectical relation to the spatial forms to which they give rise and which in turn contain them.” Harvey’s desire to enable a “utopianism of process” rather than of form, is echoed by Mark Hinshaw, the urban design director of LMN Architects of Seattle. Writing for the journal *Planning*, Hinshaw makes the case for what he calls “True Urbanism.” Like Harvey, he sees the tightly orchestrated designs of New Urbanism as too planned to account for the variety of activities found in true cities. Furthermore, he fears that New Urbanism will be unlikely to attract the kinds of creative and exciting people that bring energy to a city. “It is hard to imagine,” he writes, “many people of the creative class choosing a new urban community. These developments are not dense or diverse enough to support that kind of broadly creative culture found in Belltown, the Pearl District, and the East Village” (Hinshaw 2005, 27).

Encompassing all of these concerns, Alex Kreiger, the Chair of the Department of Urban Planning and Design at Harvard University, offers perhaps the most pointed attack on New Urbanism. In an article for the journal “*Architecture*” he wrote,

To date you [New Urbanists] have helped produce: More subdivisions (albeit innovative ones) than towns; an increased reliance on private management of communities, not innovative forms of elected local governance; densities too low to support much mixed use, much less to support public transportation; relatively homogenous demographic enclaves, not rainbow coalitions; a new attractive, and desirable form of planned development, not yet substantial infill, or better, connections between new and existing development; marketing strategies better suited to real estate entrepreneurs than public officials; a new wave of form-

follows-function determinism (oddly modern for such ardent critics of Modernism), implying that community can be assured through design; a perpetuation of the myth of the creation and sustainment of urban environments amidst pastoral settings; carefully edited, rose-colored evocations of small town urbanism, from which a century ago many Americans fled not to the suburbs but to the city. (Krieger 1998)

As scathing an indictment as this is, it is an indication of the ambition of the New Urbanists and the success of their self-promotion, that their architecture is critiqued from so many influential figures and from so many perspectives for failing to create new mechanisms for urban governance and for being unable to solve long standing social problems like racism and classism. Though the most evangelical of the New Urbanists seem to have brought the critique on themselves by their insistence on design as a near-panacea for society's ills, it seems unfair to attack them for not being able to effectively address concerns that are currently far outside the professional responsibilities of architecture and planning. In fact, most critics acknowledge upfront that, at least compared to the suburban style, they are attracted to the basic *architecture* of New Urbanism. A more fair assessment may be that the reasons for New Urbanist developments' failure to live up to expectations can be found, not in architecture or planning, but rather in the sociological and political context of the places where they emerge.

This review of the academic literature reveals that the two primary areas of concern regarding New Urbanism revolve around the social rhetoric employed by planners and the role of civic and governmental involvement in the planning process. In both cases, the story of Atlanta's most celebrated attempt at New Urbanism, Atlantic Station, provides an opportunity to evaluate – and further complicate – the conversation

about New Urbanism. The rest of this chapter will consist of, first, a critical analysis of the rhetoric of Atlantic Station focusing on advertising, marketing and media coverage and, secondly, an attempt to untangle the matrix of stakeholders whose interests shaped the construction. The story reveals that Atlantic Station, in addition to being a physical hub, is also a kind of sociological and historical hub where many of Atlanta's problems, tensions, habits and trends meet. As is often the case, it is the interaction between the public and private sector that determines how these conflicts play out.

Atlantic Station

Atlantic Station is the \$2 billion mixed use development which sits on a 138 acre site on the west side of the Downtown Connector, adjacent to Midtown. By the time it is completely built out, Atlantic Station will comprise 3,000 to 5,000 residential units, six million square feet of class A office space, two million square feet of retail and entertainment space, 1,000 hotel rooms and eleven acres of public parks.⁶⁵ The project began in 1997 when Jacoby Development Inc. contracted the property which had been home to the Atlantic Steel mill since 1901. In 1998, the mill officially closed though most reports indicate that the mill had only remained open for the previous decade because its Canadian owners found it more cost effective to run the mill at greatly decreased capacity than to close it and be forced to clean up the site. The land had been declared a Superfund site by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and, had the owners decided to close the facility, they would have been responsible for the multi-million dollar clean up. The daunting task of cleaning up the site had been the deal

⁶⁵ Melissa Turner, "A Model Approach," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, September 24, 2001, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed September 13, 2009].

breaker previously interested developers who had been eying the prime location for years and it was only because the EPA relaxed its requirements for treating contaminated soil that Jacoby was able to go ahead with their plan in the first place.⁶⁶

Jacoby Development, not unlike Post Properties, had gained its reputation mostly from working in the suburbs but decided to develop its new Intown property as a New Urbanist inspired mini-city. Whether or not this was based on personal commitment or market calculation is unknowable and most likely irrelevant. What is known is that, had Jacoby not been able to argue persuasively about the environmental benefits of a pedestrian friendly, high density development in the center of the city, Atlantic Station would not have been built. Positioned on the historically neglected west side, the development would have been isolated from the established centers of activity by the twelve lanes of interstate traffic of the Downtown Connector. To the developers, who saw this isolation from the east side of the central business district connector as potentially fatal to their plans, the only solution was to build a bridge over the connector linking it to Midtown. The problem was that the federal government had cut off all federal funding for road projects in Atlanta due to the region's non-compliance with air quality regulations. Jacoby, with the help of local and state politicians convinced the EPA to make an exception for the bridge, and even provide them with a construction grant, by arguing that it would reduce traffic by allowing more people to live closer to.⁶⁷

After the bridge was completed, construction began in earnest. However, many of the originally planned building partners back out of the project frequently citing

⁶⁶ Sallye Salter, "Relaxed EPA Rules Open Door to Redevelopment," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, June 29, 1997, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed September 13, 2009].

⁶⁷ Melissa Turner, "Atlantic Station To Ask Atlanta for \$75 Million in Seed Money," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, September 3, 2001, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed September 13, 2009].

intolerable delays.⁶⁸ As a result, Jacoby and their financial backers, the insurance corporation AIG, decided to develop most of the retail and residential space themselves.⁶⁹ The involvement of AIG is an important part of this story. Primarily an insurance company, AIG was able to provide what is known as “patient money” in the world of finance. Given the size of AIG’s assets (at the time) and the long-term nature of their business, they were able to back the deal without the pressure to demand immediate repayment that more traditional lenders might feel.⁷⁰ Given the scope, complexity and scale of the project, patience and money were two things Jacoby needed in vast quantities.

By the time Atlantic Station opened in the fall of 2005, hundreds of residents had already moved in and dozens of stores were already open for business.⁷¹ Furthermore, the amount of media interest seemed to reflect (or create?) a general excitement about the project among metropolitan residents. All indications were that Jacoby’s gamble had worked and that the decade of work that went into Atlantic Station were going to pay off. However, though the project was coming to life with such favorable public opinion was only the beginning for the project journalists had begun calling a mini-city. The developers and the city had made some big promises and written some big checks and now it was time to see if the project could live up to the hype.

⁶⁸ Melissa Turner, “Another Exit From Atlantic Station; Withdrawal by Third Development Partner Sets Back Planners,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, March 24, 2001, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed September 13, 2009].

⁶⁹ David Pendered, “Atlantic Station Got Lots of Help; Powerful Friends Pulled Strings,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, April 27, 2003, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed September 13, 2009].

⁷⁰ Melissa Turner and Renee DeGrosse, “Update: Atlantic Station: Renewed Vigor for Development,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, October 10, 2000, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [September 13, 2009].

⁷¹ David Pendered, “At Long Last, Day is Near; Atlantic Station to Open in April,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, March 29, 2004, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed September 13, 2009].

Atlantic Station in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution

The weekend after the official opening of Atlantic Station in October of 2005, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution ran five articles on the development. The articles retold the site's history, profiled the movers and shakers that made the project happen and spotlighted the three cornerstones of housing, office space and retail space that define Atlantic Station as the most talked about "live-work-play" development in the Southeast. This was far from the first time the city's most widely circulated daily paper had mentioned the real-estate deal. Since 1997, when Jim Jacoby contracted the property to the grand opening, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution had published nearly one thousand articles relating to Atlantic Station.

Like most newspapers, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution has suffered financially as subscribers and advertisers have declined and competition, particularly from online media sources, has increased. Despite these challenges, the paper remains influential in shaping public and political opinion on issues of local importance if for no other reason because it remains the paper of record on issues concerning the city. Like most daily newspapers, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution plays the role of civic cheerleader, if an occasionally critical one, and has long been the official outlet for the city's famous boosterism. The paper continued this tradition with its incessant and almost entirely uncritical coverage of the development. Interestingly, it was not Duany and Kunstler's standard rhetoric of community that the paper deployed to promote Atlantic Station. Rather, the coverage amounts to a celebration of consumerism.

One of the most common points of interest in the paper's coverage was the globally positioned Swedish furniture store IKEA. As purveyors of affordable, contemporary home furnishings which are particularly attractive to the young urban professionals that the city is trying to attract, the opening of IKEA was one of the most eagerly anticipated events for the development. Furthermore, that the city had been chosen to be part of the chain's North American expansion seemed to represent a kind of international honor. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution made sure that its readers understood the magnitude of this honor in several articles. One piece published two months before the store's opening interviewed a new resident of Atlantic Station who told the reporter she had once spent her vacation in Pittsburgh shopping at IKEA.⁷² "I filled three suitcases with little things and came home. That was my vacation" she said.⁷³

This article, headlined "IKEA's Vibe: Cool Stuff, Hot Savings" is virtually indistinguishable from a paid advertisement. Toward the end of the article, the report does mention that IKEA furniture tends to be made of woodchips and particle board and, as a result, does not usually last very long. This apparent criticism, however, was followed by quotes from "industry experts" who attested to what can only be called the furniture's adequacy. "I was pleasantly surprised. It's decent" said Jennifer Litwin who was identified as the author of "Furniture Hot Spots: The Best Furniture Stores and Websites Coast to Coast."⁷⁴ In an apparent attempt to put a fine point on the article's intent to inspire a nearly religious excitement about the new store, the reporter concluded

⁷² David Pendered, "Atlantic Station: Countdown to Arrival: Birth of a Mini-City," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, May 9, 2005, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed September 13, 2009].

⁷³ *ibid.*

⁷⁴ *ibid.*

by noting that the IKEA catalog is the second most printed book in the world; the first being the Bible.⁷⁵

The coverage of Atlantic Station's role in Atlanta's expanding consumer landscape was not limited to IKEA. Just days after the official opening of Atlantic Station an article appeared in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* titled "What's At Atlantic Station Besides IKEA? Lots of shoppers." Far from a critique of the development as little more than a mall with apartments, as the title might suggest, the article is literally a shopping list of things you can buy when visiting Atlantic Station.⁷⁶

In order to understand why the city's major daily newspaper allowed itself to become a promotion machine for a private developer, it is important to recall that the governing elite in Atlanta had identified the lack of middle class residents as one of the biggest problems facing the city. By shamelessly promoting Atlantic Station as a middle class shopper's paradise, the paper was effectively rewriting the story of Intown Atlanta to turn it into a place where the middle class could have the kind of consumption oriented life that was previously only available in the suburbs. While such media hype had stoked the excitement of Atlantans – and Southerners in general – regarding the opening of Atlantic Station since it had been announced, it also seems to reveal exactly what the newspaper – and many others – thought was particularly important about Atlantic Station: increasing the number of middle class consumers – and places for them to spend money – inside the perimeter.

⁷⁵ Alma Hill, "IKEA's Vibe: Cool Stuff, Hot Savings," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, June 24, 2005, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed August 14, 2009].

⁷⁶ Marilyn Johnson, "What's At Atlantic Station Besides IKEA? Lots of Shoppers," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, October 20, 2005, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed 14 August 2009].

The case of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution's coverage of Atlantic Station shows that the paper continued to endorse the governing regime's pro-business stance in advocating for more economic activity close to the central business district. It is tempting to read the overwhelmingly positive coverage of increased retail shopping opportunities as classist and, given the close link between class and race, even potentially racist. An example of this kind of tacit classism and racism appeared in an early feature story on Atlantic Station in the Business Section of the newspaper. The piece centered on a profile of Home Park resident and owner of Bobby and June's Kountry Kitchen, Bobby Crowe. After quoting Crowe as saying that Atlantic Station will be "the best thing since peanut butter" and that "It'll be the most beautiful spot in the world once they get it completed," the reporter went on to describe the plight of west side residents who, at the time, had "to travel across the interstate to get to nice sit-down restaurants [except for, one assumes, Bobby and June's Kountry Kitchen], grocery stores and retail shops." While the facts of this piece are almost certainly true, a better understanding of the historical and spatial context is needed to see the nuances in this story.⁷⁷

Atlanta's west side is defined roughly as the relatively vast area that stretches from the west of the downtown connector to the perimeter interstate. It is further divided into a North and south by Interstate 20. While the extreme north has historically been relatively comfortable, economically speaking, and majority white, most of the west side has been poor and majority black since desegregation. In the immediate post war years, west side neighborhoods were the scene of massive, though ultimately futile, white resistance to desegregation (Kruse 2005, 78-104). Since then, in addition to the area

⁷⁷ Kelly Simmons, "Development is Welcome in Midtown Neighborhoods; Atlantic Station: New Bridge, Stores, Park, Restaurants May Add Traffic, But Residents See Benefits," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, September 18, 2000, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed September 13, 2009].

around the Atlanta University Center which has long been a hub for Atlanta's Black residents, other West Side neighborhoods like the West End (one of the city's first suburbs, and initially home to some of the wealthiest white families in the city) have become centers of Black culture in the city. Notorious west side neighborhoods like Bankhead have become synonymous with crime but also with the city's vibrant hip hop scene. Home Park, the neighborhood immediately south of the Atlantic Station site, is home to a mixture of students and staff from the nearby Georgia Institute of Technology and working class families. The paper's adoption of the designation "Midtown West" (rather than the more sensible Home Park) to identify Atlantic Station's location reveals the desire to rhetorically link the development with the trendy and retail heavy Midtown – also the target of similar Atlanta Journal-Constitution hype – and also to distance it from the less commercially desirable neighborhoods that surround it more directly.

The paper's support for Atlantic Station in the form of poorly disguised advertisements for the district's stores may simply reflect the class and lifestyle preferences of those journalists, developers and politicians who are allowed to speak about and make decisions for Atlanta's development. However, there are also more concrete, dispassionate motivations behind the hype. Atlantic Station was only possible thanks to massive amounts of debt incurred by both Jacoby and the City. The repayment strategy identified by both parties was consumerism and the tax dollars it generates.

Atlantic Station and Public Private Partnerships

Jacoby is quick to acknowledge that Atlantic Station would have never happened had it not been for the energetic support his plan received from both local and state

politicians. At the local level, the Atlanta City Council had to completely rezone the site. This was a very complicated procedure as the site had previously been zoned for industrial use and Jacoby was asking for zoning that would allow for a wide range of uses often combining commercial and residential in the same lot. Zoning rules in Atlanta – and most of the country – had been developed in the post-war era and are the product of both anxiety over urban overcrowding and the country’s infatuation with suburbia. The result was that the rules in many cases required building in the suburban style of sprawling strip malls, surface parking lots and *cul de sac* neighborhoods (Duany 2000, 174-177).

Thus Jacoby was facing a complex bureaucratic challenge in the form of rezoning even before construction could begin. Furthermore, in March of 1998, activists from the neighborhoods surrounding the site expressed concerns over what they saw as “carte blanche” zoning for the massive project and its developer that had made its name developing strip malls anchored by Wal-Mart. They asked the city council to allow them to create a Special Public Interest (SPI) area which would allow the community to write zoning codes that would specify exactly what they do and do not want built in their neighborhood. Jacoby countered that such a process would take too long and that, if they did not get the area zoned by the end of April, his company would be in violation of their purchase contract for the site.⁷⁸

In the first week of April 1998, the city council approved the commercial zoning that Jacoby had initially asked for over the strong objections of the neighborhood activists. A clause in the zoning they had fought for which would have required Jacoby

⁷⁸ Sallye Salter, “Neighbors Skeptical on Atlantic Site Zoning,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, March 1, 1998, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed September 13, 2009].

to build residential units before or at the same time as the retail space was dropped by the zoning committee before the council even met and was replaced by a clause asking the developers to “use its best efforts to ensure” that this happened. The only concession to the activists was a clause which stated that the city intended to seek SPI zoning for the entire part of town where the Atlantic Steel site is located.⁷⁹

In a much more dramatic move, the Atlanta City Council approved a Tax Allocation District (TAD) for Atlantic Station in October of 1999 in order to fund Jacoby’s construction. A TAD is an area where taxes collected within the designated area are set aside for use in paying off bonds issued for infrastructure construction or improvement instead of the money going to the city’s general fund and public schools. TADs are a relatively new development in urban planning and Atlanta has been a national leader in using them. In Atlanta, developers apply for TAD status through the quasi-governmental, non-profit Atlanta Development Agency (ADA). Once ADA approves the application, the TAD goes to the city council who votes on it (Tax Allocation Districts: FAQ 2009). In the case of Atlantic Station, the city issued \$76.5 million in TAD funds in 2001 which, along with an \$80 million construction loan, marked Atlantic Station’s transition from an idea to a reality.⁸⁰ Additionally, the TAD diverts all property taxes generated by the development to improvements to the site such as more parking and infrastructure instead of directing them directly to the city for the next twenty-five years. Atlantic Station estimates that when the project is complete “this

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

⁸⁰ Matt Gove, “Money Gets Atlantic Station Rolling,” *Atlanta Business Chronicle*, November 2, 2001, <http://atlanta.bizjournals.com/atlanta/stories/2001/11/05/story5.html?page=1> [accessed 14 August 2009].

revenue should approximate \$35 million dollars per year and will enable Atlantic Station to sell bonds to further improve the property” (Atlantic Station Concept Team 2005.).

TADs are one of several instruments that have been developed as alternatives to traditional impact fees which were charged to developers to cover the municipality’s costs for extending public services such as roads, sewer, utilities and fire protection. In recent years, impact fees came to be seen as barriers to development because they represented such a large cost to developers. Furthermore, impact fees may have further energized suburban sprawl as developers sought out locations that had lower (or no) impact fees (Nelson and Moody 2003, n.p.). In effect, a TAD shifts the cost of building from the developer to the consumer and, in the process, causes the city to go further into debt. This is acceptable to the city only if they can expect the development to generate enough tax dollars to pay down the debt. While environmental protection, traffic reduction and “community” were all part of the rhetoric of Atlantic Station, they are all means to the ends of, first, adding more middle class consumers to the city and, second, paying down the debt that incurred to bring them there. Because wealthier residents will generate more tax dollars and attract more lucrative businesses than poorer ones, the middle class slant of Atlantic Station should not be surprising. This should explain the city’s enthusiastic support for Atlantic Station and all the hype surrounding shopping at Atlantic Station.

In addition to this support from local government, the State of Georgia was also very active in making sure Atlantic Station happened. Then Governor of Georgia, Roy Barnes, was an early supporter of Atlantic Station. Historically, the state government has been hostile to Atlanta but Barnes was under intense pressure to control the development

of North Georgia and the pollution its sprawl had created. Barnes took the lead in convincing the Clinton administration to declare the proposed 17th Street Bridge a “Transportation Control Measure” which exempted it from the federally mandated moratorium on road construction in the State. He also made sure that Atlantic Station was declared the nation’s first Project XL (eXcellence in Leadership) which resulted in construction funds for the 17th Street Bridge from the Federal Department of Transportation.⁸¹

Analysis

Atlantic Station manages to avoid some of the problems that have been identified with both suburban development and New Urbanism. Furthermore, it avoids many of the problems that have been linked to previous projects in Atlanta and it offers many distinct advantages for Atlanta that seem hard to explain as simply part of a money making venture. Having been built on a former industrial site, no residents were displaced and an environmental problem was cleaned up. Additionally, where other projects had been piece meal, Atlantic Station represented a very ambitious plan to create a total neighborhood that would serve the everyday needs of both its residents and those residents in near-by, and generally underserved, areas of town thus cutting down on the time people would need to spend in cars. Furthermore, Jacoby put a great deal of effort into making Atlantic Station one of the most environmentally friendly developments in the country and sought LEED certification for many of the buildings.

⁸¹ David Pendered, “Atlantic Station Got Lots of Help; Powerful Friends Pulled Strings,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, April 27, 2003, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed September 13, 2009].

The development of Atlantic Station is often valorized in the press as an example of noteworthy creativity on the part of the developers and their backers. Journalists praise Jacoby's vision, ambition and determination in the execution of what was undeniably a very complex task involving a variety of stakeholders, numerous legal questions and vast sums of money. As a result, there is a palpable respect in the business press for the business cunning that went into the project.

However, while the mainstream press has been very quick to point out all of these advantages, and to applaud the business leadership, Atlantic Station has had its share of detractors. In addition to the various community groups who have raised concerns about the project, Creative Loafing, Atlanta's alternative newspaper, has been very critical. Upon the opening of Atlantic Station, the newspaper ran a feature titled "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: CL's Guide to Atlantic Station." While the editors praised Jacoby's attempts to make the project mixed use and environmentally friendly, they conclude that, in the final analysis, the mix is still very suburban and, like any large scale mall, it will simply bring in more traffic from outside the city. They also lament the relative lack of residential units at Atlantic Station arguing that there will not be enough permanent residents to support local stores.⁸²

Furthermore, Creative Loafing devoted several articles to the battles between neighboring residents, particularly in Home Park, who constantly fought with Jacoby over the impact of Atlantic Station on their neighborhood. The paper reported in June of 2003 that the state Superior Court ruled that the city planner, Michael Dobbins, had disregarded the law when he allowed the developers to ignore part of the zoning

⁸² Michael Wall, "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: CL's Guide to Atlantic Station," *Creative Loafing* (Atlanta), June 22, 2005, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed September 13, 2009].

regulations which would have helped calm traffic in the surrounding neighborhoods. While both the article and the court acknowledged that it would have been impossible to do what the law asked, both took the city to task for simply exempting the developers rather than sending the law back to be renegotiated and rewritten.⁸³

So, another way to tell the story of Atlantic Station is that it is one more example of the often uncomfortably close relationship between elected officials and private capital in Atlanta. This relationship is a common topic in the literature of globalization and cities but, at first glance, it seems hard to determine whether or not this is actually new in the history of Atlanta. After all, the whole idea behind the governing regime theory is that the city's business and political leaders work together for both public improvement and personal profit. However, while public-private partnerships have been the norm since the Hartsfield administration, what seems new about this particular phase of regime Atlanta is that public support for the will of private capital is now presented to the citizens as the radically creative and ultimately desirable solution to the metro area's most pressing problems and not as an extra-official arrangement agreed upon behind closed doors. If anything, Atlanta's contemporary public-private partnerships represent an even stronger role for private capital that coincides with an apparent reduction of the power of government officials.

As this chapter demonstrates, "partnership" seems almost euphemistic as a description of how Atlantic Station came to be. While elected officials certainly worked with the developers to get the job done, there seems to have been very few compromises or concessions made on Jacoby's part. What the developers could not do (or were not allowed to do legally) by themselves or through market forces, elected officials stepped

⁸³ *ibid*

in to make their dreams possible. In the case of rezoning the site, politicians gave Jacoby what they wanted despite the protests of their constituents. In securing the TAD, Jacoby was able to shift the costs of development onto the tax payers and postpone Atlantic Station's duty to contribute to the local tax base for twenty five years. At the state and federal levels, Jacoby was able to take advantage of relaxed environmental protection – first for the decontamination of the site and then for the construction of more roads – in order to put key parts of their plan in place.

Thus, the process that led to the construction of Atlantic Station seems to illustrate many of the points made by critics of both neoliberalism and The Third Way in that elected government officials have been cast in the role of facilitator for private capital. However, it is important to understand the motivations for and the effects of this process. It does not seem to be true that the politicians who, time and time again, came to Jacoby's aid did so because they were simply subservient, were coerced in any direct way or had anything other than what they saw as the best of intentions. Rather, their actions seem to follow from a faith in market forces to effectively address civic problems. Following in the tradition of Andrew Young's Andynomics, the city's leaders believed that a greater number of permanent middle class residents spending lots of money inside the perimeter would help alleviate these problems. This was the same theory the city had committed itself to for both the HUD Empowerment Zone project and the Renaissance Atlanta plan. Atlantic Station, and the other projects like it, represent even more ambitious – and more directly private-sector directed – types of neoliberal strategies.

The question now is will these projects work and, if they do, for whom will they work? While Atlantic Station seems to be immune from some of the standard criticisms

of New Urbanism, it raises legitimate questions about what these kinds of public-private relationships mean for city life. This reversal of the power dynamic from developers operating within the boundaries set by elected officials to elected officials operating on behalf of capital raises questions about the rights of residents. When the growth of the city is managed, questioned and negotiated by elected officials in the public sphere, citizens of the city are able to feel like they are part of the urban process. In the case of Atlantic Station, the result of the ambitious dreams of a single developer who let nothing, including the wishes of neighbors, stand in the way of the development, it is hard to understand how one is supposed to feel like a politically engaged citizen. Jacoby took great care to replicate the urban form in Atlantic Station but left very little room for the urban process to take place.

Just as elected officials are reduced to the role of facilitators for private capital, residents are reduced from citizens to mere consumers. This is the clearest message in all of the articles about shopping that appeared in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution during the run up to the opening of Atlantic Station. The constant references to the “mini-city” as a “live, work, play” development – where play means shop and eat – convey an assumption that a person’s role in a city is limited to property owner, employee and consumer. In all the hype, the only talk about citizen participation in the project came in the form of reports on the various neighborhood groups surrounding the site who repeatedly – and unsuccessfully – fought with the developer. These citizens groups and their demands seemed to be little more than annoying barriers to capital’s dreams than part of the process of urban development.

However, there may ultimately be very real political consequences to this shift toward replacing public spaces with commercial space. Just as the city's elite had hoped, the combined efforts of gentrification and new urbanism have indeed brought more middle class residents into the city. However, while some of the southern suburbs of the city are known as a Mecca for the black middle class, the majority of the residents attracted by the Intown developments are white. At a conference in New York, during the summer of 2007, Atlanta mayor Shirley Franklin voiced an often unspoken concern that the demographic shifts in Atlanta may amount to the loss of Black political power in the city.⁸⁴

In an article for *Creative Loafing*, the self-identified liberal columnist John Sugg pointed out that very early numbers seemed to favor the only white candidate Mary Norwood.⁸⁵ Norwood is a Buckhead business woman turned community activist and a win for her would mean the city of Atlanta would have a white mayor for the first time since 1974. Her closest competition is Franklin's heir apparent, city council president Lisa Borders. While a win for Norwood would undoubtedly be seen as nothing short of a coup in Atlanta politics, it is unclear that a win for Borders would be unambiguously good news for the city's black and poor citizens. When Borders was not being a civic servant, she has been the Senior Vice President of Cousins Properties of Atlanta, one of the oldest and largest real estate developers in the city.

Conclusion

⁸⁴ Mike King, "Black Leaders Concerned About Losing Power," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, June 7, 2007, <http://www.lexis-nexis.com> [accessed 14 August 2009].

⁸⁵ John Sugg, "Norwood's Vision for Atlanta," *Creative Loafing* (Atlanta), July 9, 2008, http://atlanta.creativeloafing.com/gyrobase/norwood_s_vision_for_atlanta/Content?oid=515313 [accessed August 16, 2009].

Charles Rutheiser's scathing critique of Atlanta, *Imagineering Atlanta*, makes a big deal out of the role of dreaming in the history of Atlanta. "Atlanta," he writes, "has long prided itself as a city of dreams, a place where anything is possible" (Rutheiser 1996, 13). The book was published in 1996 and was meant to take advantage of the international attention placed on the city for the Olympics and to provide something of a counterpoint to the slick promotion the city had unleashed which, not coincidentally, asked the world to "Come Share Our Dream." The photo on the cover of the book shows the downtown skyline rising behind a rusting industrial site and succeeded in representing the contrast between the city's decay and the city's glamour. What Rutheiser couldn't have known is that the rusting warehouse in the foreground of the picture is part of the at-the-time, soon-to-be demolished Atlantic Steel facility.

As the conversion of that contaminated industrial site into one of the most talked about real estate ventures in the country shows, Atlanta is a place where big dreams occasionally come true. The question becomes, whose dreams? The core of Atlanta's current political-economic theory is that the market is able to imagine creative solutions to problems and that government should either help implement those solutions or stay out of the way. So it should come as no surprise that, when urban planning is outsourced to real estate speculators, we wind up with cities that have consumers but no citizens and commerce but no culture. This relates back to Lister's criticism of the Third Way which posits that the emphasis placed on markets demands that citizens be economically productive (Lister 2004, 160). At a more fundamental level, we have to ask if the market is really capable – or even interested – in taking on the civic responsibilities previously shouldered by government. While Jacoby was indeed visionary in trying to make

Atlantic Station as environmentally friendly as he did – both in its walkable design and in the green-minded construction of the buildings – it is important to ask if the good intentions of developers offer enough protection for the people who will live with their creations.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION: SPACE AND POWER INSIDE THE PERIMETER

Toward the end of his life, the French philosopher Michel Foucault sat for an interview with Paul Rabinow to discuss the problem of power and space. The interview begins with Rabinow asking Foucault to clarify a statement he had made to French journal *Herodote* suggesting that architecture became political in the eighteenth century. Acknowledging that the statement was awkward, the philosopher says that “I only meant to say that in the eighteenth century one sees the development of reflection upon architecture as a function of the aims and techniques of the government of societies” (Foucault 1984, 239).

This assertion that space can be constructed in such a way as to influence how people behave and reinforce or facilitate a particular kind of power relationship is one that architects – and critics of their work – often take very seriously. However, Foucault, who had made a highly influential career out of analyzing the micro-processes of power and how it flows through – rather than simply rests in – particular people and institutions refused to characterize this as a simple process. He says, “I do not think it is possible to say that one thing is of the order of ‘liberation’ and another is of the order of ‘oppression’” (Foucault 1984, 245). Using the extreme example of Nazi concentration camps Foucault says, “aside from torture and execution, which preclude any resistance, no matter how terrifying a given system may be, there always remains the possibilities of resistance, disobedience, and oppositional groupings” (Foucault 1984, 245). At the same time, just as no building could be fundamentally oppressive, Foucault refuses to say that

buildings can be fundamentally liberating. He says, “I do not think there is anything that is functionally – by its very nature – liberating. Liberty is practice” (Foucault 1984, 245).

As the preceding chapters have shown, urban development can be thought of in similar terms. While the specific development projects described can neither be seen as fundamentally oppressive or fundamentally liberating in and of themselves, it is equally true that they do not exist outside the context of struggles for control over space. As Foucault says, it is not the case “that the exercise of freedom is completely indifferent to spatial distribution, but it can only function when there is a certain convergence” (Foucault 1984, 247). In the cases described in this project, it is important to understand the how the convergence of the city’s history, its stated policies, the goals of private developers and the national and international economic context has produced some dramatic and often unintended consequences for the city.

Chapter 2, Globalization and Urban Development, described the history of what Clarence Stone called Atlanta’s “governing regime.” Stone described this as a partnership between white economic power and black political power but this has evolved into a general tradition of public / private partnerships. Andrew Young’s tenure as mayor marked new phase of this regime which was energized by his belief in what he called “public interest capitalism” or, as some have called it, Andynomics. Andynomics marked a step away from the “you give us what we want, we’ll give you what you want” partnership that, to a greater or lesser extent, defined the administrations of Atlanta mayors from Hartsfield to Jackson and toward a kind of market fundamentalism which saw the city government actively pursuing the interests of the business community in the belief that what was good for business would ultimately be good for the citizens. The

resulting struggles for public space that centered on the east side expressway debates provide telling examples of how all of these factors converge.

The development of a tourist infrastructure in Downtown, described in Chapter 3, focused on a particular project in a particular area of the city that illustrates this relationship. The Downtown business community, comprised of small business owners, property owners and corporate employees, wanted to see downtown become a traditionally urban space with attractions and activities for visitors but they needed the help of the city to realize this transformation. By focusing the energy from the 1996 Olympic Games on downtown, the city was able to generate considerable excitement in the area and this marked a new beginning for – and not a culmination of – the city's efforts to recreate the urban center. The examples of Underground Atlanta and the Georgia Aquarium show how the city worked very hard and spent a considerable amount of public money to build on this momentum and create the kind of downtown the business community envisioned though the results of these efforts were decidedly mixed.

While the development plans for the central business district focused on attracting tourists and conventioners, residential development was also a high priority for the city. Chapter 4 described the process of gentrification within the city generally and in the neighborhood of East Atlanta specifically. While gentrification is generally understood as a relatively spontaneous process led by creative young people, gentrification in Atlanta needs to be understood in terms of years of planning by the city's political and business leaders to increase the middle class population of the city. Beginning in the 1980s when the city identified its relative lack of middle class residents as a problem, the city undertook a series of programs – such as the HUD Empowerment Zones and the

Renaissance Atlanta – which were designed to attract new residents. As a result, the city has succeeded in bringing new residents inside the perimeter but this has had the (arguably) unintended consequences of displacing older residents, breaking up decades old networks of mutual support and exacerbating historical racial and class tension in some areas.

In addition to encouraging gentrification, which generally entails a demographic shift in existing communities, there have also been some new communities built within the city. Atlantic Station, the focus of Chapter 5, is an ambitious project inspired by New Urbanism, an architecture and development philosophy that seeks to recreate the development patterns common in pre suburban America. Though New Urbanisms proponents claim that it can solve all manner of social and environmental problems, the story of Atlantic Station reveals the limits of design's ability to do such things. It also provides another illustration of how Atlanta's tradition of public-private partnerships has evolved into a strategy to address civic problems through consumerism.

Each of these chapters illustrate that, as Foucault suggested, urban development alone cannot fundamentally change the social problems the city of Atlanta faces. As well intended as some of these plans may have been, creating a tourist infrastructure in Downtown, building middle class homes and developing walkable urban neighborhoods do little to address the underlying social problems of a rapidly changing international economic order and decades of racial and class based antagonism and resentment. As difficult as it may have been to rewrite the planning books to promote new kinds of development, rewriting the history of the city to address these deeper problems will be even more challenging.

Furthermore, the cases presented in this project are only a fraction of the stories of space and power ongoing in the city. Future work on Atlanta and urban development should address areas like Buford Highway and Clarkston which represent the swelling and vibrant new immigrant communities in the city which will undoubtedly further complicate the city's political scene which has been largely defined in terms of black and white. Another area of interest should be the neighborhood of Buckhead. Initially developed as a suburb for Atlanta's extremely wealthy, the neighborhood's commercial district has had a dramatic life over the past two decades as it evolved from a quiet and exclusive area to a nationally recognized party zone to a near ghost town as neighborhood activists fought the nightclubs. Perhaps the biggest story of Atlanta's recent history is in the process of being written as the 2009 mayoral race could result in the first white mayor in the city since Sam Massell's single term ended in 1974 if Mary Norwood is able to hold on to her slight lead. While it does not appear to be the case that any of the candidates are running racially motivated campaigns, it is clear that race is a factor for some residents of the city. Furthermore, a win for Norwood would have an effect on the political psychology of the city where race is always an issue thanks to its own history.

And it is this history that is often the elephant in the room when Atlanta's development is being discussed. Development is clearly a future oriented topic but development grows out of a past. As the city's politicians, developers and business leaders continue to make plans for a future Atlanta, a failure to confront the past could result in the kinds of failures, resentments and disappointments described in this project. Though some may view the city's past as small-time, provincial and embarrassing and

others may see it as painful and full of struggle, ignoring it does not make it go away and, as this project has illustrated, could complicate the process.

Works Cited

Atlanta City Council's Gentrification Task Force. "A City For All." 17 September 2001.

<http://apps.atlantaga.gov/citycouncil/2001/IMAGES/Adopted/1119/01R2013.pdf>

[accessed August 19, 2009].

Atlanta Department of Planning. "Comprehensive Development Plan" under

"Demographics,"

http://www.atlantaga.gov/client_resources/government/planning/cdp/2004cdp-

[03demographics.pdf](http://www.atlantaga.gov/client_resources/government/planning/cdp/2004cdp-03demographics.pdf) [accessed September 24, 2009].

Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce. "Atlanta MSA Growth Statistics."

<http://www.investmentinrealty.com/documents/Atlanta->

[MSAGrowthStatsReport2005.pdf](http://www.investmentinrealty.com/documents/Atlanta-MSAGrowthStatsReport2005.pdf) [accessed September 24, 2009].

Atlantic Station Concept Team. Atlantic Station LLC.

http://www.atlanticstation.com/concept_team.php [accessed 15 August 2009].

Berke, Philip. "Questioning Assumptions 2: Does It Make a Difference?" *Planning* 72,

no. 1 (2006): 38-39.

Biles, Roger. "Black Mayors: A Historical Assessment." *The Journal of Negro History*

77 no. 3 [1992]: 109-125.

Bridge, Gary. "Bourdieu, Rational Action and the Time-Space Strategy of

Gentrification." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 26, no. 2

[2001]: 206-216.

Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy. "Moving Beyond Sprawl: The Challenge for Metropolitan Atlanta."

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2000/03atlanta_center%20on%20urban%20and%20metropolitan%20policy/atlanta.pdf [accessed 18 August 2009].

Boutwell, Taylor. "East Atlanta Village (EAV) -- An Urban Oasis of Culture and Community!" *East Atlanta Community Association*, 2004.

http://eaca.net/index/about_east_atlanta [accessed September 22, 2009].

Burbank, Matthew, Gregory Andranovich and Charles Heying. *Olympic Dreams: The Impact of Mega-Events on Local Politics*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001.

Butler, Tim. "Thinking Global But Acting Local: The Middle Classes in the City." *Sociological Research Online* 7, no. 3 (2002).

<http://www.socresonline.org.uk/7/3/butler.html>. [accessed 18 August 2009].

Butler, Tim and Garry Robson. "Negotiating Their Way In: The Middle Classes, Gentrification and the Deployment of Capital in a Globalising Metropolis." *Urban Studies* 40, no. 9 [2003]: 1791-1809.

Cammack, Paul. "Giddens's Way With Words." In *The Third Way and Beyond: Criticisms, Futures, Alternatives*, edited by Sarah Hale, Will Leggett and Luke Martell, 151-166. Manchester, England: Manchester UP, 2004.

Castells, Manuel. *The Rise of the Network Society*. Vol. 1 of *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.

- Central Atlanta Progress, Inc., Atlanta Department of Community Development, and Fulton County Department of Planning and Community Development. *Central Area Study II: A Cooperative Effort of the City of Atlanta, Central Atlanta Progress and Fulton County*. Atlanta, GA: Central Atlanta Progress, 1988.
- Clarke, Paul Walker. "The Ideal of Community and Its Counterfeit Construction." *Journal of Architectural Education* 58, no. 3 (2005): 43-52.
- Congress for the New Urbanism. "Charter of the New Urbanism." *Congress for the New Urbanism*, 1996. <http://www.cnu.org/charter> [accessed 13 August 2009].
- "Current Gentrification in Atlanta Contrasts Sharply to Previous Waves of Urban Restoration." Georgia Institute of Technology, September 5, 2003. <http://www.gatech.edu/newsroom/release.html?id=331> [accessed 19 August 2009].
- DeMartino, George. *Global Economy, Global Justice: Theoretical Objections and Policy Alternatives to Neoliberalism*. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Dockeray-Ojo, Beverley and Flor Velarde. "Citizen Participation and the Empowerment Zone." City of Atlanta Department of Planning, Development and Neighborhood Conservation. http://www.acturban.org/biennial/DOC_Net_Comm/ezhistory.pdf. [accessed August 18, 2009].
- Duany, Andres, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk and Jeff Speck. *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream*. New York: North Point Press, 2000.

East Atlanta Community Association. "About EACA." East Atlanta Community Association. http://eaca.net/index/about_EACA [accessed September 22, 2009].

End of Suburbia, The. Directed by Gregory Green. Produced by Barrie Zwicker and Barry Silverthorn, 78 min. Electric Wallpaper, 2004. DVD.

Foucault, Michel. "Space, Knowledge and Power." Interview by Paul Rabinow.

Translated by Christian Hubert. *Foucault Reader*. New York: Pantheon, 1984.

Fukuyama, Francis. *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Free Press, 1992.

Gaddis, Charles. *Roses in December: A History of East Atlanta*. Atlanta: privately printed, 1997.

United States Work Projects Administration, Georgia. *A Statistical Study of Certain Aspects of the Social and Economic Pattern of the City of Atlanta, Georgia*. Atlanta, 1939.

Giddens, Anthony. *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*. Malden, MA: Polity Press, 1998.

Glass, Ruth. *London: Aspects of Change*. London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1964.

Gottdiener, Mark. *The Theming of America: Dreams, Visions and Commercial Spaces*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997.

Handy, Susan. "Questioning Assumptions 1: Do New Urbanists Walk More?" *Planning* 72, no. 1 [2006]: 36-37.

Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005.

- _____. "The New Urbanism and the Communitarian Trap." *Harvard Design Magazine* Winter/Spring (1997): 1-3.
- _____. *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography*. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Hayek, Friedrich. *The Road to Serfdom*. Vol. 2 of *The Collected Works of F.A. Hayek*. Edited by Bruce Caldwell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Held, David, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt and Jonathan Perraton. *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture*. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1999.
- Hinshaw, Mark. "The Case for True Urbanism." *Planning* 71, no. 6 [2005]: 24-27.
- Humphreys, Jeffrey and Michael Plummer. "The Economic Impact of Hosting the 1996 Summer Olympics." Selig Center for Economic Growth. 1995.
<http://www.terry.uga.edu/selig/olympics> [accessed September 24, 2009].
- Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Vintage, 1961.
- Jameson, Fredric. *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1992.
- Keating, Larry. *Atlanta: Race, Class and Urban Expansion*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2001.

- Korber, Andrea. "Is East Atlanta Losing Its Soul?" *Next American City*, October 2004.
<http://americancity.org/magazine/article/neighborhoods-east-atlanta-soul-korber/>.
[accessed 19 August 2009].
- Krieger, Alex. "Whose Urbanism?" *Architecture* 87, no. 11 [1998]: 73-77.
- Kruse, Kevin. *White Flight*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2005.
- Kunstler, James Howard. "How To Mess Up a Town." *Planning Commissioners Journal*, 1995. <http://www.plannersweb.com/articles/kun068.html> [accessed August 13, 2009].
- _____. *The City In Mind: Meditations on the Urban Condition*. New York: Free Press, 2001.
- Leary, Robert. *Central Atlanta Opportunities and Responses: Central Area Study*. Atlanta, GA: City of Atlanta Department of Planning, 1971.
- Lewyn, Michael. "How City Hall Causes Sprawl: A Case Study." *Ecology Law Quarterly* 30 [2003]: 189-205.
- Lister, Ruth. "The Third Way's Social Investment State." In *Welfare State Change: Towards a Third Way?*, edited by Jane Lewis and Rebecca Surender, 157-181. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004.
- Lund, Hollie. "Testing the Claims of New Urbanism: Local Access, Pedestrian Travel, and Neighboring Behaviors." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 69, no. 4 [2003]: 414-429.

Machan, Tibor. "No Third Way." *Mises Daily*, November 27, 1999,

<http://mises.org/story/338> [accessed July 21, 2009].

Meredith, Jeremy. "Sprawl and the New Urbanist Solution." *Virginia Law Review* 89,

[2003]: 447-498.

Meyer, John, John Boli, George Thomas and Francisco Ramirez. "World Society and the

Nation State." *American Journal of Sociology* 103, no. 1 [1997]: 144-181.

Milanovic, Branko. "Global Inequality." In *Global Inequality: Pattern and*

Explanations, edited by David Held and Ayse Kaya, 26-49. Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2007

_____. *Worlds Apart: Measuring International and Global Inequality*. Princeton,

NJ: Princeton UP, 2005.

Milder, David. *Niche Strategies for Downtown Revitalization*. West Lafayette, IN:

Purdue UP, 1998.

Nelson, Arthur and Mitch Moody. "Paying for Prosperity: Impact Fees and Job

Growth." Brookings Institute. June 2003.

http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2003/06metropolitanpolicy_nelson.aspx

[accessed 15 August 2009].

Prasad, Monica. *The Politics of Free Markets: The Rise of Neoliberal Economic Policies in Brittan, France, Germany and the United States*. Chicago: The University of

Chicago Press, 2006.

Rofe, Matthew. "I Want To Be Global: Theorising the Gentrifying Class as an Emergent Elite Global Community." *Urban Studies*, 40 no. 12 [2003]: 2511-2526.

Rutheiser, Charles. *Imagineering Atlanta: The Politics of Place in the City of Dreams*. London: Verso, 1996.

Sassen, Saskia. *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*. 2nd ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2001.

Sites, William. "Primitive Globalization? State and Locale in Neoliberal Global Engagement." *Sociological Theory* 18, no. 1 [2000]: 121-144.

Sjoquist, David and Dick Layton. *City of Atlanta Debt*. Atlanta, GA: Research Atlanta, Inc., 1999.

Smith, Neil. "New Globalism, New Urbanism: Gentrification as Global Urban Strategy." In *Spaces of Neoliberalism: Urban Reconstruction in North America and Western Europe*, edited by Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, 80-103. Oxford: Blackwell, 2003.

_____. *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*. New York: Routledge, 1996.

Stalnaker, Stan. *Hub Culture: The Next Wave of Urban Consumers*. Singapore: John Wiley and Sons (Asia), 2002.

St. Antoine, Thomas. "Making Heaven Out of Hell: New Urbanism and the Refutation of Suburban Spaces." *Southern Communication Journal* 72, no. 2 [2007]: 127-144.

Stone, Clarence. *Regime Politics; Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.

Stone, Clarence and Carol Pierannunzi. "Atlanta's Biracial Coalition in Transition."

Paper prepared for the *Annual Meeting of the American Political Science*

Association, Washington D.C., August 31-September 3, 2000.

<http://www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/stone/apsa.html> [accessed September 24, 2009].

Atlanta Development Authority. "Tax Allocation Districts: TAD FAQ." Atlanta

Development Authority. <http://www.atlantada.com/buildDev/tadFAQs.jsp>

[accessed September 24, 2009].

Taylor, Peter. *Modernities: A Geohistorical Interpretation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

_____. *World City Network: A Global Urban Analysis*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Wallerstein, Immanuel. *World Systems Analysis: An Introduction*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2004.

Watkins, Alfred and David Perry. "The Rise of the Sunbelt Cities." In *The Rise of the Sunbelt Cities: Urban Affairs Annual Reviews*, edited by Alfred Watkins and David Perry, 19-54. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1977.

"What do you think about graffiti in the village?" Online Posting. February 26, 2003 – March 19, 2003. EACA Discussions: Latest in EAV. <http://eaca.net/> [accessed April 20, 2003].

Wyly, Elvin K., Thomas J. Cooke, Daniel J. Hammel, Steven R. Holloway. "Ten "Just-Right" Urban Markets for Affordable Homeownership." *The Fannie Mae Foundation*. <http://www.fanniemaefoundation.org/news/justright.doc> [accessed April 16,2003].