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The Social Construction of a Public/Private Neighborhood: Examining Neighbor Interaction and Neighborhood Meaning in a New Orleans Mixed-Income Development

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The Social Construction of a Public/Private Neighborhood: Examining Neighbor
Interaction and Neighborhood Meaning in a New Orleans Mixed-Income Development

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
Urban Studies

by

Kelly D. Owens

B.A. Louisiana State University, 1988
M.A. Columbia University, 1992

May 2012

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To everyone who lived on and around Zamora Avenue inside
The Twilight Zone of Los Angeles, California, circa 1970 – 1990

Acknowledgments

GOD deemed that I was suited for the mission ahead and I thank Him for granting me the wisdom, strength, and courage to embark upon this journey. I am ever so grateful for challenges that strengthen me in preparation to serve a greater purpose.

This dissertation would not have been possible without the willingness and honesty of the residents of River Garden who took time to chat with me about the joys and challenges of living in the community. I am equally thankful for Pres Kabacoff, CEO of HRI, and his staff who ensured that I had everything that I needed and for also spending time with me to provide insight about River Garden. It was my goal to allow the voices of residents to speak through my work and I sincerely hope they agree that I have accurately represented neighborhood life in River Garden.

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Photo credit for all photos: Kelly D. Owens

Abstract

To understand the complexities involved with neighboring in public/private mixed-income communities, I conducted an ethnographic study of a HOPE VI site in a gentrifying neighborhood in New Orleans. Data was collected through 48 interviews, observation, mental maps, and casual encounters with residents living in the predominantly African American redeveloped St. Thomas Housing Development – renamed River Garden. I analyzed residents' neighboring processes and how they socially constructed space, leading to the identification of several phenomena that shaped neighbor interaction in River Garden. As with previous HOPE VI neighborhood studies, within-group interaction was prevalent while cross-class interaction remained limited. Mechanisms that were intended to facilitate cross-class interaction were neutralized by the exertion of social control. Both limited mobility and neighborhood choice were factors that shaped residents' perceptions of the neighborhood and motivated residents to either participate in the neighborhood as engaged residents or live as guarded residents dominated by constraints. I delineate the attributes of engaged residents to position neighborhood attachment as an important variable for neighbor interaction. Overall, the evidence illuminates class divisiveness among African American neighbors and demonstrates how the struggle for contested space creates a neighborhood filled with tension.

African Americans, Gentrification, HOPE VI, Neighborhood Change, Neighborhoods, New Orleans, Public Housing, Social Classes, Social Control

I: INTRODUCTION

On most days when driving by Boettner Park, I noted that it was empty. I visited the park frequently hoping to observe neighbor interaction in River Garden but typically left the park with blank paper in hand. After a while, I came to realize that Boettner Park was more than likely to remain empty despite my expectation that it would serve as the center of community activity in the River Garden development. I knew of the park before ever seeing it and visualized it as the place where I would find the neighborhood's preschoolers playing while their parents caught up with each other about the happenings in the area. I expected to see joggers and pairs of walkers circling the perimeter while a game of chess was being played inside the park. At the very least, I thought I would see groups of teenagers doing what teens do – skateboarding, dancing, or joking around with each other. None of these visions came to life during my observations of Boettner Park. I did, however, see residents walking their dogs, which provided a few clues about the emptiness of the park. According to Tissot (2011), dogs were an indication that gentrifiers were in the process of claiming the space.

Boettner Park sits in the center of River Garden, a redeveloped HOPE VI community in New Orleans, Louisiana. Before it was River Garden, it was the St. Thomas Housing Development until August 2001 at which time 1,393 of 1,429 units had been demolished (Greater New Orleans Community Data Center 2002). The U.S. Department of Housing and Development (HUD), the City of New Orleans, and private developer, Historic Renovations, Inc. (HRI) partnered and invested \$53.7 million of public funding to redevelop St. Thomas as part of a nationwide strategy to “change the

physical shape of public housing” (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 1999b). As a HOPE VI community, River Garden is the site of neighborhood transformation that is to include physical and social change. A major component of this transformation is the mixing of people sorted by different housing tenure including homeowners, market-rate tenants, and government-subsidized residents who either participate in public housing or Section 8 programs.¹

My dissertation examines how plans for River Garden’s neighborhood transformation have resulted in an empty Boettner Park. Like the park, the majority of residents in River Garden are stuck in the middle of a neighborhood without any incentives or motivation to engage neighbors from different housing tenure. Rather than seeing their neighbors of different housing tenure as potential allies or resources, neighbors see each other as sources of discomfort. Public housing residents are subjected to being constantly monitored and regulated because of the incorporation of market-rate tenants and homeowners into their neighborhood. Market-rate tenants perceive River Garden to be “rowdy” and “dangerous” due to the presence of subsidized residents, and homeowners’ property values have suffered as a result of unexpected additions of rental property in the neighborhood.

These outcomes are contrary to the picture of uplift that has been painted by HOPE VI collaterals² and warrant questioning of the relocation of hundreds of St. Thomas families and thousands of families across the nation displaced by HOPE VI

¹ Other housing types include affordable rental housing, LIHTC units, elderly Section 8 units, and ACC Section 8 units.

² For example, see HUD’s 1999 publication, *HOPE VI: Building communities, transforming lives* at <http://www.huduser.org/Publications/pdf/hope.pdf>

demolition and redevelopment. My first exposure to HOPE VI was while living in Washington, DC where I witnessed the demolition of the public housing development near the Navy Yard. HOPE VI was transforming the neighborhood by deconcentrating poverty of the area which involved having the majority of families move somewhere else. The families that would move back onto the redeveloped site would reap the benefits of living next door to middle-class families. It all sounded like some sort of lottery. The losers of the lottery were the families that did not get to come back to the site once it was redeveloped. Those families either received Section 8 housing (typically in low-income neighborhoods) or were relocated to other public housing developments. The winners were allowed to return to the new development and live among new higher-income neighbors. As tenants of the redeveloped site near the Navy Yard, residents would also benefit from the new boutiques and cafes on nearby 8th Street, SE, which began opening as soon as public housing buildings and the families that lived within them, were being cleared.

HUD's displacement and redevelopment strategy has resulted in the publication of numerous studies and essays about HUD's true intent for public housing families. Despite HUD's assertion that HOPE VI will provide "greater opportunities for the upward mobility of such families" (HUD 1996a, 19710), scholars believe that HOPE VI is a government-sanctioned gentrification ploy (Lees 2008; Hackworth and Smith 2001). If using Neil Smith's (1996) definition of gentrification - the influx of private capital, homeowners, and renters as a means to refurbish poor neighborhoods - then HOPE VI sites clearly resemble the gentrification process. However, HUD denies gentrification or displacement as goals of its efforts. If we are to negate gentrification as the operating

principal, then attention towards whether or not the influx of middle class families is helping to lift public housing tenants out of poverty is warranted.

The concept of HUD's mixed-income housing is undergirded by neighborhood effects theory. HUD utilizes HOPE VI redevelopment and mobility programs such as Section 8 as a means to bring positive effects to tenants. The concept of neighborhood effects was spawned by Wilson's (1987) analysis of what created the social isolation experienced by individuals living in projects. According to Wilson, when Black middle class families left inner cities, they essentially took away the neighborhood role models and advisors from the city. Those who were left behind became increasingly unemployed and more entrenched in poverty's social ills – crime, teenage pregnancies, drugs, etc. - and those social ills have become problematic for cities. As a solution to poverty concentration and its social ills, HUD and local public housing authorities (PHAs) are transforming public housing developments into mixed-income housing in order to alleviate neighborhood-scale problems and improve government-subsidized individuals' circumstances by exposing lower-income residents to mainstream values. Simplistically stated, HUD is suggesting that by reversing middle class flight, social ills and welfare dependency can also be reversed.

My initial reaction to HUD's theory was that it disregarded the actual constraints experienced by many public housing residents. While a mainstream value system equates to work ethics, an appreciation for higher education and the pursuit for homeownership, a mainstream value system does not necessarily help a struggling individual out of her current situation. HUD's premise is based upon the assumption that disparate values rather than different life constraints and structures are at the root of

subsidized families' self-sufficiency shortfalls. Both Hays (2003) and Ehrenreich (2008) convey compelling depictions of low-skilled women's struggles to find and maintain minimum-wage work while being confronted with daycare, transportation, and healthcare challenges. Another structural consideration is the quality of education that project residents receive. Education is tied to accelerating up the career ladder; however, poorer families who live in low-poverty school districts do not receive the level of education that is needed to excel. Families, who do not escape the trap of poor education, end up with low skills resulting in low to no wages. They are not able to move out of the neighborhood and the perpetual cycle of stagnation repeats for their offspring (Marger 2008; Kozol 1991). River Garden children attending the neighborhood school, SciTech Academy, are more likely to perform below grade level compared to their cohorts who attend Lusher Charter School, approximately four miles outside of River Garden.³ HOPE VI's singularly-focused approach relies upon higher-income neighbors to bring about positive change but does not address the opportunity barriers that have created public housing residents' circumstances.⁴

Nonetheless, a number of studies have sought out to test HUD's assertions. Scholars have conducted research to determine if outcomes are improving for lower-income residents who participated in dispersal and redevelopment housing programs

³ This statement is based upon the statewide reporting system for Louisiana public schools. For the 2010-2011 school year, Lusher Charter received an A+ on the state report card with 98% of students at or above grade level; River Garden's neighborhood school which is also a charter, SciTech Academy at Laurel, scored an F with 39% of students scoring at or above grade level. Report cards accessed at: <http://www.doe.state.la.us/reportcards/>

⁴ HOPE VI funding is being phased out and the program is being replaced by the Choice Neighborhoods initiative under President Obama's Administration. Choice's intent is to incorporate wrap-around services and resources in redeveloped public housing communities. Daycare, schools, nonprofits, public transportation, and economic development initiatives are part of the comprehensive package designed to address the aforementioned barriers. Choice funding is being directed to public housing sites that have not been redeveloped. HOPE VI sites continue to operate under the HOPE VI framework.

and have found that employment rates and income levels for subsidized residents remain stagnant (Ludwig et al. 2008; Kling, Liebman, and Katz 2007; Abt Associates and National Bureau of Economic Research 2003). Such findings suggest that HOPE VI is not improving poverty levels at a rate that would justify the displacement of over 50,000 families across the nation.⁵ Further studies have suggested that the absence of social interaction between public housing and market-rate residents disallows neighborhood effects to occur and cite demographic characteristics such as differences in race, ethnicity, language, and socioeconomic status as barriers to interaction (Kleit 2005). According to neighborhood effects theory, critical factors to reversing the circumstances of public housing families include interaction aided by spatial proximity and the resources that higher-income residents bring into the neighborhood. In order for poorer individuals to counter the social isolation they experience, they must acquire mainstream values from their higher-income neighbors which means certain social processes have to take place - thus, the attention on social interaction and community building or the lack thereof in HOPE VI communities (Chaskin and Joseph 2010; Graves 2010; Tach 2009; Kleit 2005). Scholars have focused on the connections between quality of social interaction and structural mechanisms (e.g., neighborhood shops, civic associations, internet connectivity, recreational space, etc.); however, with the exception of Tach's (2009) investigation of perceptions and motives,⁶ the literature has not fully examined the perceptions of residents who dwell in mixed-income housing

⁵ The HUD-published FY2010 Budget Summary states on page 20 that "Over the past 15 years, HOPE VI has invested \$6.1 billion of federal funding for 235 projects, to demolish 96,200 public housing units and produce 107,800 new or renovated housing units, 56,800 of which will be affordable to the lowest-income households."

⁶ Tach's findings were that varying interpretations about crime differently motivated market-rate versus public housing residents to participate in the neighborhood.

developments in order to ascertain whether residents are motivated to interact with neighbors.

Given the finding that neighbors of different backgrounds are not likely to socialize and that neighbors are becoming more socially distant (Lees 2008; Galster and Booza 2007; Putnam 2007; Putnam 1995), the next line of questioning is whether or not working- and middle-class residents can effectively serve as bridges between socially-isolated individuals and mainstream society. Since we know little about residents' actual motivation to interact or the processes that they develop to navigate through mixed-income neighborhoods, I chose this as my line of inquiry.

My introduction to River Garden occurred before I even imagined conducting a study on its grounds. On the occasions that I passed through River Garden down Felicity Street, I had always wondered exactly what was going on with the neighborhood. My pre-research observation was that it was a nice new place but people seemed to hang out more during the day in this subdivision than in other areas of the Lower Garden District. I had even thought that it would be a nice place to live but something about it felt like I had to be in the low-income category in order to qualify. An assumption, admittedly, but an assumption based on knowing that the African American poverty rate in New Orleans (34%)⁷ was higher than the national average and residents in this neighborhood were on the corners, on porches, and sidewalks during the workday each time I passed through.

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau

My assumption about the presence of low-income housing in the neighborhood was correct and I soon discovered that my observation about the amount of “hanging out” that occurred in the area was a sore spot for many residents. For River Garden residents, “hanging out” was a sign that individuals were idle because they did not have jobs, were staking out homes, or were about to create a “scene.” These notions along with other perceptions about public housing tenants were some of the reasons that market-rate tenants were not interacting with them. Other residents were simply not interacting with *any* neighbors because of perceptions shaped by crime or because of busy schedules. Given the importance of knowledge and experience in shaping one’s perception, if residents were not interacting, how would they ever be able to view their public housing neighbors as individuals with unique circumstances and personal struggles? How could neighborhood effects occur if higher-income residents were not motivated to interact with their public housing neighbors? What would motivate a resident to interact with his/her public housing neighbor?

What I found was that residents interact with their public housing neighbors based on two important factors. The first is that opportunities for cross-tenure social interaction have to be made available. Interaction has to be facilitated by spatial proximity and neighborhood mechanisms that bring people into the same social space. For example, two people who come outside on their balcony to smoke cigarettes after dinner have the opportunity to interact because of the routine of smoking and the proximity of their balconies. Presumably, these neighbors are going to speak to each other and over time, develop some kind of connection. To answer the question ‘*What about the neighborhood facilitated or inhibited interaction,*’ I observed and analyzed

social interaction through the lens of neighborhood mechanisms as suggested by several neighborhood effects investigators (Chaskin and Joseph 2010; Freeman 2005a; Sampson et al 2002) and found that social interaction occurs within River Garden with varying degrees of quality. Interaction is most likely to occur between residents of the same housing tenure, particularly for public housing residents, market-rate tenants living in two secured-entry mid-rise buildings, and homeowners. Market-rate tenants who are dispersed among the general population are among the least segregated group of non-subsidized residents. The majority of residents in this group reported infrequent interaction with lower-income neighbors. With respect to the within-tenure interaction that is occurring, prevalent mechanisms for facilitating interaction include social networks, neighborhood institutions, and routines.

The lack of cross-tenure, in many cases, is by individual preference but is also explained by an analysis of the spatial configuration of River Garden. The community's layout points to design that is intended to limit cross-tenure interaction in favor of controlling space to appease market-rate tenants and homebuyers. Boettner Park is mostly surrounded by single-family homes which favors homeowners' control of the park. Two secured-entry mid-rise buildings in the development predominantly house market-rate tenants, and public housing residents are monitored by the development's management company as a means to inhibit socializing on porches and stoops. River Garden residents are more likely to encounter neighbors of different tenure at the nearby Walmart rather than inside the borders of River Garden.

The second important factor that determined if neighbors interacted across housing tenure stems from how residents processed their environment. Upon asking

the question, '*What about the neighborhood motivated residents to interact or withdraw,*' one conclusion was quite clear for residents across all housing tenure. Many of the residents would rather live somewhere else. Market-rate residents were uncomfortable with the environment but constrained by rental leases; public housing residents were being marginalized but did not have other housing options; and homeowners, who were anxious about their investment in a neighborhood that was still in the early stages of change, were confined by negative equity. Limited mobility resulting from financial constraint was dealt with in one of two ways. Residents either decided to accept and claim their position in the neighborhood or retreat from the neighborhood until they could figure a way out of it. Residents who were staking their claim in the neighborhood therefore developed positive perceptions about the neighborhood.

Not all residents felt forced to stay in the neighborhood. In addition to a number of public housing residents who would stay even if they were provided other viable options for housing, a select group of market-rate and Section 8 residents were there by choice and were more instrumental in creating cross-tenure social space. My finding about overall interaction, within-group or cross-tenure, was that it occurred between neighbors who had developed positive perceptions of the neighborhood. They either viewed the neighborhood as normal or at least promising. Respondents' perceptions were shaped by several factors: 1) limited mobility confined residents to the neighborhood which then moved residents to determine what meaning they attached to the neighborhood; 2) people moved into the neighborhood with different expectations and the closer their expectations were to reality dictated whether their perceptions of the neighborhood were going to be positive or negative; 3) perceptions were shaped by

how comfortable and safe one felt in the neighborhood; and 4) residents who previously encountered similarly structured neighborhoods accepted the neighborhood as normal.

The experience of living in River Garden certainly helped me to arrive at my findings, particularly about the role of perception. While living in River Garden for eight months, my perceptions fluctuated as did my motivation to interact with my neighbors. During one particular period, I did not feel comfortable or safe and I simply withdrew. Of course, my goals for living there were not to establish roots in the neighborhood so a fair assessment cannot be drawn from my experience alone. However, the information that I gathered from 48 respondents, combined with my observations and immersion into the neighborhood, provides insight into the individual processes that take place prior to the act of neighbor interaction. Neighborhood effects theory glazes over the individual processes (e.g., arriving at positive or negative perceptions of neighbors/neighborhood; determining one's motivation to speak to neighbors) involved in shaping neighbor interaction. Although we can assume that people will have to *want to* interact in order to interact, it really is much more to it than that. People have to perceive the neighborhood as somewhat positive and because perceptions are loaded with individual histories, knowledge, values, experiences, and ideologies, perceptions cannot be oversimplified as an assumed variable.

Based on respondents' divergent perceptions of River Garden, I identified two predominant groups – engaged and guarded residents. Residents with optimistic perceptions of the neighborhood are engaged while residents with negative perceptions are guarded. Engaged residents include public housing and Section 8 residents, and to a lesser degree, market-rate residents. Homeowners are also in the engaged group.

Engaged residents in the tenant categories perceive the neighborhood as normal and do not place boundaries on how they use it. Homeowners believe and hope that the neighborhood *will be* normal. For the time being, they operate within a microcosm of the neighborhood.

The way in which engaged residents participated in the neighborhood demonstrates neighborhood attachment, which describes residents' sentiments toward and involvement in their neighborhood (Woldoff 2002; Lee and Guest 1983). I found neighborhood attachment to be more of a bridging variable to neighborhood interaction than neighborhood mechanisms alone. In River Garden, neighborhood attachment is a byproduct of positive perceptions of the neighborhood and is demonstrated by fully utilizing the neighborhood, creating social ties, and exhibiting passion for the neighborhood.

Guarded residents (comprised of market-rate and Section 8 residents) view the neighborhood as abnormal or dysfunctional because of how they perceive their public housing neighbors and crime in the area. For some Section 8 residents, feelings of exclusion play a role in their isolation. They maintain their safety by withdrawing from the neighborhood and avoiding neighbors. The boundaries they place on the neighborhood limits when they can use it and restricts use in certain areas. For them, the neighborhood is a place of shelter, with no other meaning attached to it.

My findings conclude that neighbor interaction is impacted by spatial design, social control, and whether or not residents perceive the neighborhood as normal which dictates what kind of meaning they attach to the neighborhood. Promise for the

neighborhood comes from engaged residents, particularly, those market-rate residents who live in River Garden by choice, perceive the neighborhood in a positive light, and are instrumental in encouraging cross-class interaction.

My study also illuminates the underlying current of the struggle for contested space at River Garden. Homeowners are in the space because of gentrifying forces; public housing residents are in the space because it is the only home they know. Currently, both groups are experiencing limited mobility and for different reasons they demonstrate neighborhood attachment. From an attachment perspective, public housing residents are tied into the history and people of River Garden and the neighborhood offers use value (support networks). For homeowners, attachment is tied to current use value (proximity to work and shopping and as a departure from work) and future exchange value (Logan and Molotch 2007). Due to their limited mobility, homeowners feel the need to exert control over how space is used in River Garden and public housing residents, who are bound to place, must conform. While scholars argue whether neighborhood effects or gentrification is the goal of HOPE VI, I argue that in River Garden, gentrifying forces in the form of homeowners actively controlling their neighbors' behaviors and lobbying for direct social services on behalf of public housing residents, will have more impact for public housing residents than per chance neighbor interaction with the gentry (higher-income neighbors). This finding speaks to Wilson's (1987) assertion that higher-income residents bring resources to the neighborhood that could effectuate change. In River Garden, those resources are homeowners' initial financial investment in the community, their capacity to organize and form a collective

power demanding control over the environment and making their insistence upon directing resources toward their poorer neighbors.

\$6.1 billion of public investment has been funneled into HOPE VI projects. According to HUD's 2012 budget request, overall public housing related expenses total over \$16 billion and future public investment will fund mixed-income communities under the Choice Neighborhoods initiative.⁸ Public funding for River Garden has amounted to \$53.7 million (\$33.7 million from HUD for demolition and redevelopment; \$20 million from city and state government funding for infrastructure and development) plus a projected \$21.8 million from sales tax generated by Walmart and diverted to River Garden's developer in the form of Tax-Increment Financing (TIF) funding and Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) funding.⁹

Given this significant public investment, research that helps to illuminate the experiences of individuals who live in government-subsidized housing provides transparency to government spending. Also, because neighbor interaction is an important means toward increasing social capital which then creates neighborhood solidarity, deters crime, and effectuates better public service provision (Campbell et al. 2010; Wilson 1987; Putnam 1994), analyses that speak to mechanisms and processes that facilitate and inhibit neighbor interaction provide ideas of how to better design communities and promote neighborhood stability. Putnam's (2007) finding that the more diverse neighborhoods are, the more inhabitants will isolate themselves speaks to

⁸ HUD, FY2011 Budget accessed at http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=DOC_4220.pdf

⁹ Funding is generated by sales tax from Walmart to be deferred to private developer, HRI as a means to repay developer for financing a portion of infrastructure costs that were originally to be paid for by the city.

the challenges associated with mixed-income communities. My dissertation confirms that heterogeneity curbs interaction but also provides analyses of the various forces that work against the fostering of neighbor interaction. By reviewing these analyses, the reader is able to discern the intricate complexities that shape communities. In River Garden, people experience the same space yet arrive at different perceptions which motivate them to engage the neighborhood or guard themselves from it. My findings can also be applied to various neighborhoods outside my research site that are experiencing mixed-income occupancy or other forms of neighborhood change. My work adds to the neighborhood effects and neighborhood change literature by filling gaps regarding the motivations, processes, and barriers that shape neighbor interaction and by exploring how gentrifying forces impact neighborhood dynamics.

My dissertation is organized into seven remaining chapters. I present a review of the literature in Chapter 2, which includes a brief overview of the origins of public housing with emphasis on how public housing developments began to suffer from the effects of concentrated poverty. I further explain William J. Wilson's (1987) analysis of the connections between concentrated poverty, middle-class flight, and social dislocations (unwed mothers, crime, joblessness, etc.). As previously mentioned, Wilson's assertions form the basis of neighborhood effects theory and the rationale for HUD's efforts to deconcentrate poverty in order to fix associated problems. Upon deconstructing HUD's premises, I point to neighborhood effects and new urbanism as the theoretical foundations of HUD's conceptual framework for engineering life chances for public housing residents. In this chapter, I also explain how neighborhood effects theory testing has spawned the identification of mechanisms as a medium to effect

change within communities. These mechanisms provide useful tools for my analysis of neighbor interaction opportunities in River Garden. I conclude Chapter 2 with a discussion of gentrification given the implications attached to the massive displacement of poor black families that results from HOPE VI intervention.

The most effective approach to understanding the processes and motivations of River Garden neighbor interaction was for me to observe and ask ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions, warranting qualitative methods. In the third chapter, I explain my research design and analyses of data. In Chapter 4, I provide contextual data describing my respondents and I present an overview of River Garden in order to provide a full picture of the space under study. Photos in Chapter 4 also provide visuals that help tell the story of social space in River Garden. In Chapters 5 through 7, I provide analyses of the empirical evidence gleaned from my research. Chapter 5 discusses how neighborhood mechanisms and the utilization of several practices (territorializing, social control/spatial design, gated communities, and smoke and mirrors) combine to define the social space available for interaction. In Chapter 6, I present the symbols, structures, and interpretations that form the basis of how residents perceive the neighborhood. I focus on individual processes and motivation and substantiate the development of the engaged and guarded resident framework. I also delineate groups of residents based on their perceptions and circumstances and establish that they either emanate from being in a neighborhood of limited mobility or a neighborhood of choice. I share the experiences of both guarded and engaged residents who are in the neighborhood due to limited mobility. By exploiting the attributes of engaged residents, I proffer neighborhood attachment as a viable component of neighborhood interaction. I also

discuss homeowners' motivations to fight for neighborhood change and how their pursuits will impact other neighbors. In Chapter 7, I present several vignettes of residents who are in the neighborhood by choice. Their experiences speak to cross-tenure interaction and shed light on what's working in this mixed-income community. In my conclusion (Chapter 8), I provide a synopsis of my research findings and discuss the related implications which form the basis of the recommendations that I present for consideration by developers, community planners, and policymakers. I conclude with the limitations of my study and provide recommendations for further research.

II. HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF GOVERNMENT-SUBSIDIZED MIXED-INCOME HOUSING

My literature review provides an overview of how public housing has evolved from nuclei of concentrated poverty and social dislocations to its current space undergirded by theoretical notions of proximity and engagement. Public housing (“the projects”) densely housed poor people in under-resourced neighborhoods and facilitated the social reproduction of poverty, crime, and joblessness. “The projects” was the result of the ideological notion that poor blacks should live in a certain space so that white neighborhoods would not be infiltrated with otherness¹⁰ (Hirsch 1998). HOPE VI ideology is based upon mixed-income structuring, urban redevelopment, the theory of neighborhood effects, and the social determinism of new urbanism. These tenets are converging to gradually transform spaces that are attractive to gentrifying forces. The following review of literature provides a general historical account of space now occupied by public/private developments such as River Garden and concludes with a brief discussion of how the space is being conceptualized for future use.

Evolution of Public Housing

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is responsible for providing affordable housing to the nation’s poor. The historical foundations of HUD’s policies depict an agency that has had to react to problems created by overpopulation, deindustrialization, racial segregation, central city disinvestment, inadequate design, and concentrated inner-city poverty. The current thrust of the

¹⁰ Otherness, defined as cultural deviation from dominant group. See Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*.

federal government's housing policy directive for cities across the nation is centered on physical rehabilitation and poverty de-concentration. Mixed-income housing, in the form of mobility housing programs (e.g., Section 8) and housing redevelopment programs (e.g., HOPE VI, Choice Neighborhoods), has been advocated and implemented by HUD as a solution to the 1) social isolation experienced by government-subsidized individuals living in poor areas; 2) poverty concentration experienced by inner-city neighborhoods; and 3) the resulting urban decay experienced by post-industrial cities. New urbanism and neighborhood effects theory provide the conceptual framework for HOPE VI initiatives as HUD's mixed-income housing programs seek to connect poor people to middle-class values, re-integrate previously segregated neighborhoods, re-invest in disinvested central cities, and replace physically faltering public housing.

The evolution of public housing has occurred over nearly eight decades. The federal mandate for public housing was a response to shortages resulting from poorly built housing stock coupled with massive migrations into industrial cores. The origins of public housing developments can be traced to the 1933 National Recovery Act that established the Public Works Administration (PWA) and enforced the construction of affordable housing units. The Housing Division of PWA delivered 25,000 units in 58 public housing buildings across the United States. PWA housing was open to anyone despite salary levels until 1936 when income limits were set. The 1937 Housing Act (Wagner Act) made several changes to the original conception of public housing. It allocated funding to be administered by the newly created United States Housing Authority, established strict spending allowances per unit, attached slum clearance to public housing activity, and devolved responsibility of the program to local housing

authorities (now public housing authorities or PHAs) (Radford 2000). Twelve years later, under President Truman, the 1949 housing act sought to provide a “decent home in a decent environment for every American” through the acquisition of slums and blighted land (as quoted by Bauman, Biles, and Szylvian 2000, 139). Truman’s goal of providing 810,000 public housing units was finally met in 1971 (Biles 2000).

Public housing projects: the site of concentrated poverty

Public housing units were typically sited in residentially segregated inner-city areas (Hirsch 1998). White flight, black middle-class flight, and subsequent working-class flight resulted in high concentrations of the poorest blacks in central cities (Hirsch 2000; Radford 2000; Wilson 1987) who were experiencing massive waves of unemployment created by a combination of employment discrimination, deindustrialization, and globalization (Sassen 2006; Sugrue 2005; Savitch and Kantor 2004; Smith 1996; Castells 1991). As such, public housing projects increasingly housed impoverished blacks and became the site of many of the city’s social dislocations (unwed mothers, crime, joblessness, etc.). Moreover, since public housing projects relied upon income-based rent for building maintenance, projects became physically disastrous as welfare-dependent single mothers who paid little or no rent became majority occupants (von Hoffman 2000). Thus, public housing projects became physical representations of the social conditions associated with concentrated poverty.

Concentration effects

Concentrated poverty areas are problematic according to *The Truly Disadvantaged* author, William J. Wilson (1987) who contends that high concentrations

of residentially segregated poverty areas are to blame for the outcomes of the underclass. These outcomes, or social dislocations, include out-of-wedlock births, female-headed households, welfare dependency, and crime. These social dislocations, which continue to reproduce, are the effects of concentrated poverty, coined “concentration effects” by Wilson. In brief, *concentration effects* describe the “massive joblessness, flagrant and open lawlessness, and low-achieving schools” combined with “social isolation from mainstream society” experienced by the most disadvantaged urban black populations (Wilson 1987, 58).

In his explanation of why social dislocations became more rampant in inner cities beginning in the late 1960s, Wilson theorizes that the exodus of middle-class blacks and eventually working-class blacks removed the “social buffer” that tempered the effects of joblessness in areas that once were class-integrated. He stresses that the presence of middle-class blacks helped to maintain the viability of basic institutions such as churches, schools, stores, and recreational centers. He also states that middle-class families provided role models with respect to mainstream norms and values. Without the middle-class social buffer, the lower-income families who were left behind were devoid of individuals who could model good work ethics and became more socially isolated, lacking the social networks from which to learn about jobs and other resources.

Residential segregation

Other works on the causes and effects of urban poverty point to residential segregation as a primary factor; whereas Wilson focuses on residential *class* segregation, other authors contend that it is residential *racial* segregation that created

the effects of concentrated poverty (Massey 1994; Massey 1990). Hirsch's (1998) historical account of how Chicago's institutional, neighborhood, and local agencies collectively worked to exclude African Americans from white neighborhoods is a clear example of racial segregation. Sugrue's (2005) detailing of the processes that created residential segregation in postwar Detroit explains how deindustrialization exacerbated disparate conditions for African Americans, and Silver and Moeser's (1998) historical account of three "separate" cities in the urban South demonstrates how policies and politics crystallized residentially segregated areas for African Americans. Residential segregation has been found to be responsible for low educational attainment, poor healthcare, and crime (Kling, Liebman, and Katz 2007; Rabin 1997). Whether residential segregation is created by private discriminatory practices such as restrictive covenants or government policy (Hirsch 2000; Biles 2000; Hirsch 1998; Rabin 1997; Silver 1997; Thomas and Ritzdorf 1997), residentially segregated pockets of black poor neighborhoods manifest the conditions of concentration effects that make it difficult to break cycles of poverty (Sampson et al 2002; Venkatesh 2002).

Fixing "The Projects"

Under President Bush, a 1989 congressional study of public housing confirmed that the projects were physically and socially deteriorating. HUD, with the backing of Congress and the White House, sought to improve living conditions in inner cities and

mitigate poverty concentration levels while eliminating government dependency among public housing residents. HOPE VI was to be the solution to the projects problem.¹¹

Homeownership Opportunities for People Everywhere (HOPE VI), introduced during the Bush Administration and passed under President Clinton, is a HUD initiative that provides federal funding for cities (in partnership with private developers) to renovate or demolish public housing developments and replace them with units that provide housing for mixed-income populations. The composition of housing tenure varies from city to city as the number of public housing units, subsidized homes, and market-rate rentals and homes are established by the local public housing authority (PHA). Since its launch in 1993, HOPE VI has expended \$6.1 billion to demolish 96,200 housing units and produce 107,800 new or renovated units (53% of those units have been allocated to lowest-income residents).¹² Towering housing developments have been replaced with designs inspired by new urbanism, which stresses compact, mixed-use environments that are walkable, sustainable, and physically consistent with surrounding neighborhoods (Larsen 2005). HUD's website lists the following elements as key to the transformation of public housing through the HOPE VI initiative:

- "Changing the physical shape of public housing"

¹¹ With the newest presidential administration, HOPE VI funding is being phased out as the Choice Neighborhood initiative, which builds upon the foundation of HOPE VI is being launched. Choice Neighborhoods are also mixed-income developments with a broader focus on community institutions such as early childcare programs. In 2011, the Choice Neighborhoods initiative awarded the first group of implementation grants to five cities.

¹² HUD, FY2010 Budget Summary accessed at <http://www.nhl.gov/budgetsummary2010/fy10budget.pdf>

- “Establishing positive incentives for resident self-sufficiency and comprehensive services that empower residents”
- “Lessening concentrations of poverty by placing public housing in nonpoverty neighborhoods and promoting mixed-income communities”
- “Forging partnerships with other agencies, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and private businesses to leverage support and resources”¹³

HOPE VI has effectively deconcentrated poverty in formerly impoverished neighborhoods through large-scale displacement of the area’s lowest-income earners. During the redevelopment of public housing projects, displaced tenants are provided with Section 8 vouchers to use within the private market; some tenants are able to return to the development once completed; however, at least half of original public housing tenants are replaced by moderate- to middle-income earners. This shift in population increases the average income for the area. When aggregated, employment and education attainment levels improve not only because of the incorporation of higher-income earners but also because of the selection process that determines which original public housing residents will be allowed to move back into the development. Housing management companies are able to establish selection criteria that weeds out former residents who were late with payments and deny residency to households in which a family member is linked to criminal or drug activity (Tach 2009).

Once projects are redeveloped, public/private mixed-income developments are housed with both original public housing tenants and new higher-income families. This mixed setting sets the stage for the second part of HUD’s dual-prong strategy to

¹³ Accessed at www.hud.gov in October 2010.

transpire. HUD intends to increase self-sufficiency among subsidized tenants who had been socially isolated from mainstream America and who lacked middle-class role models and social ties that could prove to be resourceful. The proposed altering of outcomes for this population is grounded in neighborhood effects theory.

Neighborhood effects as theoretical base of mixed-income housing

The production of positive neighborhood effects has been proposed as the antidote to concentration effects. Freeman (2005a) defines neighborhood effects as a unidirectional condition in which disadvantaged populations imitate the behaviors their more affluent neighbors. Neighborhood effects is also contextualized as a causal relationship between conditions and outcomes by Chaskin and Joseph (2010); Clampet-Lundquist and Massey (2008); Joseph, Chaskin, and Webber (2007); Kling, Liebman, and Katz (2007); Curley (2005); and Sampson, Morenoff, and Gannon-Rowley (2002). Dietz (2002) offers an objective definition by stating that neighborhood effects are “community influences on individual social or economic outcomes” with examples such as “labor force activity, child outcomes, criminal behavior, and other socioeconomic phenomena” (2002: 539); Galster (2007) also acknowledges that effects can be positive or negative. For the purpose of my study, *neighborhood effects* is defined as the beneficial, neutral, or adverse impacts on both individual and neighborhood outcomes resulting from exposure to neighbors.

Wilson’s *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987) is credited as being pivotal to the onslaught of sociological inquiry about neighborhood effects (Chaskin and Joseph 2010; Clampet-Lundquist and Massey 2008; Kling, Liebman, and Katz 2007; Curley 2005;

Freeman 2005a). Sampson, Morenoff, and Gannon-Rowley (2002) report that since the publication of Wilson's concentration effects theory, there have been hundreds of research studies on neighborhood effects. Wilson's (1987) theory that higher-income individuals provide neighborhood stability via social interaction (e.g., higher-income neighbors share information related to job opportunities and other resources for advancement) is also expressed by Ludwig et al. (2008) who contend that lower-income individuals experience improved outcomes as a result of living near neighbors who are already at an economic advantage.

HUD makes an explicit connection between HOPE VI and neighborhood effects theory. In a 1999 publication, HUD announced that its mixed-income developments were to "lure back the working families that form the bedrock of stable neighborhoods." HUD goes on to explain why it is important to attract working families:

Many scholars believe that the flight of these families from declining cities weakened local economies, crippled local institutions, and frayed the ties that bind the poor families that remain to the values and the opportunities of mainstream society. In cities across America, HOPE VI is giving these families new reasons to return (HUD 1999, 8).

HUD's reference to how the flight of middle-income families negatively affected poor families is consistent with Wilson's theories about the presence of working- and middle-class families in inner-city neighborhoods. It is clear that HUD believes that the presence of working families will produce positive neighborhood effects for HUD's public housing tenants.

Testing neighborhood effects

HUD's sponsorship of two housing dispersion programs, in particular, provided the platform for the testing of neighborhood effects. The Gautreaux program resulted from complaints against the Chicago Housing Authority which was accused of persistently building public housing in residentially segregated and poverty-concentrated areas. A 1976 Supreme Court ruling forced HUD and the Chicago Housing Authority to provide scattered-site housing and Section 8 vouchers in lieu of building more public housing projects in deprived areas (Polikoff 2006).

As an indication of HUD's validation of neighborhood effects theory, HUD administered several studies to determine how the Gautreaux mobility program impacted residents who moved into lower-poverty areas, typically the suburbs. HUD also developed a more formal experiment of Section 8 movers with the Moving to Opportunity (MTO) Demonstration Project that evaluated outcomes for Section 8 residents compared to outcomes of project-based residents. Findings from official HUD studies found both the Gautreaux and MTO programs to be favorable for participants (Abt Associates and National Bureau of Economic Research 2003; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 1979). HUD determined that positive neighborhood effects could be achieved when subsidized families lived in lower-poverty communities rather than in concentrated poverty developments.

Despite HUD's conclusions, whether or not neighborhood effects can be produced or measured is currently debated in the literature. While some reports find that outcomes such as mental health, family processes, risky behavior, and fear of

crime improve for individuals whose neighborhoods change (Fauth, Leventhal, and Brooks-Gunn 2008; Brazley and Gilderbloom 2007; Turney et al 2006; Leventhal, Fauth, and Brooks-Gunn 2005; Varady et al. 2005; Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn 2004, Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn 2003; Katz, Kling, and Liebman 2001; Rosenbaum and Harris 2001; Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn 2000; Popkin, Rosenbaum, and Meaden 1993), others who specifically measured self-sufficiency indicators such as welfare dependency and income did not find significant change after subjects moved to lower-poverty neighborhoods (Popkin, Levy, and Buron 2009; Clampet-Lundquist and Massey 2008; Ludwig et al. 2008; Abt Associates and National Bureau of Economic Research 2003). Scholars argue that issues such as selection bias and incomplete comparisons of subjects' pre- and post-relocation individual and neighborhood circumstances make it impossible to measure neighborhood effects (Clampet-Lundquist and Massey 2008; Keels 2008) while Galster and Booza (2007) are not convinced that neighborhood effects have been empirically validated in any studies. Nonetheless, HUD has articulated the theory of neighborhood effects as a premise of its mixed-income housing strategies (HUD 1999).

Mechanisms that facilitate “mixing” in mixed-income neighborhoods

Neighborhood effects centers on the mechanisms by which the presence/absence of the middle-class makes a difference. These mechanisms serve as the mediators between neighborhood characteristics and neighborhood effects (Ainsworth 2002). In other words, it is through these mechanisms that residents are brought into contact with positive or negative forces that may bring forth changes. Throughout the literature, these neighborhood mechanisms have been categorized as

collective efficacy/socialization, social networks, neighborhood institutions and with much less frequency, routine activities. Those that have attempted to grasp an understanding of neighborhood effects through these mechanisms usually agree on the following descriptions of neighborhood mechanisms:

Collective efficacy/socialization – Chaskin and Joseph (2010) view collective efficacy as the implicit notion that the presence of higher-income people may compel lower-income individuals to become more ambitious and modify their behavior in order to fully integrate into society and achieve upward mobility. Through this process, individuals set behavior norms for others to follow and older individuals provide wisdom. There is intimacy and mutual respect between socializers and those being socialized. The more homogenous the community, the easier it is to set and enforce norms, and share common norms and mutual trust (Freeman 2005a). Galster (2007) cautions that change in behavior is not always better; sometimes it can be worse. Sampson, Morenoff, and Gannon-Rowley (2002) add that the capacity for informal social control and social cohesion are to be included as byproducts of collective efficacy.

Social networks speaks to the social ties that lead to neighbors providing support to each other and helping each other cope (Freeman 2005a). Less intimate and more casual networking can form weak ties that bring about information about jobs and resources (Granovetter 1973; Freeman 2005a). Basically, such social relationships help to form social capital (Sampson, Morenoff, and Gannon-Rowley 2002).

Neighborhood institutions are the services and amenities for the neighborhood (Freeman 2005a) and are measured in terms of quality, quantity, and diversity of the institutions (Sampson, Morenoff, and Gannon-Rowley 2002). Such institutions also serve as mechanisms for interaction (Kleit 2005; Varady et al. 2005). Neighborhood institutions may include schools, churches, recreation centers, and businesses.

Routine activities depend on how land use patterns and frequency of daily routine activities factor into enabling social interaction (Chaskin and Joseph 2010). For example, the routine of utilizing public transportation to travel to work could lend towards interaction among patrons waiting together at the transit stop each morning.

Sampson et al. (2002) suggest that studies on Gautreaux, MTO, and HOPE VI that focus on neighborhood mechanisms are more helpful for understanding how neighborhood effects operate and help to operationalize neighborhood effects. Social ties, collective efficacy (shared norms), and neighborhood institutions speak more specifically to how integrated communities may interact (Chaskin and Joseph 2010; Freeman 2005a; Sampson et al 2002).

Examples of studies on neighborhood mechanisms include the work of Boyd (2007), Freeman (2006) and Varady et al. (2005). Boyd (2007) analyzed responses from participants of the Gautreaux Two program that was launched in 2002 with similar goals and guidelines to the initial Gautreaux program and found that participants made decisions to move based upon the mechanism of *social networks*. Freeman's (2006)

interviews of individuals in gentrified areas in Harlem indicated that the mechanism of *neighborhood institutions* was strengthened during the gentrification process. Freeman lists coffee shops, clothing boutiques, grocery stores, and small service-oriented businesses as examples of neighborhood institutions that began sprouting during gentrification in neighborhoods in Harlem and Brooklyn. Freeman suggests that gentrifiers are key to attracting new businesses as well as supporting existing businesses in the neighborhood. Varady et al. (2005) studied the specific *neighborhood institution* of schools as a mechanism that can create social interaction among parents as they come together for school functions. He also acknowledges the importance of attracting middle-income families with children to HOPE VI projects as a strategy to improve educational institutions that would result from income mixing in schools.

Several studies of HOPE VI developments stand out as having investigated social relations among residents of different housing tenure and the mechanisms that facilitate such interaction. Chaskin and Joseph (2011; 2010), Graves (2010), Tach (2009), and Kleit (2005) interviewed HOPE VI residents of different housing tenure to explore social interaction processes and how “community” is achieved, to determine the impact of specific *neighborhood institutions* on social interaction among residents, to compare levels of *social ties* and *collective efficacy* among residents, and to identify why the use of a common *neighborhood institution* did not promote social interaction across housing tenure, respectively.

New urbanism in mixed-housing design

Neighborhood effects and neighborhood mechanisms are best facilitated by space designed to create interaction via neighbors crossing paths during their daily routines. As a catchall for both physical and social improvement, HOPE VI redevelopment is undergirded by new urbanist design known for its focus on pathways, the incorporation of social space, and preference for low-density neighborhoods. After the award-winning design of Florida's Seaside community, new urbanism gained widespread attention as a design movement to address suburban sprawl and inner city disinvestment. The Congress of New Urbanism (CNU) was formed in 1993 with a vision that emphasizes mixed-use, mixed-income, infill development, flexible land use policies, and the reclamation of community (CNU 1996). While new urbanism is criticized for elements of physical determinism (Larsen 2005; Harvey 1997; Pyatok, 2000; Upton 1997), proponents point to the movement's design philosophy as instrumental to the betterment of inner city space (Bohl, 2000; Poticha, 2000a, 2000b; Talen and Ellis, 2002).

New urbanism became an integral component of HOPE VI upon HUD Secretary's Cisneros's endorsement of the CNU Charter in 1996 (Elliott, Gotham, and Milligan 2004). Since then, HOPE VI has demolished project buildings and replaced them with layouts that stress compact, mixed-use environments that are walkable, sustainable, and physically consistent with surrounding neighborhoods (Larsen 2005). HUD's adoption of new urbanism is clearly defined:

“...the New Urbanism principles that will be promoted by HUD and its partners...include: defined neighborhoods of limited size; flexible zoning standards to allow a mix of compatible uses, along with a mix of housing styles and levels of income; public parks and gathering space; historic preservation; mass transit connections; and pedestrian-friendly streets and walkways connecting the neighborhood to the surrounding area” (HUD, 1997, 3)

New urbanism also lends towards HOPE VI's social goals because its design principles are supported by tenets such as connectedness. The Congress for New Urbanism explicitly states that daily interaction is a desired outcome of its designs because social interaction strengthens the “personal and civic bonds essential to an authentic community” (CNU 1996).

Lofland makes the argument that the built environment's character influences what people do in that space, particularly with respect to how much interaction may occur (Lofland 1998). If these design principles influence interaction, then new urbanist pathways and open spaces could serve as mechanisms for higher- and lower-income residents to people watch, mingle, and share resources which would advance the neighborhood effects process.

Mixed-Income Housing and Neighborhood Change

The St. Thomas housing development was situated in the midst of gentrifying blocks in the Lower Garden District and Irish Channel and deemed to be part of a larger revitalization strategy (Goetz 2011a; Lauria and Stout 1995). Its redevelopment has ignited private sector investment in housing and nearby commercial ventures (Goetz

2011b) and although the neighborhood is comprised of mostly African American residents, the Black population has significantly declined over the past fifteen years. HUD does not claim to promote gentrification through HOPE VI; however, many scholars present arguments that make the connection between HOPE VI and gentrification quite clear.

HOPE VI has been an attractive revitalization tool for cities plagued with aged public housing inventory. Through redevelopment of public housing projects, newer mixed-income communities typically reduce the prevalence of crime and blighted surroundings (Larsen 2005; Newman and Ashton 2004). Redeveloped sites house far fewer residents than the original structures as many original public housing tenants are displaced by the redevelopment process and also by higher-income earners who create the mixed-income balance. With this displacement critics argue that original residents lose social capital while cities accelerate the gentrification process resulting in subsequent displacement within neighboring communities (Lees 2008; Smith and Stovall 2008; Goetz 2005; Newman and Ashton 2004). Lipman (2008) asserts that the HOPE VI program is a new form of urban renewal that has attracted the attention of cities seeking to revitalize their inner cities. This argument is related to the contention that HOPE VI is a strategy specifically aimed at gentrifying previously disinvested areas by deliberately displacing poor blacks (Smith and Stovall 2008; Newman and Ashton 2004). These positions have created the debate as to whether or not the HOPE VI promise of increased social capital among public housing tenants is plausible or if its language about social benefits is meant to mitigate criticisms about urban renewal and gentrification (Lees 2008).

Evicted from the public as well as the private spaces of what is fast becoming a downtown bourgeois playground, minorities, the unemployed and the poorest of the working class are destined for large scale displacement. Once isolated in central city enclaves, they are increasingly herded to reservations on the urban edge (Smith 1996, 28).

Arguments insisting that HOPE VI is merely government-subsidized gentrification contain merit given that the definition of gentrification mirrors the activities taking place in HOPE VI communities. In *The New Urban Frontier*, Smith (1996) defines gentrification as the process “by which poor and working class neighborhoods are refurbished via an influx of private capital and middle class homebuyers and renters” (32). HOPE VI targets areas that were once neglected and physically rehabilitates these areas in an effort to provide decent housing for public housing tenants while attracting prospective working-class and middle-class renters and homebuyers. The displacement that is caused by HOPE VI projects marks the initial phase of the redevelopment process as public housing tenants must move out of the projects in order for renovation and construction efforts to occur. Upon completion of the development, only a percentage of displaced tenants can be accommodated. Whether displacement can be empirically tied to gentrification in traditional neighborhoods is a topic of continued debate in the scholarly circuit (Newman and Wyly 2006; Freeman 2005b; Freeman and Braconi 2002); however, displacement in HOPE VI sites is non-debatable.

Scholars have studied gentrification as a stage in the neighborhood change cycle (Galster and Booza 2007; Schwirian 1983), as a growth machine strategy (Logan and

Molotch 2007), and as a consequence of economic restructuring (Smith 1996). Other studies examine gentrification within the context of neo-liberalism and post-Keynesian policies and point to HOPE VI as a state-intervention involving private capital with the goal of promoting gentrification (Lees 2008; Hackworth and Smith 2001). At one point, public housing was conceptualized as space that safeguarded middle-class residents from being infiltrated by poor black families and it was a space that centralized poverty and its associated conditions. If gentrification is indeed the intent of cities, the current spaces of public/private mixed-income communities represent eventual neighborhood transformation. These assertions and debates therefore situate my study in the neighborhood change literature.

Within the neighborhood change literature, a number of ethnographic studies provide insight into mixed-community neighboring dynamics. Both Pattillo (2007) and Woldoff (2011) investigated the juxtaposition of race and class in changing neighborhoods. Pattillo studied residents' roles in an African American neighborhood while Woldoff's neighborhood study presented residents' reactions to their community becoming less integrated. Freeman's (2006) examination of two different neighborhoods in Harlem and Brooklyn, New York presented a less contentious struggle for contested space while Brown-Saracino (2009) analyzed gentrifiers' experiences in both urban and rural settings, resulting in an ungrouping of gentrifiers as a homogenous group driven by capital gains. This literature was helpful in my attempt to unravel and analyze the empirical evidence that came from my study.

III. METHODOLOGY

At the onset of my research, my intent was to advance the discussion of neighborhood effects by grasping an understanding of social interaction processes. I designed my research project to examine the activities of residents and learn the motivations behind their patterns and processes. My aim was to analyze the inner-workings of neighbor relations in a HOPE VI environment from perspectives representative of all housing tenure.

Research Design

I conducted a multi-method qualitative analysis of social dimensions within a HOPE VI neighborhood in New Orleans to answer the following questions:

1. How (or to what extent) do neighbors interact? What facilitates interaction among neighbors? What informs residents' decisions about with whom to interact?
2. Which neighborhood mechanisms and structures shape neighbor interaction?
3. What are residents' expectations of "the neighborhood", particularly in socially-mixed developments?

Several HOPE VI neighborhood studies provided the basis for my research design. Chaskin and Joseph (2010), Graves (2010), Tach (2009), and Kleit (2005) utilized methods that included interviewing residents, observing community events, convening focus group sessions, analyzing documents, and observing the utilization of public space in HOPE VI developments. Below, are summaries of the studies that were conducted.

Chaskin and Joseph (2010) interviewed 111 respondents including residents, developers, property managers, and community stakeholders across three HOPE VI sites in Chicago, Illinois. Respondents were residents of either public-, affordable, or market-rate housing. Additionally, field observations and documentary data were utilized as data collection strategies. This work centered around the process of building “community” and focused on expectations in the areas of social interaction, neighborhood change, promoting changes for individuals, and addressing macro-level issues such as racism and prejudice. Residents were more vocal about expecting to form casual relationships and to witness more community-level improvements in the form of better amenities. Developers and managers cited expectations for improved outcomes for public housing residents, while neither group was emphatic about expectations for improved race relations. Chaskin and Joseph (2010) also examined the mechanisms through which community was to be developed. These mechanisms included planned events and projects, shared norms of behavior, and local institutions. They found that several factors either promoted or inhibited participation and interaction. At many of the planned events, for example, there was selective participation whereas most attendees were public housing residents thus limiting opportunities for cross-class interaction. Chaskin and Joseph (2010) discuss pragmatic reasons for nonparticipation such as time conflicts and demands from work and family. Preexisting relationships also played a major role in developing new relationships with public housing residents typically having more grounded connections.

As a resident of her study site for 14 months, Graves (2010) interviewed 52 respondents including property managers and 48 residents of Maverick Landing, a

HOPE VI development located in Boston, Massachusetts. She also analyzed flyers and newsletters distributed by management, attended community events, and engaged in casual conversation with neighbors. The primary focus of her ethnographic study was on mixed-income structuring through the mechanism of the private management company. She concluded that management's efforts actually dissuaded social interaction due to preferential treatment of private-market residents that subsequently created tension among residents.

Orchard Gardens, a HOPE VI development also located in Boston, Massachusetts served as the site of Tach's (2009) study on interpretative frames and social processes. Over the course of six months, Tach completed 50 semi-structured interviews in which residents responded to open- and close-ended questions about their perceptions of the neighborhood, social ties, and experiences with management. She asked questions designed to measure the use of neighborhood mechanisms as well as questions geared towards identifying perceptions and motives. Additionally, Tach observed how public space was being utilized and made observations about processes such as meeting attendance and the handling of conflicts in public space. The results of her study showed differences between original residents and newcomers in terms of how they participated in neighborhood mechanisms. The most notable differences were in the areas of social networks, social control, and organization participation where original residents had stronger ties within the community (with other original residents), were more likely to intervene when witnessing crime, and were more involved with community events. Tach explains the differences as stemming from the interpretative frames used by residents of different housing tenure. Original residents saw the newly

renovated community as a much nicer neighborhood with far less crime than before whereas newcomers were influenced by reports of previous crime levels and preferred to keep to themselves. Tach identifies withdrawal and avoidance as the strategies utilized by higher-income residents to evade social interaction and concludes that newcomers did not provide the benefits as theorized in the neighborhood effects literature. Rather, they resisted opportunities to interact with original residents.

Kleit (2005) conducted telephone surveys of 105 residents representing three different housing tenures within the ethnically diverse New Holly HOPE VI development in Seattle, Washington. The interviews sought to investigate the strength of social ties and involvement with on-site activities. Telephone interviews occurred over a period of two months and were followed up by a month of native-language focus group sessions aimed at understanding the dynamics of diversity and social interaction at New Holly. Through these interviews, Kleit gathered responses to test her five hypotheses related to fostering social interaction summarized as: 1) living in the same housing type; 2) sharing similar ethnic backgrounds; 3) having children in the household; 4) utilizing community facilities, and 5) living within close proximity. The bulk of interviews resulted in close-ended responses related to relations with neighbors, perceptions of the neighborhood, and the use of community facilities. Focus group sessions centered on participation in community activities and language and culture differences as barriers to social interaction. She found that public housing tenants and market-rate residents both used community services; however, public housing tenants used services more frequently. Using statistical analysis of the responses, Kleit found that using community facilities did not mean that residents were more likely to connect with residents of

different housing tenure. Through focus group follow-up sessions, she found that language and culture created barriers to use of services. She also found that proximity played a role in creating social ties among public housing residents, while other social ties were created across housing tenure due to similarities such as ethnicity, children in the household, and language.

My study builds upon the foundational research established by Chaskin and Joseph (2010), Graves (2010), Tach (2009), and Kleit (2005) (see Table 1). I replicated the use of several of the aforementioned methods including casual conversation with neighbors, observation of neighborhood activity, semi-structured interviews of residents and additional actors such as the developer and manager, and the facilitation of a focus group comprised of homeowners. Similar to Graves (2010) who lived in her research site for 14 months, I lived within my study site for 8 months, from January to August 2011.

Conceptual framework for research design

Consistent with my survey of the neighborhood effects, neighborhood mechanisms, and neighborhood change literature, my expectations were that cross-class social interaction among River Garden neighbors would be limited and that social interaction among tenants of the same housing tenure would be more pronounced. I expected that neighborhood mechanisms, such as institutions (e.g., churches and community organizations), would cater to residents of certain housing tenure, thereby reducing opportunities for cross-tenure interaction. However, the overarching goal of

	KLEIT	TACH	GRAVES	CHASKIN and JOSEPH	OWENS
Year of study (published)	2005	2009	2010	2010	current
Location of study	Seattle, WA	Boston, MA	Boston, MA	Chicago, IL	New Orleans, LA
Topic (Subtopics)	Social ties (cross-class interaction)	Social processes (mechanisms)	Neighborhood structuring (social interaction, management)	Building community (social interaction, mechanisms)	Neighbor interaction (neighborhood meaning)
# of respondents	105	50	52	111 (across 3 sites)	48
Methods Utilized					
Interviews	yes (phone)	yes	yes	yes	yes
Observation	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Ethnographic	no	no	yes	no	yes
Mental maps	no	no	no	no	yes

Table 1: Comparison of HOPE VI research topics and methods

of my research and my contribution to the literature was to also better understand how individual processes and motivations help shape neighbor interaction. Upon understanding the individual processes and motivations involved in neighbor interaction along with macro-level structures in combination with neighborhood mechanisms, my study would speak to the likelihood of neighborhood effects coming into play. As a guiding framework, I structured my questions around unpacking the independent variables indicated below. Responses led to additional understandings about the meaning of neighborhood (see Figure 1).

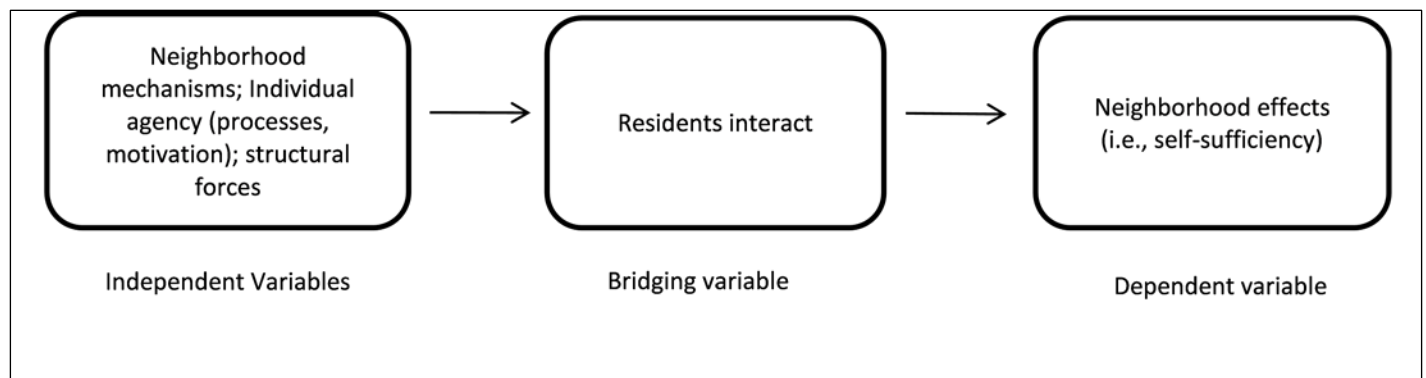


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of research design

Through interviews, I gained a sense of how and why residents established social limitations with their neighbors, paying particular attention to how their proclivities towards socializing may have hindered or contributed toward neighbor interaction. I also delved into respondents' daily routines to identify opportunities and barriers to neighbor interaction. Listening to respondents describe their perceptions of the neighborhood and neighborhood boundaries, while tapping into my own personal experiences as a River Garden resident, helped to shape conclusions about how perceptions and utility of the neighborhood defined the meaning that residents attached to neighborhood. Upon further analysis, I found that neighborhood perception was critical to residents' motivation to interact. Residents who held positive perceptions of the neighborhood were more likely to interact with neighbors. In doing so, these residents demonstrated their attachment to the neighborhood. The addition of perception as an explicit and important variable offers a more nuanced framework to the original framework that guided my research design while neighborhood attachment offers an encompassing concept that captures the processes leading to neighbor interaction (see Figure 2).

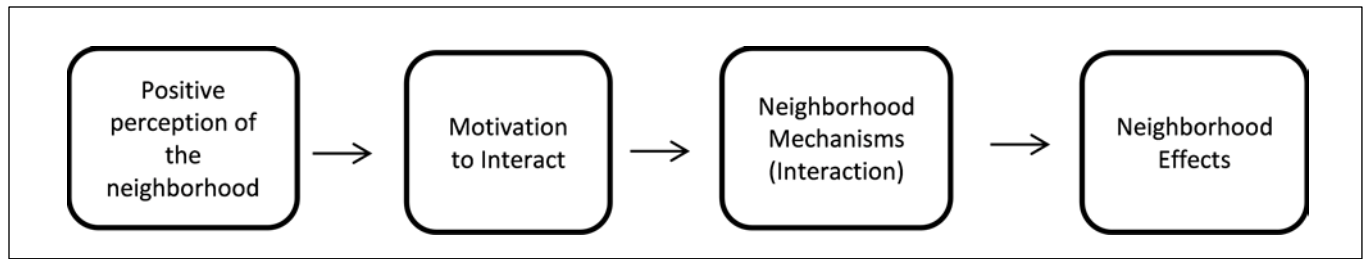


Figure 2: Amended conceptual framework.

My model illustrates an important link to neighborhood effects. Neighborhood effects theory suggests that the presence of neighborhood mechanisms facilitates interaction but does not explicitly discuss neighborhood perceptions and motivation. My findings suggest that perception and motivation are important variables to neighbor interaction. Together, positive perceptions, the motivation to interact, and actively engaging neighbors are signs of neighborhood attachment in River Garden. I suggest neighborhood attachment as a stronger variable to neighbor interaction than spatial proximity as implied by neighborhood effects theory.

Methods

I utilized several methods in order to obtain a deeper understanding of individual processes and motivations that shape social interaction. In order to learn about these processes from the unique perspectives of River Garden residents, I situated my research in the qualitative paradigm, which is most suited to questions about processes and meanings (Creswell 1994).

Semi-structured interviews of residents and management

The primary method that I utilized was semi-structured interviews. I identified a random sample by mailing response cards to a computer-generated randomly-selected stratified sample representing 50% of the private market tenants and publicly subsidized housing residents. My goal was to interview 10% of the residents representing market-rate tenants (goal of 36 residents) and 10% representing public housing tenants (goal of 12 residents). My rationale for stratifying my sample is based upon findings from the aforementioned studies whereby patterns and responses were typically consistent within groups when analyzed by housing tenure. For example, Tach (2009) found public housing residents to have more social ties and to be more involved with community events as opposed to their higher-income neighbors. Also, Graves (2010) found that residents' perceptions of the management company were correlated with housing tenure. If patterns and motivations differ by housing tenure for my population, I wanted to be able to make such an analysis.

The response cards encouraged residents to schedule time to talk about their feelings about the community and a gift incentive was mentioned as a token of appreciation. The only stipulations were that respondents had to be at least 18 years of age and no more than two individuals from the same household could be interviewed.

Upon receiving address lists from HRI management,¹⁴ I mailed 408 postcards (see Appendix A).

Residents were directed to call my landline and ask for “Pat” which allowed me to distinguish individuals who were responding to the response cards. Upon receiving such calls, I ensured that the respondent was of age and set up appointments to meet in person. The response rate was relatively low at 3%. Twelve individuals called to inquire about interviews and I met with all except for two callers who were unable to keep their appointments. Given the low rate of response to my postcards, I resorted to utilizing a door-to-door strategy. Nineteen respondents were solicited in this manner, and six subjects were individuals that I randomly asked to interview while walking through the neighborhood or the lobby of the mid-rise building where I resided. Only two respondents were identified through snowballing. I also conducted a focus group comprised of seven homeowners and later interviewed one homeowner in his home. The Seattle Best coffee shop located in Phase II of the development was utilized as a meeting spot for approximately half of the interviews that I conducted. Other interviews were conducted in the lobby of the mid-rise building or on the stoops of residents’ units. The homeowner focus group was conducted in River Garden’s Social Services office. In addition to the eight homeowners, I interviewed fifteen market rate renters, seven public housing residents, and fifteen Section 8 residents from February 2011 through August 2011. My initial inclination was to group public housing and Section 8 residents as being representative of the same socio-demographic group and solicit more market-rate residents to achieve pre-established goals. However, I discovered the ideologies of

¹⁴ Address lists did not include names of residents but did indicate housing tenure.

Section 8 residents did not mirror those of the public housing group, warranting a separate identity for Section 8 residents who, in many instances, reflected views similar to market-rate residents. (see Table 2 for demographics of respondents).

	Homeowners	Market-Rate	Public Housing	Section 8
Race				
African American	3	9	7	15
White	5	5	0	0
Asian American	0	1	0	0
Gender				
Male	4	5	2	6
Female	4	10	5	9

Table 2: Demographics of respondents.

I asked open-ended questions that prompted respondents to discuss their motivations for living in River Garden, their expectations of the community, and their participation in and observations of neighbor interaction. Additional questions encouraged respondents to describe their routines, discuss the role of neighborhood institutions, proffer reasons that supported his/her actions and observations, and offer explanations for some of my personal observations (see Appendix A for interview protocol). Additionally, I presented respondents with a map of the area and asked them to outline the boundaries of what they considered to be their neighborhood. Respondents were also asked to identify their social ties by mapping the locations of close friends, casual acquaintances, and individuals with whom they consistently exchanged pleasantries. Finally, I collected demographic data on each individual respondent (see Appendix A for data collection form and survey) and devised a numbering system so that demographic information could be linked to informants' respective interview responses and mental maps. Interview sessions ranged in length

from 20 to 60 minutes. Respondents were either provided with \$10 gift cards for Seattle's Best Coffee located in the River Garden development or they were provided with \$10 in cash. All market-rate residents and some Section 8 residents indicated they would use the gift cards. I resorted to cash whenever residents indicated the coffee gift cards were not useful to them.

I also met with three representatives of River Garden's management company, HRI, including the president, Pres Kabacoff, and two staff members. The intent of these meetings was to clarify information that had been reported by resident respondents and to also gain an understanding of the intentionality toward achieving HOPE VI goals.

I originally planned to interview representatives of neighborhood institutions to determine their roles in bringing residents together; however, respondents did not indicate that they frequented these institutions to the degree of becoming familiar with other patrons. Respondents who did patronize neighborhood institutions such as the Kingsley House or Hope House (both social service agencies) did not suggest that these institutions served as catalysts for residents meeting each other or socializing.

Although it was not required, I obtained an official endorsement of my research from River Garden management. I did this in anticipation of residents and managers wanting to know if I "had permission" to conduct my research. This endorsement was both a benefit and hindrance. Through River Garden's regional director, I was introduced to the leader of the quasi-homeowners association and other key individuals who helped to facilitate my research agenda. However, many public housing residents were leery of my intentions and feared that I would be reporting to River Garden

management, possibly jeopardizing their status as residents. Seven public housing residents refused to allow me to interview them upon learning that HRI was aware of my research.

Participant-Observation

I observed daily patterns of River Garden residents during designated blocks of time in the morning, afternoon, and evening hours. I became a regular at Seattle's Best Coffee and spent morning peak hours there between 7:00 AM and 9:30 AM at least three days per week during my first two months of data collection and less frequently thereafter. I took occasional walks throughout the neighborhood including daily walks to Walmart for personal shopping and I became a member of the Anytime Fitness gym. Through my observations, I noted interactions (greetings vs. dialogue, length of interactions, routine patterns of residents, etc.) and recorded notes about how the built environment aided or inhibited social interaction.

Mental maps

Mental maps are how one perceives space based on knowledge of the environment. Through mental maps, respondents interpret their feelings and attachment to place and reveal how he/she interacts with the environment (Kitchin 1994). In order to gain an understanding of residents' perceptions of the neighborhood, I asked them to transfer their mental maps onto paper. I provided them with a street map that depicted River Garden and surrounding areas bordering its southeast boundaries around to its northeast boundaries. With a pen or marker, respondents drew the outlines of what I refer to as their *comfort zones*. Respondents were asked to not

include areas that they intentionally avoided with specific instructions that if avoided areas were inside of their comfort zones, they were to mark out those areas. Residents were asked to place the letter X to show approximately where they lived. They were then provided with colored markers and asked to place dots to indicate the residences of their social contacts. Social contacts (social ties) included residents they spoke to on a frequent basis, even if just in passing, and neighbors that they considered friends. Residents were asked to also enclose Walmart if they considered Walmart to be a part of their neighborhood. An example of a respondent's mental map is provided in Figure 3 with an explanation of map details.

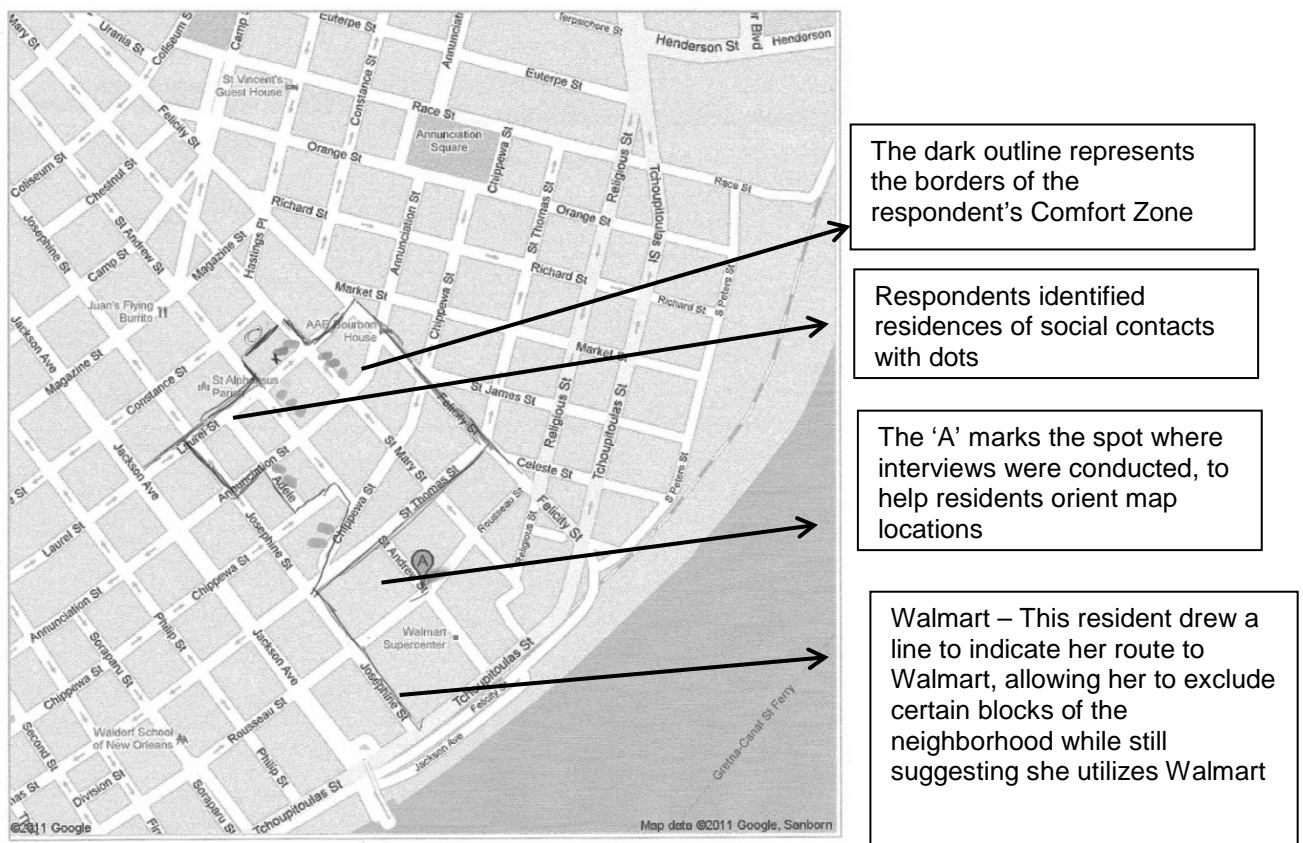


Figure 3: Example of respondent's mental map. Map data: ©2011 Google, Sanborn.

Qualitative Analysis

Coding

I recorded 27 hours of interviews and had all recordings professionally transcribed. To identify recurring themes, patterns, and trends, I conducted a meta-analysis of the interviews and developed categories that captured prevalent themes. Using Dedoose, a cloud-based mixed-methods analysis software, I imported all transcribed documents and excerpted every section of responses that related to those themes. Those excerpts were carefully coded and then systematically arranged by code. The major themes were captured by the codes described below. For each major theme, sub-codes were developed in order to allow for specification and patterning. All codes are listed in Appendix B. Primary codes are as follows:

Barriers: Respondents spoke of actions and mindsets that inhibited social interaction such as fear of crime, class and culture differences, and anti-social dispositions.

Boundaries: This code captured references to social and geographic boundaries.

Defines Neighborhood: As neighbors proffered definitions of how neighbors should act or how they regarded ideal neighborhoods, this code was utilized.

Dogs: Dogs became a prevalent topic throughout this study. Responses describing the role of dogs in shaping interaction were therefore coded.

Former residency: Statements indicating where respondents lived prior to River Garden were coded to determine if residents were out-of-towners or

New Orleanians and whether they had previously lived in St. Thomas or other New Orleans housing projects.

Kids: In an effort to understand the role that children play in shaping interaction among adults, discussions about kids were highlighted.

Management: Discussions about management were all coded.

Mechanisms: This code was utilized when respondents mentioned behaviors including collective efficacy, developing social ties, how daily routines shaped interaction, and the role of neighborhood institutions in developing neighbor relations.

Neighborhood Choice: The Neighborhood Choice code captured respondents' motivations for moving into River Garden.

Neighborhood Effects: If anyone made reference to a positive or negative outcome resulting from living in River Garden, this code was utilized.

Neighborhood Expectations: Respondents' discussions about what they expected from the neighborhood were highlighted as such.

Neighborliness: This code was used to identify respondents' behaviors towards neighbors and marked respondents' observations of their neighbors' behaviors and processes.

Theory: Respondents' opinions about mixed-income housing were captured under the Theory code.

Walmart: Each time Walmart was mentioned, it was coded.

Wants to move: When respondents discussed the desire to move out of River Garden, it was coded as such.

Coding of mental maps

Each respondent was asked to draw a mental map of what he considered to be his neighborhood. Of the 45 residents that I interviewed, 37 maps were legible and complete. I developed a coding system to indicate the size of respondents' comfort zones based upon what was indicated on their mental maps; codes were as follows:

1. Block – Comfort zone was restricted to no more than four blocks within the respondent's home.
2. Local – Comfort zone was larger than five blocks but not quite as large as the River Garden subdivision.
3. River Garden – Respondent indicated comfort zone consistent with River Garden borders.
4. Global – Comfort zone encompassed area larger than River Garden subdivision.
5. Other – Comfort zone was depicted as being outside of River Garden.

Mental maps also included dots drawn by residents to show where their social ties lived. I analyzed the locations of social ties to determine plot characteristics. Contacts were either:

1. Isolated – 3 or fewer social ties were indicated but did not live in close proximity to respondent
2. Clustered – contacts were clustered near respondent's home (same street)
3. Adjacent – contacts were within adjacent block of respondents' home
4. Scattered – contacts were plotted throughout respondent's entire comfort zone, which at a minimum was local in size

I then organized the mental maps in groupings based upon size of boundaries and social contacts plots as indicated in Table 3.

General Group Characteristics of Mental Maps			
	Group I	Group II	Group III
Boundaries	River Garden/Global	Block/Local/Other	Global
Number of social ties	7+	3 or less	4 - 6
Social ties plotting	Clustered/Scattered	Isolated	Clustered

Table 3: Characteristics of mental map groupings.

Merit of qualitative analysis

While pursuing this research, concepts important to maintaining the qualitative integrity of my project guided my work. These concepts included trustworthiness, credibility, methodological soundness, ethics, and generalizability.

Trustworthiness, a concept used with qualitative methods, refers to the credibility of the research and is comparable to concepts of reliability and validity in quantitative studies. The basic questions related to establishing trustworthiness are “*Did the study utilize standards considered to be acceptable and informed by the social science community?*” and “*Was the study conducted in an ethical manner?*” (Rossman and Rallis 2003, 63). Trustworthiness stems from credibility, methodological soundness, and ethics.

Credibility is established by using standardized and trusted practices. Protocols for conducting interviews for case study research have been standardized and must be followed. Strategies to demonstrate the credibility of one’s research include collecting data over a period of time and using triangulation (Creswell 1994; Rossman and Rallis 2003).

I developed standardized protocols for conducting my interviews. For example, respondents were provided the same explanation for my research and asked the same questions as indicated on my interview protocol (Appendix A). Sessions were recorded and introduced with my mention of the respondent's special code which consisted of the date of the interview and order of the interview for that particular day. For example, the first person that I interviewed on March 1, 2011 was labeled as 301-A and the second respondent interviewed on that same date was labeled as 301-B. This allowed me to properly label each recording as it was downloaded onto my hard drive. I downloaded interviews on the same day that they were recorded to ensure accuracy. Respondents' codes were also used on their mental maps and on their corresponding demographic profiles.

I lived in the neighborhood for eight months, spending the first month observing and the remaining seven months observing, interviewing, and participating as a resident (e.g., casual conversation, walking through neighborhood, shopping at Walmart, etc.). Several sources helped me to arrive at conclusions about neighbor relations; those sources include interviews with residents of different housing tenure, mental maps of residents, observations of the neighborhood, and personal experiences as a resident of River Garden. These data were triangulated and shaped my findings.

With respect to ***methodological soundness***, it is important that the methodology of the research is grounded in a theoretical or conceptual framework and has an apparent logic that connects the research design to the research questions. Additionally, the researcher should utilize various methods to gather data. Researchers must also provide detailed information about the processes that she uses so that

readers can determine the level of rigor that was utilized, making the research more credible (Rossman and Rallis 2003).

I designed my research based on the conceptual framework described on page 41. As mentioned, I used several data – interviews, mental maps, observation, and participation and in this chapter of my dissertation, I outline my data collection process and my data analysis processes.

Babbie (2007) provides discussion of the **ethical** issues in social research. In summary, the issues to be considered include voluntary participation, ensuring that participants will not be harmed, guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality, and only using deception if it can be justifiably rationalized. These issues were addressed through my application to the Institutional Review Board to ensure that my respondents would be receiving the special protections that are required (see Appendix C). The names of respondents in my dissertation are fictitious with the exception of elected city administrators, the developer of River Garden, and the three murder victims killed in River Garden during my research process. In some cases when descriptions of locations and particularities about the events would make it obvious as to whom the respondents were, I altered the setting or exact nature of the incident while ensuring that I conveyed the information in such a way to maintain the integrity of what was reported while also demonstrating the impact of the event.

The goal of my research was to produce generalizable findings that could contribute to theory development while also presenting important implications for HOPE VI programs as well as the Obama administration's Choice Neighborhoods initiative,

which has replaced HOPE VI. **Generalizability** is established through the process of probability sampling, which allows the researcher to generalize from a sample to a larger population. The key component to probability sampling is random sampling whereby the researcher's biases are countered by the equally probable selection of sample subjects (Babbie, 2007). Mailing the postcards to residents of River Garden who represented each of the housing tenures ensured that I met with a random sampling of interviewees; I also met with two snowball respondents. My door-to-door strategy also generated a random sampling given that residents of all housing tenure are integrated throughout the neighborhood with the exception of residents in the mid-rise building, which is occupied by mostly market-rate tenants. I randomly knocked on the doors of individuals whom I had not previously met or seen. Although, I possessed an address list that provided hints regarding residents' backgrounds, I did not reference the address list and therefore did not know the housing tenure of occupants. My interview session with homeowners was conducted as a focus group. All homeowners were invited to attend. Like other interviews, participation in the focus group was predicated on availability and willingness. All solicited respondents were offered an incentive to participate. With the exception of the participants in the focus group, who were informed that dinner was being served, respondents did not know what the incentive was until they completed the interview.

My efforts to ensure a random sampling offset biases associated with the selection of subjects and therefore allow for the findings based on my sample to be accepted as objective and generalizable to the larger community of River Garden.

IV. SOCIO-SPATIAL OVERVIEW OF RIVER GARDEN

The Place

River Garden, a HOPE VI development in New Orleans, Louisiana, is the site of my study. River Garden was formerly the St. Thomas public housing development which was completed in 1941 with the delivery of 1,510 units in 161 buildings that occupied 49 acres nestled between the neighborhoods of the Lower Garden District and the Irish Channel. The site is bordered by the Mississippi River and is in close proximity to the warehouse district, the industrial riverfront, and the Central Business District (see Figure 4).

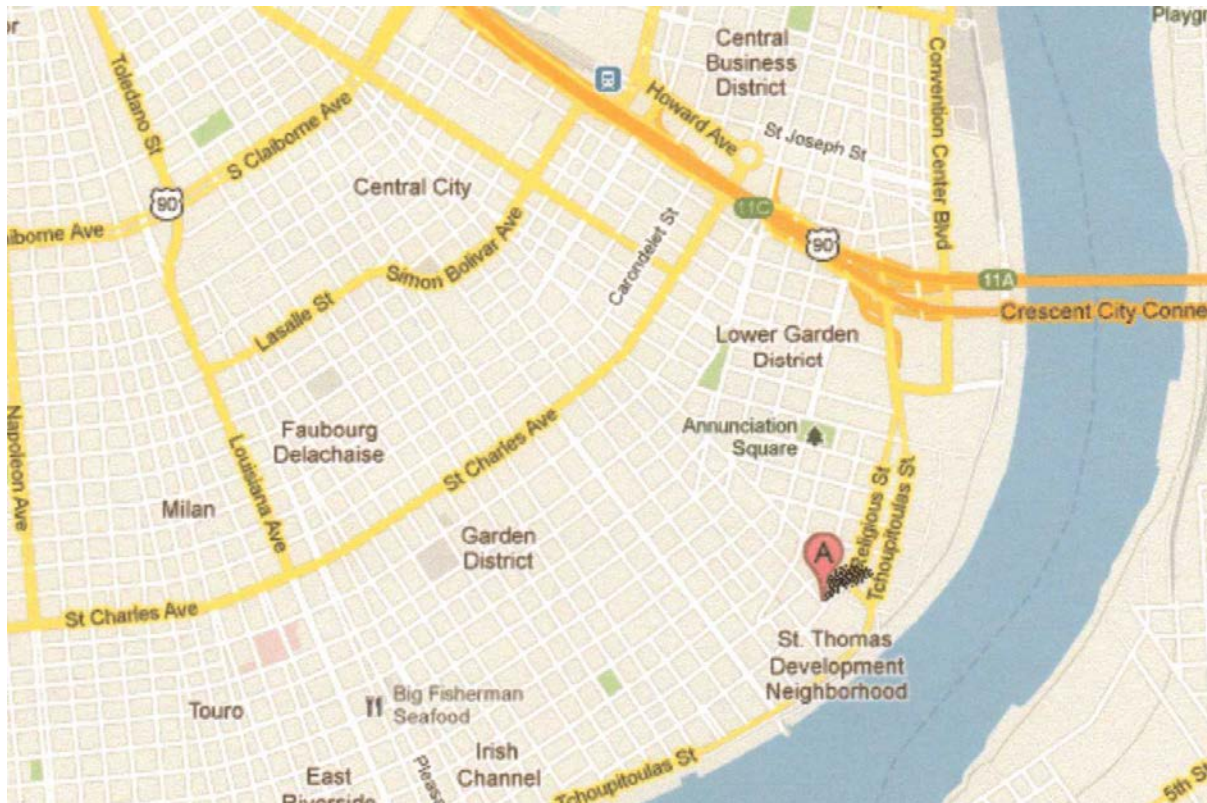


Figure 4: Map of River Garden (located in St. Thomas Development neighborhood) and surrounding areas, Map: © 2011, Google.

River Garden exists in its present form because of the successful HOPE VI grant application for \$25 million submitted to HUD by the City of New Orleans through the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) in 1996. HANO, which manages over 5,000 public-housing and low-rent units and administers over 17,000 Section 8 vouchers, was under the administration of two different mayors during St. Thomas' redevelopment. Mayor Marc Morial was in office during the bidding process to identify River Garden's developer and Mayor Ray Nagin was elected in 2002 right before River Garden construction began in 2003. Soon after River Garden's final construction phase was complete, Mayor Mitch Landrieu was elected.

HRI Properties, a national developer and property management company founded by Pres Kabacoff and the late Edward Boettner, was chosen as the developer of River Garden. Since 1982, HRI has completed a mix of 54 private and public/private projects across the country. HRI's portfolio includes apartments, condominiums, and hotels in several states with most developments in the New Orleans metropolitan area. HRI holds a 99-year lease for the land on which River Garden sits and serves as the development's property manager. HRI gained widespread attention and criticism for recruiting the Walmart Supercenter, which sits adjacent to the Mississippi River and in front of the River Garden development. HRI stirred up further controversy by successfully lobbying for the area to be designated as a Tax Incremental Financing District, which makes HRI the benefactor of what would have been the city's sales tax revenue generated by Walmart sales activity over a term of 25 years, estimated to amount to a total of \$20 million. This deal was struck as a way for the city to repay HRI

for its financing of infrastructure redevelopment that the city originally was going to fund but was unable to by the time construction plans were underway.

Prior to HOPE VI redevelopment, the St. Thomas Development census tract was nearly half-vacant, housing 806 families of whom 93.1% were black, 4.2% white, and 2% Hispanic. In 2000, 69% of St. Thomas area residents were below the official poverty line (U.S. Census). With the exception of five buildings, the St. Thomas units were completely demolished by 2001 and construction of River Garden began in 2003, with the majority of units being completed in two phases (July 2005 and December 2009). River Garden provides housing for 739 families and features a 2.75 acre park located in the center of the development. Critics claimed that the redevelopment of St. Thomas was a strategy to promote gentrification with the aid of government subsidies and in the process, 806 families were displaced. The sizable reduction of new public housing units meant that the majority of families were not able to return (Bagert 2002). With the mandate for mixed-income housing, River Garden's accommodations for public housing families is 20% of the capacity of the former St. Thomas development. The breakdown of mixed-income units in River Garden is as follows:

- 360 market rate units
- 122 public housing units
- 37 affordable units
- 23 market rate homes
- 15 affordable homes
- 35 plots for additional homes to be built upon market demand
- 57 Section 8 units for the elderly
- 60 Section 8 ACC units
- 64 Tax credit units

(HANO 2011)

In the latest “picture of subsidized housing” available, HUD reports that the public housing units are occupied by blacks (66%) and Hispanics (34%) and that 77% of such units are female-headed households with children.¹⁵ As a note of reference, the African American and Hispanic populations of New Orleans in 2010 were 60.2% and 5.2%, respectively.¹⁶

River Garden is in the census tract officially known as the St. Thomas Development, which was subdivided out of the Lower Garden District neighborhood of New Orleans. New Orleans relies upon its tourism industry which provides 73,000 mostly low-wage jobs in the New Orleans metropolitan area.¹⁷ Other top industries in the city include utilities, education, health, and government. In August 2011, at the time that I completed my interviews, the unemployment rate for the metropolitan area was 7.3%. In 2005, the city was catastrophically devastated by Hurricane Katrina, a category 3 storm that caused several levee breaches in the city leading to the eventual flooding of nearly 80% of the city. According to the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center, 1,464 people lost their lives and 70% of all occupied housing units suffered damage – 51,000 of which were rental units severely damaged or destroyed. The population decreased from 484,674 to 208,548 when measured nearly one year after the hurricane. As of the 2010 census, New Orleans’ population is 343,829 or 71% of its pre-Katrina population.

¹⁵ Data obtained from HUD Subsidized Data Query Tool accessed at http://www.huduser.org/portal/picture2008/form_1S4.odt

¹⁶ Demographic data related to market-rate rentals was requested but deemed not available to the public.

¹⁷ Current labor statistics provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics are grouped by the New Orleans metropolitan category which includes the suburbs of Metairie and Kenner.

Hurricane Katrina further reduced New Orleans' affordable housing by 63% which was later exacerbated by HANO's displacement of 4,500 public housing families who were not allowed to move back into four New Orleans projects slated for demolition and rebuilding (Luft and Griffin, 2008). HRI had just completed its first phase of construction of the re-developed St. Thomas projects at the time of Hurricane Katrina. River Garden was one of a few communities untouched by flood waters and newly-homeless residents representing all walks of life resorted to River Garden as their new dwelling. For some, the arrangement was temporary and for others, River Garden is still home.

The Development



Photo 1: River Garden Phase I shotgun and Greek-revival style apartment units

River Garden boasts tree-lined streets with architecture reminiscent of traditional New Orleans neighborhoods. The development features one- and two-level units that resemble cottage, shotgun doubles, and Greek revival structures found throughout adjacent neighborhoods. Phase I consists of ranch style duplexes, four-plexes, and

townhome apartments painted in every pastel color. These units feature porches, balconies, and small semi-fenced backyards with concrete slabs for outdoor grilling. The River Garden Elderly Apartments building, completed in 2007, sits on the northwestern border of the development and is a short walk to Magazine Street, an established corridor of restaurants and specialty retail stores. Residents refer to Phase I units as being on the “The Backside.”

In the center of River Garden are the twenty-nine single-family homes situated between The Backside and Chippewa Street. Homes are not “cookie cutter” - they vary in size and design and feature porches, driveways, and front and backyards. Homes are fenced in with uniform three-foot high black iron in the front and typically six-foot high wood fencing in the back. A fully-developed River Garden will feature 73 constructed homes pending the identification of homebuyers. Homes border the centrally located neighborhood park (see Photo 2).

The park is officially Boettner Park, named after HRI’s late founder, but is referred to as the “community park” or the “dog park” by residents. Boettner Park is 2.75 acres and is shaped in the form of a right triangle. One paved sidewalk borders the perimeter of the hilly park while one concrete path cuts through the park allowing residents from Phase I to walk to the Phase II side of the development (see Photo 3).



Photo 2: Tree in Boettner Park with River Garden homes in the background.



Photo 3: Boettner Park in River Garden (memorial in honor of HRI founder, Edward Boettner)

Five original St. Thomas buildings that were not demolished make up the River Garden Historic Apartments that were gutted and renovated in 2007. These 37 units specifically provide housing to individuals who qualify for affordable housing based upon income. The three-story brick buildings enclose a courtyard and also contain space designated as the community social services office.

The units in Phase II are bright earth-tone townhome and row home style apartments. Each row home features two separate units that are accessed either at the front or back of the building. The resident in front lives on the ground level of the building while the resident who lives in the second unit opens the backdoor to a flight of stairs. Units feature small stoops (steps and landing) rather than the larger porches seen in Phase I. Phase II also houses two four-story mid-rise buildings that were completed in December 2009 (see Photo 4). Mid-rise units feature additional amenities such as balcony views of downtown New Orleans and the Mississippi River. Residents are primarily market-rate renters who experience a “gated” feel due to secured entry and separation from the rest of the community. The ground level of the mid-rise buildings features retail space that had been leased to Seattle’s Best Coffee (now Subway), Anytime Fitness, a clothing store, a notary shop, and a nail salon. The mid-rise buildings have been named “The Highrise” or “the condos” by residents. Phase II garden apartments and the mid-rise buildings make up “The Frontside” of River Garden, which is considered to be quieter than The Backside (see layout of the River Garden development in Appendix D).



Photo 4: Phase II includes row home style units and mid-rise buildings.

The People

River Garden residents make up the majority of the housing units reported in its respective census tract (Tract 141). Descriptive analysis of 2010 census data provides the demographic background of the study area combined with demographic data collected from my sample (see Table 4). These data allow for univariate analyses of racial composition and families with children for the River Garden community before and after the redevelopment of St. Thomas. In 2000, family relocation was already underway, but a substantial number of residents were still in St. Thomas at the time the census was taken.

Characteristics of the St. Thomas Development Census Tract	2000 Census		2010 Census	
Population	2,957		2,161	
Total housing units	1,429		1,171	
Total Households (total occupied housing units)	834		1,001	
Renter occupied	89.7%		88.4%	
Black/African American	93.1%	2,753	77.5%	1,674
White	4.2%	124	15.7%	339
Asian	0.1%	30	1.4%	30
Hispanic (any race)	2.0%	59	3.4%	73
Female	53.8%	1,590	55.9%	1,207
Female householder (no husband present) with children under 18	48.5%	404	23.6%	236

Table 4: 2010 and 2000 Census data of St. Thomas Development census tract. Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Census data shows significant differences in neighborhood density and racial composition. The area lost 796 people over the 10-year period. There are 15.6% fewer African Americans and 10.5% more Whites. When considering the overall population, from 2000 to 2010, the African American population was reduced by 40%, while the White population has nearly tripled. When factoring in a vacancy rate of 42% at the time of 2000 census (initial stage of St. Thomas displacement had already begun), the overall impact of African Americans moving out of the area is not completely known.

Respondent demographics

Consistent with census data for the neighborhood, the majority of respondents who participated in my study were African American (78.6%) and female (62%). Most respondents were below the poverty line (40.5%) and within the age range of 40 to 61 (59%). Exactly one-third of respondents were market-rate renters, 54% were government-subsidized residents and 23.8% of all respondents were former St.

Thomas residents. (See Table 5 for race and housing tenure of respondents and see Appendix E for more detailed demographic information about respondents.)

	Public Housing	Section 8	Market-rate Renters	Homeowners
African American	7	15	9	3
Asian American	0	0	1	0
White American	0	0	5	5

Table 5: Race and housing tenure of respondents.

Residents represent a mix of working people, college students, and government-subsidized residents. White inhabitants are most visible in The Highrises, in the driveways of the single-family homes, and around Boettner Park. Senior residents live in the Elderly Apartments with some interspersed throughout the development. Children are typically seen in Phase I.

Public Housing Residents / Section 8 Residents

River Garden residents are either subsidized by the government or pay market-rate for their apartments and homes. **Former residents** are public housing residents who resided in the development prior to the demolition of the St. Thomas Housing Development. Section 8 voucher users, or **sub-paying residents or sub-payers**, pay a portion of their rent based upon their income which may come from a low-wage job or Social Security benefits determined by age or disability; the other portion of their rent is subsidized by the government and paid directly to the property manager.

The former and sub-paying residents interviewed for my study were all African American and mostly women (65%). Nearly half of them were at least 50 years of age and the majority (65%) received under \$10,890 per year, the poverty guideline for a single person household as established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human

Services to determine program eligibility. Three respondents from this group reported dropping out of high school while the remainder of the group received high school diplomas. One sub-payer attended college. Four sub-payers had school-aged children in the household while the younger respondents of the former residents subgroup had younger children. Older respondents spoke of grandchildren who lived off-site and at least one had custodial supervision of her grandson.

The majority of former residents were previous residents of St. Thomas with three former residents indicating having lived in other projects in New Orleans. One sub-paying resident was from out-of-state.

Market-rate residents

I refer to ***market-rate residents*** as ***renters*** and they include working class, middle-income, and upper-income residents who pay the full advertised rate for their apartment units. For the most part, renters are equally dispersed throughout both Phase I and Phase II of River Garden, except for those who live in the Highrise. It is very likely for a renter to pay \$900 for his/her one-bedroom apartment and live next to a resident who pays a mere fraction of the rent, if anything at all. That is not the case for renters living in the mid-rise buildings. They are not in the open space of the development but rather in contained apartment buildings with elevators and balconies. It is most likely that they live next door and across the hall from individuals with similar educational backgrounds who also make a decent wage because 89% of all mid-rise residents are in the market-rate category. A special key fob is required to enter the mid-rise buildings and guests have to be buzzed into the building. Depending upon which side of the

building residents live, their balconies either face the Mississippi River or the larger community. The mid-rise buildings are in close proximity to Walmart meaning residents do not have to walk through the neighborhood to patronize the store. Since rent can be paid online and garbage is disposed of through indoor chutes, these residents need only partake of the River Garden community when they enter and exit the parking lots adjacent to the buildings or when they walk their dogs. Residents in the Highrise are not totally immune to the happenings in the neighborhood but they are further removed from the community.



Photo 5: One of two mixed-use, mid-rise buildings in River Garden.

Renters who participated in my interviews were mostly from out-of-state with renters in The Highrises having the highest representation of out-of-towners. Incomes ranged from lower-middle to upper-income and all reported having attended college, with the majority completing a bachelor's degree. Renters who were integrated with

former and sub-paying residents were pretty equal in terms of gender representation but six out of seven Highrise dwellers were women. Renters were in their 30's and 40's. Three had school-aged children living with them and one had a toddler. Several respondents in this category moved into River Garden because they were displaced by Hurricane Katrina while the remaining residents were attracted by River Garden's new construction and location. At least half of the renters in The Highrises moved into River Garden because of the secured entry system of their mid-rise buildings.

Homeowners

The final group of residents are the homeowners of River Garden. They are represented by both market-rate and affordable homeowners and were informed about the mixed-income concept prior to purchasing their properties. Homeowners who participated in the focus group that I conducted were mostly White (5 of 8) and equally male and female. They are primarily college-educated professionals in two-person households reporting incomes of \$75,000 or more. Homeowners were mostly in their mid-30's to 40's and were lured to River Garden by new urbanist principles such as walkability, architectural design, and the rarity of new construction in New Orleans.

<p>Former Residents Public housing residents who are former St. Thomas tenants or former residents of other New Orleans' public housing developments</p> <p>Sub-paying Residents (sub-payers) Residents utilize Section 8 voucher, which helps to subsidized rent; resident's portion of rent is calculated based on income and need</p>	<p>Market-Rate Residents (Renters) Residents pay advertised rate for rent and are integrated into the development, outside of mid-rise buildings, or live in one of the two mid-rise buildings</p>
<p>Homeowners Both market-rate and affordable homeowners are included in this category</p>	

V. SPATIALITY IN A MIXED-INCOME COMMUNITY

Depending on when observed, neighbor interaction is visible and vibrant in River Garden, particularly among residents who are home during the day. Residents socialize with tones of familiarity relating to each other as though they have known each other for a while. There are also spurts of “oh, how you doing, how was your day?” signaling courteous, but less familiar exchanges. At other times, I noticed people walking past each other without speaking or I observed that the neighborhood was simply quiet. In other words, neighbor interaction in River Garden can be best described as spotty. Consistent with previous HOPE VI studies, neighbor interaction was prevalent within housing tenure, with less evidence of cross-tenure interaction (Chaskin and Joseph 2011; Chaskin and Joseph 2010; Tach 2009; Kleit 2005). When interaction was across housing tenure, it was fleeting.

My first task in understanding these dynamics was to conduct an assessment of the physical and social environment. *Is the space conducive to neighbors interacting and are there mechanisms that specifically promoted class-tenure interaction?* The results of my inquiry suggest that a number of controls are inhibiting interaction, particularly cross-tenure interaction. Although HOPE VI ideology leads us to believe that interacting with neighbors of different housing tenure is a desired outcome, the design of this particular public/private development detracts from such goals. I surmise that the reason for spotty interaction in River Garden is because the development is designed to attract renters and homebuyers meaning private market desires for peace and privacy have to be delivered to some extent, a notion that is consistent with Pow’s

assertion that developers are motivated to meet consumers' demand for a privatized lifestyle (Pow 2009).

In order to appeal to the middle class, River Garden developers have undermined HOPE VI design principles which are based in new urbanist philosophy. New urbanism calls for connectedness facilitated by pathways and spatially proximate features such as porches and stoops. In River Garden, porch space and sidewalks are regulated in an effort to curtail socializing. New urbanism also strives to incorporate social space. In River Garden, Boettner Park could serve that purpose; however, the absence of benches and its designation as the "dog park" deters residents from using park space. These examples are part of an overall design to control the use of space in River Garden. Throughout this chapter, I identify four practices that are instrumental in dictating how space is used in River Garden - territoriality; social control/ spatial design; gated communities; and smoke and mirrors. These practices, some strategic and some unintentional, equate to diminished social space in which cross-tenure interaction could occur in the neighborhood. To further illustrate the production of social space, I demonstrate how the aforementioned practices are played out in the specific spaces of the stoops of the row home units in Phase II, Boettner Park, the backyards of homeowners, elevators in the mid-rise buildings, and HRI events. These spaces are indicative of neighbor interaction in River Garden and help illuminate opportunities and barriers for within- and cross-tenure interaction. Throughout these spaces, I also tease out the mechanisms of social networks, routines, and institutions as described in neighborhood effects literature.

Given the diminished social space in River Garden, residents claim other spaces as places to socialize. The neighborhood Walmart not only promotes within-tenure interaction but also enables cross-tenure interaction. I conclude the chapter by signifying Walmart's role in the neighborhood and presenting another factor that has had a significant impact on the level of activity within the neighborhood - crime. Some residents admit to being afraid of being victimized and they choose to stay within the confines of their units. I discuss the crime situation in River Garden as a matter outside of management's control and how it has a bearing on neighborhood dynamics in River Garden.

Territoriality

Sack's theory of territoriality explains the concept as an "attempt by an individual or a group (x) to influence, affect, or control objects, people, and relationships (y) by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area. This area is the territory" (Sack 1983, 56). In River Garden, both the stoops and Boettner Park have become spatialized territories.

On St. Thomas Street, row homes provide anchorage for concrete stoops sheltered by second-floor balconies. On several of the stoops, women, with a splattering of men, are seated on steps and in chairs that have been positioned for optimal views of neighborhood activity. The stoops and balconies provide orchestra and mezzanine seating for the ongoing street theater (see Photo 6). Today's cast includes a young mother pushing a stroller, a group of teen boys, several dog walkers, and an intermittent parade of cars that seem to be competing in a booming bass contest. The women on

the stoops are very comfortable with each other. They joke, laugh, and gossip. They agree and they disagree.

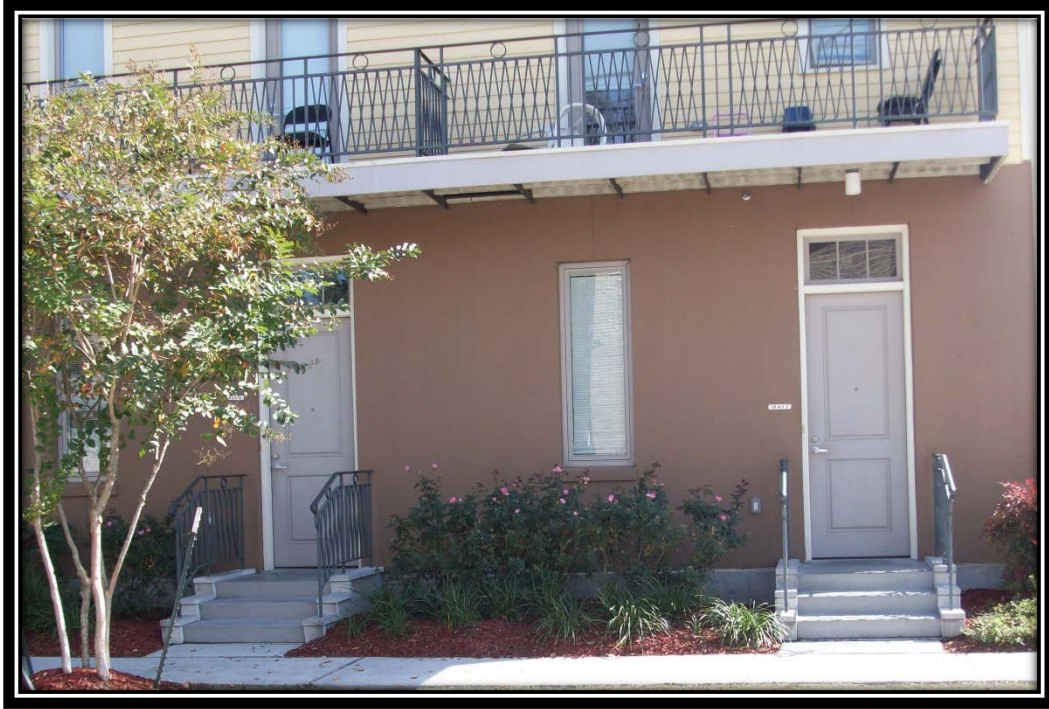


Photo 6: "Orchestra and mezzanine" seating on stoops and balconies of River Garden row home apartment units.

On a daily basis, former residents (x) gather in two's and three's to continue the previous day's conversation in front of their units either seated on the steps of their stoops or on chairs situated on their porches and balconies. They speak of shared experiences and people they know in common. They were displaced twice – first, by the demolition of St. Thomas and then by the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. They share unspoken glances that can only be interpreted by members of their network. Passersby note that "they all know each other" and take that as a cue that they are "outsiders" who would not fit into the group. Although not necessarily deliberate, networks of former

residents exclude newer residents (y) from joining them on their stoops to join in their conversations and establish new relationships.

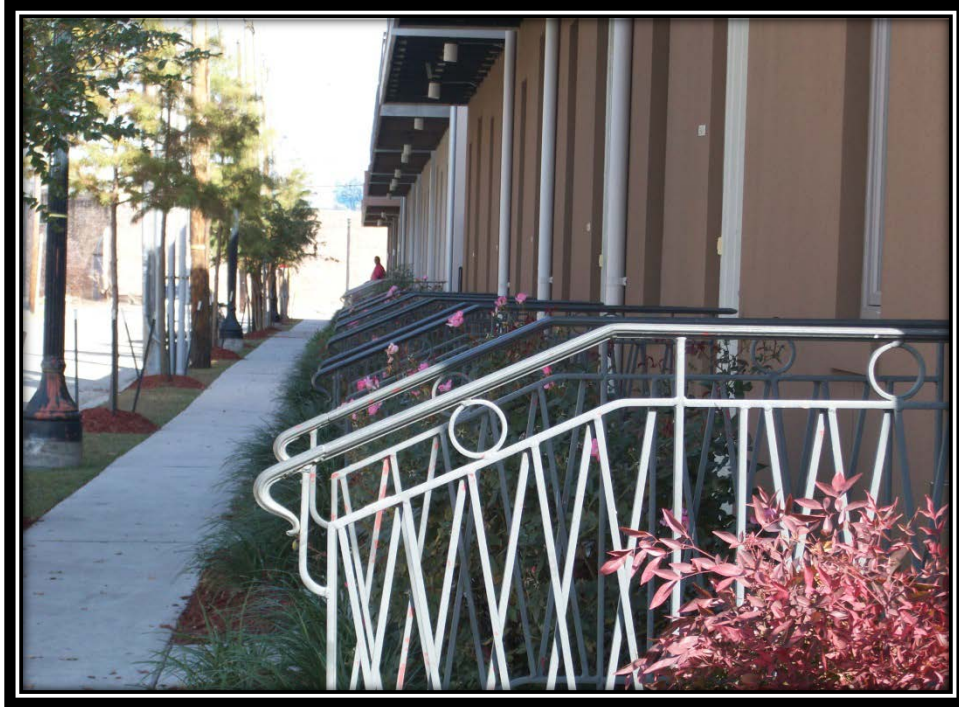


Photo 7: Row home apartment units on St. Thomas Street provide stoops for people-watching and chatting.¹⁸

As former tenants of St. Thomas, these residents share strong social ties. They head up social networks comprised of relatives, long-time friends, and friends of friends. They watched each other's children grow up and those children now have children of their own. Younger former residents spoke of having played with their peers as toddlers and as school mates.

Everybody is still around here. Actually St. Thomas where I was born so mostly everybody know everybody. They grew up together.

¹⁸ Note that pictures do not include people for two reasons: 1) on many days, River Garden was quiet and absent of people outside; and 2) because former residents did not want to be photographed. They feared that the researcher would share information with HRI and their participation would create additional tension between them and management.

Residents on one end of Stoop Row are talking about the weather, the “happenings” from the day before, the “stories,” the evictions, the old friends that they have run into lately, and the new people who have moved in. A group of men on the other end are talking about the Saints, the Hornets, and “getting a gig.”

We talk like about five or ten minutes, or talk about sports or most of the time we’re talking about a job situation. New Orleans, it’s kind of hard out here.

Conversations are light yet laced with the seriousness of being poor in a city where jobs are scarce for high school dropouts with criminal records as is the case for this respondent. Although residents may not always have solutions for their neighbors’ situations, they provide an ear and chime in with reassuring “uhn huhns” as their friends vent. A part of their bond stems from the desire to create some semblance of neighborhood life of which they can actively participate. (Hayden 1997). In River Garden, neighborhood life entails helping each other pass the time (see Photo 7 for picture of Stoop Row).

Social networks, in the form of strong ties among former residents, were just as prevalent in River Garden as in other HOPE VI sites (Chaskin and Joseph 2010; Tach 2009). These are the very same social networks that critics of HOPE VI feared would be broken during the displacement of public housing residents. Social networks are particularly important for poorer families because of the social capital inherent within them. Logan and Molotch (2007) explain social networks as the sources of use value that is derived from the neighborhood. Neighbors provide in-kind services in the form of watching each other’s children, sharing meals, providing each other with transportation,

or just emotional support. These strong ties provide poorer residents with needed support that would not otherwise be available to them.

The strong ties among former residents are counterproductive to incorporating newer residents into existing networks. Newer residents initially want to engage with their former resident neighbors but feel excluded. This is particularly felt by sub-payers who are not former St. Thomas residents. Because they are not as familiar with neighbors, they describe the neighborhood as being “clique-ish” and equated the feeling to being “left out.” For residents who do not possess outgoing personalities, penetrating these existing bonds seem insurmountable.

I don't consider this as my neighborhood because I don't know nobody like that, so I just feel like this is just where I stay. This is not my neighborhood because I don't know, you know, in your neighborhood you have friends.

These newer residents resort to isolating themselves and have not developed strong ties within the neighborhood. They express some weak tie activity with former residents but not to the point that would allow them to benefit from social networks that provide “survival” services to each other. Newer subsidized residents have also established weak ties among renters who live next to them.

In the process of territorializing the stoops while strengthening their existing social ties, former residents have the opportunity to develop weak ties as they encounter renters who are coming in or leaving their units. The social space created by the routine of stoop sitting as renters engage in their routines allows for cross-tenure interaction between former residents and renters. These are typically “hi and bye”

exchanges that are cordial but fleeting and characteristic of weak ties. Weaker social ties are typically heterogeneous and are of value because of the connections to other social systems offering multiple access points for flows of information (Ibarra 1993; Granovetter 1973). In neighborhoods such as River Garden, weak ties are desirable in that potential job leads and resourceful information could come through a succession of weak ties.

According to my respondents, there had only been a couple of instances where weak ties had materialized into exchanges of helpful information, which is an important goal with respect to neighborhood effects. One former resident spoke of her market-rate neighbor who informed her of a position at her place of employment and “even got up and brought [the resident] to her job to fill out an application.” At least one renter mentioned knowing all of his surrounding neighbors and knowing what they did for a living. He admitted that his motivation for getting to know his neighbors was to figure out how he could get connected to a better job opportunity due to his dissatisfaction with his current situation. Of forty-five respondents, only two indicated the use of weak ties for job information, meaning nearly 5% of my sample population learned of jobs this way. Creating more opportunities for cross-tenure interaction could increase the potential for forming weak ties across housing tenure, however, individual motivation would dictate to what extent neighbors were willing to engage with neighbors beyond courteous greetings.

Stoop sitting and conversations of exclusion by former residents represent the spatial practices that territorialize stoops as former residents’ space. Although attempts to control this space by management curtail some of the stoop activity, it is still space

that former residents can claim as their territory. The other group of renters that stoop sitters encounter are dog walkers. The presence of dogs presents dual outcomes. Dogs serve as mechanisms for meeting people but they are also representative of newer neighbors who move into the neighborhood and territorialize dog walking spaces as their own (McNicholas and Collis 2000; Tissot 2011).

When dog owners come out, they cross the paths of other dog walkers, leisure strollers, children playing, and former residents sitting on stoops. The dogs serve as icebreakers creating opportunities for neighbors to speak to each other. Residents credit their dogs as being instrumental in meeting some of their neighbors:

Q: When you think about the other friends that you've made, is there something in common?

A: Yeah. The dog; they have dogs almost all of them but it's actually very funny because I have met almost everybody in my building that has a dog.

They'll be like, "Oh, that's such a beautiful dog," and right whenever they show any interest in her, she's like, hey and kind of shows interest in them too. And there are a lot of people that have dogs so whenever I'm walking her in the dog park, which is really good, I get to start conversation that way.

Renters are the predominant owners of dogs meaning that the routine of dog walking served to bring renters out around the park. They encounter residents of different housing tenure as they walk along the one side of the park adjacent to row

home units. For some, frequent encounters with the same residents develop into a comfortable familiarity and light exchanges become the norm. For Highrise renters who own dogs but are not necessarily social butterflies, dog walking was one way to get out and meet neighbors including former residents and other renters with whom they would otherwise have limited contact.

Right on the park right in here are some people I always say
hello to and see oh and there's some down this street too
because I walk my dog a lot and I've seen a couple of
people more than once and I know their dogs' names.

Although dog owners enjoy the availability of the park as a destination for their dogs, the park represented contested space. The opportunity for the park to become the territory of dog walkers and their dogs is facilitated by management's desire to control the space. Without any amenities of the space, dog walkers become the predominant users of the park. As such, Boettner Park represents another space that has been territorialized in River Garden. Controversy over the use of the park has pitted former residents against management; however, it is renters' routine of walking dogs (x) through the park that has distinguished it as space for dog walkers and their dogs. The constant practice of circling the park has created an expectancy that dogs are going to be walked around the park. This visual and expectancy have marked the park as dog territory. As evidence of the effect that daily dog walking has created, several respondents (y) alluded to the presence of a "dog park" sign which does not exist. Former residents who have been vying for the use of the park as play space for their children accept that Boettner Park is a dog park and have instructed their kids not to play in the park for fear of tracking in dog matter.

Social Control / Spatial Design

Former residents, in particular, resented the idea that the largest green space in the community was mostly utilized by renters who owned dogs (see Photo 8). At nearly three acres, Boettner Park provides an ideal setting for neighborhood gatherings and child play yet there are no swings, slides, or sandboxes, “nowhere to play a game of football” or soccer because of the hills, “no grills, picnic tables,” or even one bench.



Photo 6: Boettner Park, also known as the "dog park"; River Garden homes in background.

Almost as if scripted, every former resident that I interviewed mentioned their disappointment and frustration over how space was used in Boettner Park. They were told that River Garden would include play space for children, but such space has not been developed. Upon concluding that community amenities were not designed for families with children, former residents perceive HRI as being insensitive to their

circumstances. A few respondents were in agreement about River Garden having made commitments to include playground equipment in the park and questioned why management seemingly chose dogs over children. As such, Boettner Park is a point of contention for many residents. Former residents, in particular, accuse HRI of being biased towards market-rate residents.

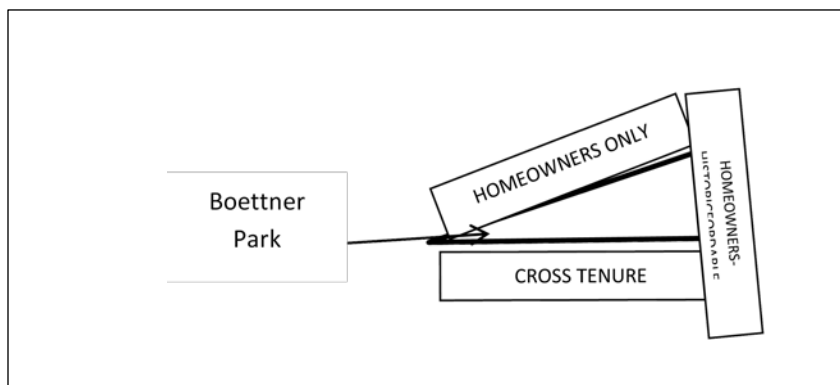


Figure 5: Housing tenure surrounding Boettner Park.

The spatial layout of housing tenure around the park explains the lack of amenities. With the exception of cross-tenure housing along the south side of the park, single-family homes create an entire perimeter around the park (see Figure 5). The park serves as frontage for these homes and homeowners have protested against installing any playground equipment or seating that would attract their neighbors to the park. Thus Boettner Park is underutilized while children have no dedicated play areas within River Garden. Instead, children of former residents play in the streets and in parking lots in danger of being hit by cars.

Other than empty Boettner Park and a small community room located in the Historic Apartments, River Garden does not contain community space available to all residents. Laundry machines are within self-contained units, thereby negating the need

for a common laundry facility, and as previously mentioned, there are no play areas or picnic areas for families to gather. Across town at the newly redeveloped Magnolia (now Harmony Oaks) and St. Bernard Projects (now Columbia Parc), the community space was quite the opposite of River Garden's landscape. Responding to the question about cross-tenure interaction, a homeowner shared the same concerns as former residents with regard to community activities.

If you look at other places like Columbia Parc, it's actually a community where there are things there that facilitate interaction. There's a community gym. There's a community pool. There's a community computer lab. There's, you know what I mean? There's a community movie theater.

Other homeowners chimed in similar sentiments regarding the need for community amenities. However, according to HRI CEO, Pres Kabacoff, homeowners lobbied against a playground and park benches. Kabacoff explained that homeowners were fearful of the spillover from kids playing across the street. A playground would bring more people into their vicinity – people who would come “rob their homes.” Kabacoff did “not think it was a good decision but that's what happens.”



Photo 9: Boettner Park was predictably empty, even with picture-perfect weather.

Kabacoff and homeowners are clearly exerting social control measures to minimize socializing in common space and since stoop sitting also creates spillover effects, an informal “stoop policy” governs residents’ abilities to socialize in front of their homes. Respondents reported that management employees ride through the neighborhood to monitor the amount of activity in front of the units. HRI is aided by NOPD (New Orleans Police Department) who provide additional surveillance of the neighborhood with instructions to break up gatherings of loiterers. According to residents, written warnings are issued as a result of having too many individuals on one’s stoop or porch. I learned from HRI’s compliance manager that porch gatherings are handled the same way by which HRI handles noise complaints. Given HRI’s policy to evict based on ongoing occurrences of excessive traffic or noise, the stoop

monitoring practice is intimidating for some residents and perceived as HRI's preference to accommodate market-rate residents who they assume are the reason for HRI's insistence on controlling their behavior. Kabacoff admitted that controls had to be put in place in order to maintain the kind of balance needed to retain market-rate residents.

Kabacoff's assertion about controlling common space coincides with the absence of amenities that could potentially bring residents together. Herein lies a huge conflict of interest for a private developer charged with providing a "decent home" for both government-subsidized and market-rate residents. Not surprisingly, Kabacoff has chosen to appease his investors and payers at the expense of the livelihood and safety of former residents and their children.

Gated Communities

Gated communities bring to mind exclusive neighborhoods, suburban subdivisions, and luxury condominium or apartment highrise buildings staffed with security guards. The common feature is that outsiders are kept outside while those who live within the gates are kept at ease by the idea of feeling safe from intruders. In River Garden, certain areas of the development serve this same purpose. In the section of single-family homes, front gates and backyard fences deter trespassers. Visitors must let themselves in through the closed entry gates that lead to front porches. At the edges of River Garden, the doors to the two mid-rise buildings remain locked and require a key fob for entry. Guests must announce themselves in order to be buzzed in through a networked phone system. These practices designate insiders as members who meet certain rules and utilize mechanisms that control people by controlling access to space.

Pow (2009) identifies these practices as indicators of gated communities. Homeowners are members of an exclusive club of individuals, mostly with household incomes of \$75,000 per year with advanced degrees, cars, dogs, and spouses. With very few exceptions, renters who live in The Highrises are working-class and middle-class residents who pay market-rate rent. They are mostly college-educated and single with no children.

On one particular day of observation, I stationed myself on the couch of The Highrise lobby, which provided a perfect view of the steel-colored elevator. A chair to my left and right reminded me of the furnishings of a swanky warehouse loft I once visited. An HRI leasing agent walked a couple into the building and explained, “This is your lobby and here is where you will pick up your mail.” The elevator ‘ding’ signaled the elevator’s ascent to the quiet third floor where they would see a unit suited for the urban professional seeking a well-laid out, open but intimate space perfect for entertaining a handful of friends, particularly if it was a unit with a balcony with views of the Mississippi River.

The buildings are four-floors high so at least two floors of residents are utilizing the elevator. According to residents, if it were not for elevator lobbies, they would not know the faces of their neighbors, particularly on other floors. As I continue to observe the elevator action, I see renters coming in from the gym as others are exiting with dogs or briefcases. Exchanges vary in length depending upon how quickly one has to reach his or her destination. One respondent claimed the elevator as “probably the most social part of the building.” Riding on the elevator with her dog was the reason that one

respondent indicated knowing most of the people in the building. The elevator lobby served as the meeting point for members of this particular gated community.

Highrise renters mostly know each other by face with some instances of having exchanged names. When they do chat, discussions are kept at surface levels. They ponder neighborhood activities that have garnered police activity, they talk about the back exit which does not lock how it is supposed to lock, and they discuss the last power outage that the building experienced. With the exception of two renters, respondents who lived in the mid-rise building did not express the desire to mingle with their neighbors beyond the elevator chats. While elevator riding did lend to the establishment of social ties, these ties were only among residents of the same housing tenure and socializing was controlled. The unwritten code of The Highrises is that visitors are not unannounced – even if visitors live in the building meaning that neighbors do not knock on each other's doors without invitation. Essentially, the Highrise dwellers are not going to be surprised by insiders nor infiltrated by outsiders. When the gating system is compromised, Highrise renters use forms of informal social control to keep their space exclusive. Renters who broke the code by holding the main door open to allow visitors into the building were met with hard stares from their neighbors. Highrise renters experienced living in a gated community that effectively segregated them from residents of other housing tenure while also minimizing their contact with other Highrise renters who they only encountered by happenstance.

The same kind of within-tenure interaction was evident in the area where homeowners resided except that interaction was more intense in nature. Homes are clustered within a central area of River Garden, mostly alongside the park. When

homeowners first moved into the development, they could easily speak to each other from their backyards. They had sizeable lots that were open to the lots of other homes. The lots combined to form a park-like setting. Backyards were where many homeowners had their first encounters as neighbors which evolved into more socializing.

There is no fence around my property or the property behind me or the one next to me and so I see those neighbors a lot more because when they come home or on the weekend when they're doing lawn work and stuff like that we say hello. We chat. Sometimes we sit down and just talk about life and stuff.

Backyard exchanges abruptly ended as homeowners began erecting fences to protect their properties from intruders who were creating routes through their backyards as shortcuts to get to the Phase II side of the development (see Photo 10). Homeowners later realized that they created physical barriers to neighbor interaction which possibly explains why newer homeowners seemingly “keep to themselves” more so than the first wave of homeowners who lived fence-free for several years:

I was really disappointed to see that some of the neighbors put up fences because right away the conversation ended.



Photo 10: In the process of fencing others out, homeowners have fenced off communication with neighbors via backyards.

Homeowners in their backyards, with or without fences, are symbolic of the exclusivity that was designed into the development to attract buyers. The homes that offered the most exclusivity were reportedly “the first to go.” Homeowners are interested in socializing with their peers but only in uncontested space. Backyards provided such a safe haven until lower-income neighbors discovered shortcuts through homeowners’ yards thus turning backyards into contested space. Contested space is occupied by poor neighbors and serve as constant reminders of why property values remain depressed. Contested space also includes would-be burglars and intruders. Fences symbolized the barriers and social control measures that homeowners consistently exerted in their struggle to preserve their space from contesters. If homeowners are willing to barricade themselves from communicating with each other, they certainly are not expected to participate in cross-tenure interaction. This, however, was not the case for all homeowners. Those who were willing to buy properties on the fringes in close

proximity to rental housing knew that cross-tenure interaction was likely and they cordially participated. These homeowners tended to lean more towards the selective residents category described in the next chapter.

The gated communities provide the setting for safe communication for members who live in the space. The “gateness” of these sections of the development also decrease opportunities for cross-interaction, but cross-tenure interaction does not seem to have been a priority for planners and developers.

Smoke and Mirrors

HRI, the company that provides property management of River Garden, provides services and resources, and plans events that give the appearance that an effort is being made to bring residents together several times throughout the year. A community newsletter is produced monthly and provides policy reinforcement such as reminders about parking and trash and also includes an event calendar detailing activities in and around the city. During my eight-month tenure at River Garden, I did not learn of any River Garden-sponsored events via the newsletter. The newsletter repeatedly included a calendar of events that were city-sponsored events rather than River Garden events (see Figure 6). Even in perfect weather months like May, events for the community were not planned; however, I did not receive the newsletter listing April’s events and I learned from several respondents that I missed out on the Easter event.¹⁹

¹⁹ This is likely because I moved within the development during the time that I would have received the newsletter.

Over the course of the past two years, HRI sponsored a Christmas Give-Away, Dog-Costume Parade, Mardi Gras Door-Decorating Contest, and a canned-food drive. HRI also partnered with the New Orleans Police Department to sponsor a Night Out Against Crime in which residents, police, and community officials walked throughout the River Garden community and knocked on doors to meet neighbors. Respondents were aware of most activities and participated in a few. Consistent with the findings of previous HOPE VI studies, events were mostly attended by former and sub-paying residents (Chaskin and Joseph 2010; Tach 2009). Crime Night Out did not attract much participation from former and sub-paying residents but did recruit a couple of renters willing to march through the neighborhood. One resident asserts that it was because of his participation in Crime Night Out that many of his neighbors recognize and wave at him whenever he walks through the neighborhood. The Dog-Costume Parade also attracted renters, who are the predominant owners of dogs in River Garden.






May 2011						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival	2 NOMA View 20th Century Photographs of Louisiana www.noma.org	3 Bob Seger Enjoy a Great Performance at the New Orleans Arena 7:30 pm 587-3822	4 	5 Happy Cinco De Mayo	6 New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival	7 New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival
8  Mother's Day	9 Have a Manicure at Pinky's Nail Salon	10 Take a Stroll Along St. Charles Ave.	11 Wind Down Visit the Carousel Bar at the Hotel Monteleone 8pm-10pm	12 Twilight Enjoy Jazz and Classical Music at New Orleans Botanical Garden 5pm-8pm	13 French Quarter Martinelli Winery Reception 7pm 648-6113	14 New Orleans Classic Auto Festival
15 Steam Fest www.lasta.org	16  National Bike to Work Day	17 Have an Iced Kula at Seattle's Best Coffee	18 Wind Down Visit the Carousel Bar at the Hotel Monteleone 8pm-10pm	19  Happy May Day	20 Enjoy the Mid-City Bayou Boogaloo	21 Enjoy the Mid-City Bayou Boogaloo
22 Enjoy the Mid-City Bayou Boogaloo	23 Start Stop Smoking Today...	24 Enjoy a Manicure at Pinky Nail Salon.	25 Seattle's Best Enjoy A Cup of Joe	26 See a May Pole Celebration	27 Then & Now Visit Contemporary Arts Center to view past and present artwork of artists. 11am-4pm	28 New Orleans Food & Wine Experience 504-529-WINE
29 35th US President John F. Kennedy's Birth Anniversary (1917)	30 <u>Memorial Day</u> Office Closed	31 World No-Tobacco Day				

Figure 6: HRI's calendar of events is for activities outside of River Garden.

Residents have mixed feelings about HRI's events. The efforts are certainly recognized by renters but they believe the events are targeted for other audiences (e.g., Easter Bunny denoted families with children); they are not interested in the "handouts" that are typically associated with events (e.g., Christmas Give-Away); or they were unable to attend due to events commencing before the workday was over. Former and sub-paying residents attended events but generally walked away disappointed due to the items being given away (e.g., toys were expected but book bags were distributed at the Christmas Give-Away). Other former and sub-paying residents assert that events are a "front" and do not believe that HRI's "hearts are into it" because they are never personally invited to the events when they visit the office, they are not "treated right," and they are being "talked about" by HRI staff.

The fact that events have been attended by groups from all housing tenure indicates a willingness and interest on behalf of residents to participate in sponsored activities. Accordingly, HRI events have the potential to attract cross-tenure participation; however, because the events are specifically targeted for segmented audiences, within-tenure interaction is encouraged rather than cross-tenure interaction. The ongoing tension between HRI and former residents further diminishes interest in community events.

Save Money. Mingle Better.

River Garden has successfully created a space that is more conducive to the demands of market-rate residents. The neighborhood is far from being consistently noisy and on most days, it is quiet. The social control measures that have been exerted on residents have not necessarily totally thwarted social interaction but instead has pushed socializing into the space offered by the neighborhood's superstore. Walmart sits adjacent to River Garden and was almost event-like each time that I visited. On the occasion that I went to the store on the Friday before Mardi Gras weekend, there was a thick line at McDonald's and even thicker lines at checkout. A lot of "catching up" was going on in a few aisles and especially in the meat section where there is more open space. Shoppers were in pre-revelry moods as they stocked up on king cake, red beans and rice, and hot dogs. I had to be strategic about my shopping route in order to avoid aisles gridlocked with parked baskets and mini-reunions. It took me forever to get out of the store that day because it seemed like everyone in line wanted to have a conversation with my cashier, who happened to be a resident that I recognized from having seen her sitting on her porch a few times. This sort of phenomenon occurred

frequently because of the 600 employees at Walmart, the majority were River Garden residents.

With a pharmacy, cell phone store, photo processing lab, portrait studio, hair salon, a Vision Center, fast food, and shelves containing approximately 142,000 items, Walmart is the epitome of one-stop shopping. It is walkable from every corner in River Garden and because residents are there so frequently, it is likely that shoppers run into the other residents who are shopping or socializing.

Q: How often do you go to Walmart?

M: I go most every day.

Q: Do you go every day because you really need stuff or because it's a place to socialize?

F: Be social.

As an illustration of the social significance of this particular neighborhood institution, Walmart, also colloquially known as 'Wally World' was the topic of a local bounce rapper's lyrical musing. His video, shot in the parking lot of River Garden's Walmart, went viral. He described Walmart as a place where lots of people converge, especially women, making it an ideal location for men to meet potential mates. Former residents utilized Walmart for the expressed purpose of socializing with other River Garden residents as well as high school classmates and former St. Thomas residents who did not move into the redeveloped River Garden.

And you just have Walmart that's over there - we get to see people who haven't moved back yet that we knew from back here so that makes it all good anyway.

By providing jobs to residents and attracting shoppers of all housing tenure, Walmart facilitates cross-tenure interaction.

I see my next door neighbor at Wal-Mart; I see her there and she works there. I love seeing her there.

...one of the neighbors actually works at Walmart so every time we go to the store and we're fortunate enough to check out in her lane it's like hey, what's going on. I haven't seen you in a while...We talk right there at the store.

Although some respondents expressed their preferences to avoid Walmart because of "all the people hanging out" or because of "long lines," most respondents appreciated the convenience of having Walmart in the neighborhood. One resident expressed the same sentiment that I held regarding Walmart's location, "I never realized I would like living next to a Walmart, but when you run out of stuff and just need something, you know it's there." For some residents, shopping was the goal but for others, Walmart was "yes, indeed for socializing."

Out of Control

As a resident of River Garden, I found myself juxtaposed in completely different environments. At times, the neighborhood was speckled with vitality on stoops where adults conversed, on corners where teens hung out, and on sidewalks where children played. Other times, River Garden was silent. Of course, my exact whereabouts had

some bearing on what I would see and hear at specific times, but there were certainly days when I walked through the neighborhood expecting to run into people and did not. As I spoke to respondents, I attempted to understand why neighborhood dynamics shifted in the manner I observed. I suspected that often times, the residents that I expected to see were at Walmart, which was consistent with what they told me in interviews when some admitted to going there at least five times a week and not always for any particular reason. However, another major factor also played a role in the disappearance of residents.

While Kabacoff is able to manage control of some common space, his efforts do not seem to have much bearing on the crime that has taken place in River Garden. Residents linked to criminal behavior are evicted on the spot but that does not mean that residents will not come back into the neighborhood to visit with friends and hang out. Kabacoff and NOPD are not able to ward off outsiders who have vendettas against current residents. This describes the circumstances surrounding the preponderance of violence that occurred in River Garden over the course of a five-month time span in 2011. Prior to 2011, the last fatal gunshot victim was 26-year old Edward Causey, an African American male who had been killed in broad daylight near Annunciation and St. Andrew Street in 2008. In 2011, three African American men were killed. The murders of Keith Berry, Louis Cook, and Antonie Martin were acknowledged by the majority of respondents (see Photo 11). The fact that a three-month old baby was grazed by a bullet during the shooting that targeted Mr. Cook was particularly unnerving for respondents.

I'd never seen a body bagged before. The drive by and the first shooting happened within a few weeks of each other, and then there was a random gun fight in the middle of the street which apparently nobody got shot coincidentally, but I think that's been my biggest issue with the community. And it is what it is. It is New Orleans...I didn't think it was going to be a factor when I moved in, outside of normal New Orleans violence.

The topic of crime in River Garden was mentioned by the majority of respondents. Some residents mentioned crime because it was frightening; some talked about how disturbing it was because they knew someone who had been victimized. In 2011, violent crimes plagued the entire city of New Orleans with 199 killings by the end of the year, surpassing the previous year's murder rate. While certain neighborhoods experienced more crime than others, River Garden was not one of them. From 2008 to 2011, there had been four murders in the St. Thomas Development neighborhood compared to Milan²⁰, an Uptown neighborhood where there had been 11 murders in the same time period.²¹ Still, there is a heightened sense of crime within River Garden and the perception that crime is more intense in the neighborhood than in "normal neighborhoods" means that many residents retreat and stay inside their homes or found reasons to be away from home.

²⁰ Milan is a neighborhood in Uptown. Milan is twice as large as the St. Thomas Development neighborhood but the point is made to illustrate that crime is not necessarily more prevalent in River Garden.

²¹ From New Orleans Interactive Murder Map, 2008 – 2011. Accessed at <https://www.google.com/fusiontables/embedviz?viz=MAP&q=select+col9+from+2530486+&h=false&lat=29.97132496934466&lng=-90.05600097312009&z=13&t=4&l=col9>



Photo 7: A cross marks the location where Louis Cook was gunned down in broad daylight

In addition to the fatal shootings, residents had heard about, witnessed, or experienced other crimes such as “boys kicking in doors and carrying off 50-inch TVs,” a “mob attacking a resident at 5:00 in the morning,” “drug deals going on all up and through River Garden,” and the ability to get “any kind of drug you need – weed, pills, and crack.” Other reported disturbances in River Garden included heated arguments among neighbors, name-calling, disputes between couples, yelling at children, and “loud-talking.” A case of domestic violence ending in the fatal shooting of a man was anecdotally shared by respondents as well as admissions about calling the police on several occasions due to concerns over shouting matches.

The perception that there was a lot of crime in the area prompted residents to question whether or not they should continue to live in River Garden. In the interim, they chose to withdraw from the neighborhood and avoid interaction with neighbors.

Previous studies confirm the correlation between crime, or the perception of crime, and levels of neighborhood satisfaction (Woldoff 2002), neighborhood detachment (Sampson 1991), and increased residential turnover (Dugan 1999). Respondents in my study spoke to those same issues and remaining residents theorized that the high renter turnover in River Garden was due to crime. “People come and go” was speculated by residents to be the result of “all the killings and going ons.” Another resident commented about the “market rate people back here. They’re moving out because this community, well it looks good on the outside but it ain’t too good inside.”

For whatever other reasons residents were moving out of River Garden, respondents consistently mentioned resident turnover. “They come and go so much, they never stay there for long and when you meet them, somebody else stay there like a week later.” A Highrise renter who lived in River Garden for almost two years discussed her frustration surrounding trying to make friends with neighbors. She recounted the story of how she rode the elevator up with a “really nice lady” and upon exiting the elevator together they realized that they lived right next door to each other. She saw and greeted her newfound neighbor a few days after that first encounter. Two weeks later, her neighbor’s furniture was being carried out, “They move so often,” lamented the respondent. A number of residents conveyed that they did not have the same set of neighbors they had when first moving into River Garden. The consistent interruption of neighbor relations due to short timeframes was also prevalent in the HOPE VI communities studied by Chaskin and Joseph (2011).

Summary

This chapter explores the potential for interaction and cross-tenure interaction via mechanisms and also discusses how social space is diminished through several practices. On most days, River Garden is a vibrant, social neighborhood, particularly because many former residents are home during the day keeping each other company. Analyzing their interaction along with cross-tenure interaction via neighborhood mechanisms provides insight toward understanding the roles and effectiveness of social networks, land use patterns (routines), and institutions. Daily or even weekly routines have the potential to facilitate within- and cross-tenure interaction by bringing residents together in the same space on a frequent basis. The daily routine of sitting on stoops is one of the mechanisms that fosters interaction among social networks of former residents while dog walking brings about cross-tenure interaction as renters cross the paths of former residents. Dogs serve as ice-breakers for conversation and even if the interaction is minimal, dog walking creates an avenue for exchange that may not have otherwise occurred (McNicholas and Collis 2000).

Walmart is frequented by residents across housing tenure and facilitates open social interaction. Renters utilize Walmart for products and services while former residents utilize Walmart as their one-stop venue for shopping and socializing. For lack of a community gathering site, former residents routinely visit the store as a pastime with neighbors or they go with the intent of catching up with old friends who live outside of River Garden. Walmart also promotes cross-tenure interaction between shoppers and workers.

While these mechanisms support interaction within River Garden, other forces inhibit social space. The spatiality of River Garden strongly leans toward a space designed for market-rate tenants and homeowners. The practices of territoriality, social control/spatial design, gated communities, and smoke and mirrors further diminish social space that could be utilized for cross-tenure interaction. These practices effectively create segregated groups of residents who interact with residents of their same housing tenure. For example, newer sub-paying residents want to interact with the individuals with whom they have more in common; however, the spatialized territory of the stoops seems impenetrable and sub-payers have not been able to identify a mechanism to gain entrée into these existing networks, which could serve them primarily for use value and for the opportunity to receive information introduced into the network via both strong and weak ties. Boettner Park has been territorialized as the “dog park” and gated spaces such as River Garden’s homes and the mid-rise building exclude residents of different housing tenure from being in those spaces. The events sponsored by HRI are part of this theme of diminished social space because the events lack cross-tenure appeal and seem to be conducted just for the sake of being able to say that attempts were made to bring residents together.

Social control measures are tied to the spatial layout of the development which clearly points to safeguarding the prime real estate occupied by homeowners and renters in The Highrise. The lack of cross-tenure housing around the community’s largest common space and the absence of park amenities in Boettner Park, are indicative of the desire to limit opportunities for socializing.

Socializing, however, is what helps former residents “pass the day.” Their social space is dictated by HRI, who has to ensure that homeowners and renters are comfortable in their space and not turned off by the ongoing visual of people hanging out. In the meantime, the comfort level of former residents is compromised as their behavior is controlled by the threat of being evicted. Former residents feel the pressure from HRI and express that although they enjoy the newness of River Garden, they prefer the previous administration. What they miss is the freedom they had in their St. Thomas environment where managers were not concerned about appeasing a paying segment because such a segment did not exist.

Residents afraid to venture out into the neighborhood because of their fear of being victimized means there are fewer people with whom to socialize and the high turnover rates dissuade residents from meeting new neighbors because prior experiences informed them that the relationship would be short-lived.

In River Garden, the integration of higher-income neighbors forces the exertion of extra controls on former residents’ behavior and over time develops the expectation for a quiet neighborhood. Harvey (1997) disagrees with this strategy and contends that the exertion of social control and surveillance has the potential to produce social repression rather than facilitate social change. For now, social control measures have worked to reduce the amount of “hanging out” in the neighborhood and Boettner Park is predictably empty.

VI. THE NORMAL, DYSFUNCTIONAL, PROMISING NEIGHBORHOOD

The previous chapter discussed how specific mechanisms in River Garden converged to define the spatiality of the neighborhood. I concluded that although several mechanisms create opportunities for interaction, a number of practices control the sociability of space and inhibit residents' access to each other thus diminishing opportunities for cross-tenure interaction. However, if residents want to socialize with each other, certainly there are ways for them to get around these barriers. The prevailing question then is, *Do residents want to know their neighbors?*

Upon interviewing respondents, I concluded that while some River Garden residents are open to meeting new people, many of them have gotten to know the neighbors they want to know. In most cases, these are residents within the same housing tenure. Residents who did not know many of their neighbors were not making concerted efforts to get to know them. My attempt to understand both ends of this spectrum required an analysis of residents' responses to questions that revealed their perceptions of the neighborhood as well as their motivations to participate in neighboring activities. Upon analyzing those responses, I discovered two categories of residents and also realized that residents reached those categories from different origins. River Garden dwellers can be categorized as either *engaged* or *guarded* residents. Engaged residents are more likely to interact with neighbors and fully utilize space. They are individuals who either selectively chose to be in the neighborhood or moved into the neighborhood and experienced regrets. The latter group of engaged residents couched their regrets and decided to claim the neighborhood – mostly because moving out was either financially impossible or risky. Former residents and

sub-payers lack alternative housing options, renters are in legally-binding contracts, and homeowners would suffer financial loss if they were to sell their properties. The other category of River Garden dwellers are guarded residents. They are withdrawn from the neighborhood because after moving into River Garden, they experienced regrets, and do not have an interest in making claims on the neighborhood.

To simplify these categories, consider that the origins of residents depict a 'neighborhood of limited mobility' – those who feel that they cannot move out due to financial constraints - and a 'neighborhood of choice' – those who selectively chose to live in River Garden and are satisfied with their decision. Figure 7 illustrates the nomenclature of resident groups in River Garden. Also note the housing tenure associated with each category. Housing tenures are not absolute but represent the majority of respondents in these categories.

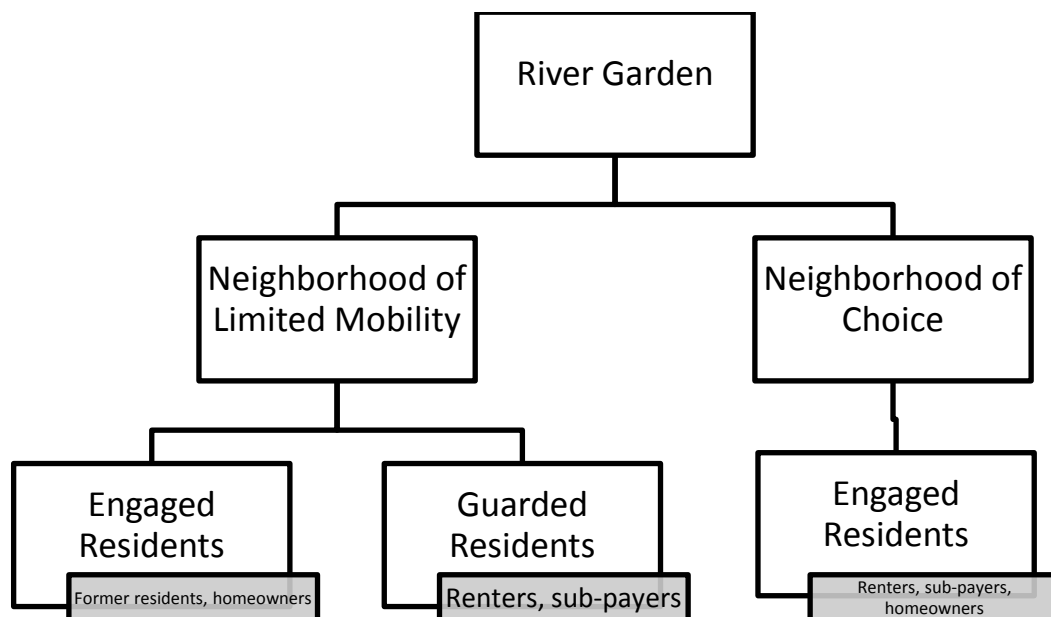


Figure 7: Types of residents and their origins

Whether residents in River Garden are experiencing the neighborhood by choice or because of limited mobility, the underlying premise of how they arrived at their comfort or discomfort with the neighborhood was based upon their perceptions of the space. The next section allows the reader to backtrack and discern how engaged residents arrived at their somewhat positive perceptions of the space and how guarded residents came to perceive the space more negatively. In describing these different perceptions, which are predominantly represented by specific housing tenure, my point is to demonstrate how many of the same circumstances are differently interpreted. Depending upon how residents interpreted their experiences in River Garden determined how they used and lived in the space. Engaged residents hold positive perceptions and those perceptions are correlated with fuller participation in the neighborhood while the negative perceptions held by guarded residents are linked to efforts to withdraw from the neighborhood and limit engagement with neighbors.

Engaged residents, those who selectively chose to be in the neighborhood and those who are making the best of their limited mobility situations, consistently demonstrate neighborhood attachment. I found that neighborhood attachment had a symbiotic relationship with neighbor interaction. The more attached residents became, the more they interacted and the more they interacted, the more attached they became to the neighborhood. This concept is good for the stability of the neighborhood because more social cohesion is experienced by residents who are more attached to the neighborhood (Brown, Perkins, and Brown 2003). In River Garden, neighborhood attachment is conceptualized as a demonstration of the willingness to develop social ties, exhibit passion for the neighborhood, and utilize open boundaries. As I describe

how engaged residents utilize the space, I include examples that illustrate how neighborhood attachment is demonstrated by the different residents in River Garden.

This chapter seeks to accomplish the task of explaining 1) residents' varying perceptions of River Garden; 2) the development of the engaged and guarded framework; 3) the characteristics of guarded residents who are in the neighborhood due to limited mobility; and 4) the characteristics of engaged residents who are in the neighborhood due to limited mobility. Also, the characteristics of residents by choice, those who freely elect to belong in the neighborhood, are presented in the next chapter. It is presented separately and along with other considerations of resident life for the purpose of shedding light on best practices that could be used for further research and eventual policy development.

Perceiving the space

Residents absorbed sights, symbols, and situations to form the basis of how they perceived the neighborhood. Residents observed a number of variables to make such determinations such as how much personal space and privacy they were afforded, how common space was utilized, and how people related to each other in those common spaces. Residents processed such stimuli as indications of everyday life or as sources of discomfort. Different perceptions of and reactions to the same stimuli were noted. For example, one resident characterized a group of teenage boys on the street corner as threatening, while another resident viewed it as the exhibiting of normal peer relations. Loud booming music from a passing car made one resident "bounce wit it" while another resident shook his head in the "tsk tsk" fashion. In yet another scene, a

male dog walker headed toward a female resident expected her to acknowledge him or his dog as so many other neighbors did but instead, she rolled her eyes and mouthed the words, “I can’t stand these damn mutts.”

Thus, the first departure among River Garden residents that I had to grapple with was the residents’ conceptualizations of normalcy, which required that I first adjust some of my own notions about what was normal versus abnormal. I first caught myself attaching my norms to the neighborhood upon witnessing residents walking through the neighborhood and making it clear that they were in a hurry or “minding [their own] business.” If eye contact was made, greetings were hurried, but often times, individuals walked by each other as if they were not visible to one another. The phenomenon struck me as being odd because we were in the South where everyone is friendly and according to my normative view of neighborhoods, it seemed unnatural not to acknowledge people in your own domain. This is when it occurred to me that I was using my own frame for what I thought was a normal neighborhood and that residents in River Garden may have possessed different views of normalcy. Certainly, they moved in with different expectations and these expectations and eventual perceptions created varying semblances to neighborhood normalcy depending upon their respective experiences before moving into River Garden.

For the most part, I found that perceptions of neighborhood activities varied and the lines of division were class-related. Depending upon their housing tenure, residents find the neighborhood to be normal, dysfunctional, or promising. Former residents perceive the neighborhood as normal, renters consider it dysfunctional, while homeowners believe the neighborhood is somewhat promising.

River Garden is normal

Former residents enjoy a vibrant space characterized by daily chats, kids playing, perpetual debates, lots of “kidding around,” heated arguments, and when things get really carried away...police intervention. Their expectations for how the day will play out are usually accurate because for former residents, each day is typically a replication of the day before. Loudness, laughter, “drama”, and “hanging out” with the same people every day was perceived as normal. Former residents did not feel bound by perceptions of what the neighborhood should be according to others; rather they have learned how to live within the constraints that shape their space. Neighborliness is facilitated by getting to know neighbors and creating trust by “watching out” for each other. The lived space for former residents is shaped by shared histories, shared circumstances, and shared social networks. Exchanges are typically of a pleasant nature and they enjoy each other’s company.

Every now and then, debates turn into arguments or neighbors greet each other with hostile words lingering from unresolved issues. When exchanges do become heated, it is not viewed as being dysfunctional, but rather part of “everyday life”. “Drama” was the word that respondents used to describe this space. Drama was the continuous “confrontations” that occurred between neighbors over parking spaces, loud music, and boyfriend/girlfriend situations. One respondent defined drama as “the shooting and the fighting and the fussing and the arguing and the loud talking.” For one respondent, the expectation for drama is part of her daily routine:

We usually wake up and look for a job, put on something, we go out, play with the kids, speak to the neighbors. It's also like you got to look around to see who's going to fight. I woke up this morning; they got a pile of people in the middle of the street fussing. So you got to wake up to that sometimes.

This expectation was also shared by another resident who indicated that if “you come outside, you guaranteed to see a crowd of people fighting...every day.” The expectation for drama was so strong for a former St. Thomas resident that he chose to stay inside and avoid neighbors as much as possible in his effort to not resort back to his “old ways,” which he felt would get him into trouble. Former residents are not immune to crime but their histories of having lived in crime-filled environments provide them with the necessary mechanisms to carry on daily routines without feeling compromised. For them, River Garden is perceived as a normal and almost predictable environment.

River Garden is dysfunctional

Renters and sub-payers do not perceive River Garden as a normal neighborhood. If it was normal, it would be more quiet, less active, and safer. Their neighbors would be more like them in terms of behavior, use of language, and respect for each other's privacy. These residents did not expect the noise, consistent foot traffic, or litter to be constant aspects of the neighborhood. They especially did not anticipate the shootings. Their notions stemmed from previously living in space produced by different manifestations of structure.

Renters and sub-payers had an idea of what was meant by “mixed-income community” and had an expectation for more “stuff to be going on” as compared to previous neighborhoods, but most came from outside the city of New Orleans and had never experienced living amongst as many poor neighbors. These residents are intermingled throughout most of River Garden and witness the “almost daily” exchanges described as “drama.” Some “didn’t know exactly what to expect as far as neighbors” and were surprised by the level of noise and the lack of “respect for privacy.”

Let me tell you something. What I’m not accustomed to -- I saw the people who lived there prior to it becoming River Garden, who have houses there now, sitting on the porch, sitting on my steps, sitting on the side of my house, by my front door, touching, pulling the plants...there was an opening near my side door and people would just come through and walk on the grass and that’s just a bit too close to me - the level of noise, litter, just a whole lot of people walking around...It’s honestly really -- it’s just not my type of neighborhood. A corner store, shootings, police all the time, it’s dangerous. Gunshots on another street, breaking glass, my glass in my car was broken...It’s not private and I pay too much money because I don’t pay Section 8 HUD rent. I pay rent.

The location of Walmart on the front side of the development means that River Garden residents walk through entire sections of the community to get to the store. Some paths are traveled more than others, particularly those streets that lead to the middle of Boettner Park where a sidewalk cuts through the park and leads to the Walmart parking lot. Walmart was blamed for the amount of people who walked

through the neighborhood, littered, and spread “rowdiness.” One respondent surmised that in a “*normal*” neighborhood, you wouldn’t have as much foot traffic.”

The common space through which “packs of teens” travel is shared by others who were “offended,” “annoyed,” or felt “threatened.” Their loud behavior is deemed as an invasion of their “quiet space” and the “gang-like” grouping was intimidating. The “crude behavior” saunters through River Garden along with other cultural norms that some residents find off-putting:

I just think sometimes you just don’t have the right type of people in the neighborhood so it creates a problem. You hear a lot of foul language from people walking. It’s just so commonplace and to me it’s just a turn off.

I mean, people walking down the street screaming ‘fuck you’ to their friends and I know it’s they’re not fighting but it’s just not what I’m accustomed to. Especially after being in the burbs.

In addition to the constant activity in the neighborhood, an overwhelming disappointment among residents in this group concerns the amount of trash seen along common areas and in front yards. Residents expected that their neighborhood would be well-maintained and expressed frustration about how “trashy” the neighborhood was. They are “tired of picking up the trash.”

Every morning when I leave this building, maintenance is cleaning up the parking lot, every single morning, and that’s what’s frustrating. Just because I know I’m paying my rent, and I know some people may have vouchers or Section 8 or

whatever it is here...if the maintenance didn't clean it up every day, it probably would be a lot dirtier, and I would not be staying here... It's just people don't respect their front yards in their neighborhoods. I mean, this has nothing to do with, you know, that clientele or the people that are here that are Section 8.

This respondent has made some assumptions about who is doing the littering and has provided commentary about the lack of respect exhibited by subsidized residents. Learning that they paid more money for rent than their neighbors was disconcerting for renters who did not realize that they were moving into a mixed-income development where they would be paying up to eight times as much as their neighbors. Once they learned that they were part of a "social experiment", they questioned why planners would think that it would actually work. They accused their neighbors of not wanting "to get out of the projects." At face value, their neighbors are able to "hang out" because they are not making efforts to get ahead. They are poor because they wanted to be poor. The habits of poor people, trashiness, "rowdiness" and invasion of personal space are perceived as personal offenses and the neighborhood is "dysfunctional."

River Garden is promising

Homeowners agree that the neighborhood is somewhat predictable but are not convinced that it has achieved normalcy. Their ability to trace the neighborhood's history offered them the satisfaction of knowing that the neighborhood is dramatically changing. Although River Garden is "not perfect" now, the redevelopment of St. Thomas represents a very different neighborhood than what existed prior to demolition in 2001. River Garden is now less dense, more racially diverse, less impoverished, and Walmart

as an economic anchor has brought jobs and convenience to the neighborhood. For homeowners, staying focused on the momentum of neighborhood change is what keeps them optimistic about the neighborhood.

While homeowners admit the neighborhood is “risky,” they are hopeful about it “turning around.” They chalk up crime in the neighborhood as the “New Orleans tax” that yields “fabulous things about living here that are extremely unique” at the expense of potentially being burglarized. One homeowner felt “pretty good about the neighborhood as long as there aren’t drug deals being done right in front of my house.” They “knew what [they] were getting into and actually found it interesting what the community is trying to solve for.” They also expected that “it was going to be a long term engagement” considering the goal to break “a cycle of poverty and [address] some pretty persistent social problems.”

Clearly, residents possess divergent perceptions of the space and as such, they are differently motivated to meet neighbors and utilize the neighborhood. The different uses of space were not only observed but were also depicted on respondents’ mental maps.

Using The Space: Guarded and Engaged Residents

The mental maps drawn by residents were instrumental in deciphering how residents negotiated space in River Garden. My initial analysis of these maps led to the realization that I was observing three distinct groups of neighbors. Recall the groupings based upon the analysis presented in Chapter 3 (see Table 6):

General Group Characteristics of Mental Maps			
	Group I	Group II	Group III
Boundaries	River Garden/Global	Block/Local/Other	Global
Number of social ties	7+	3 or less	4 – 6
Social ties plotting	Clustered/Scattered	Isolated	Clustered

Table 6: Mental maps analysis by group characteristics

In tying together the mental maps analysis and my realization about divergent neighborhood perceptions, I found an important pattern. Residents in Group I (mostly former residents) and Group III (homeowners) had more open boundaries and more social ties and as previously indicated, their perceptions of the neighborhood were more positive than negative – neighborhood perceptions were normal or at least promising. Contrarily, the residents who made up Group II (a mixture of sub-payers and renters) restricted their use of the neighborhood, had fewer social ties, and considered the neighborhood to be dysfunctional. In essence, residents' perceptions of the space dictated how they lived in the space (Lefebvre 1991). My next step was to further exploit this finding.

When considering perceptions, motivation, and individual processes, I found River Garden residents to either be *engaged* or *guarded*. Upon additional analysis of maps and coded excerpts, I was able to further characterize the two groups of residents as indicated in Table 7, but found it necessary to distinguish the subgroups of engaged residents by housing tenure due to several particularities that set them apart from each other.

	ENGAGED RESIDENTS		GUARDED RESIDENTS
Who?	All former residents, some subsidized and market-rate residents	Homeowners	Market-rate and subsidized residents
Boundaries	Experiential	Physical	Temporal
Perception of Neighborhood	Normal	Will be normal	Dysfunctional
Neighbor Interaction	Open interaction within domain, open to interaction with other domains	Selective interaction inside and outside domain	Limited interaction within domain, strained interaction outside domain

Table 7: Attributes of engaged and guarded residents.

Table 8 indicates the housing tenure breakdown of the 37 mental maps and linked codes that were analyzed and grouped.

	Engaged	Engaged, but Guarded	Guarded
Former Residents	6		
Sub-payers	8		5
Renters	3	2 ²²	7
Homeowners	6		

Table 8: Housing tenure of engaged and guarded residents

²² Two residents did not fit exactly into either the engaged or guarded groups. These residents indicated 5 social ties clustered at the site of the mid-rise building, however, their comfort zones were at least the size of River Garden. The low number of contacts combined with the larger comfort zones was inconsistent with criteria for either groups. This is explained by both respondents being social with residents who reside inside of secured mid-rise buildings while expressing prejudices about neighbors who live outside of the building. One resident gets out of the building to jog and walk the dog; the other resident gets out of the building to monitor a teenage son who engages with other teens in the neighborhood.

Guarded residents

The motivation to meet neighbors and get out into the neighborhood was lacking for residents in this group. The mental maps of guarded residents were coded as block, local, or other. Nine of the eleven residents in this group reported having three or fewer social contacts. Two guarded residents indicated six or more contacts due to their previous tenure as St. Thomas residents. Social ties were either local or clustered. Guarded residents expressed one or more of the following characteristics:

1. Busy routines or different life patterns
2. Assumption or reality that neighbors did not share common norms or values
3. Victim of crime or paranoid about being victimized
4. Felt like an outsider
5. Bound to the neighborhood by limited mobility
6. Socialized in old neighborhood

Guarded residents were strongly influenced by structural forces (e.g. crime, class, etc.) and their reactions to those forces were manifested as fear, frustration, or discomfort. A subgroup within this group was simply absent from the neighborhood due to how they guarded their time due to competing interests.²³

Engaged residents

Engaged residents are motivated to meet neighbors and fully utilize the neighborhood. The mental maps of engaged residents ranged in size from local to global, with the majority being global. The majority of engaged respondents reported

²³ I did not hear from enough residents in this category to substantiate a separate group but am including this group as it does provide a more comprehensive view of what is happening in the neighborhood. I surmised that the reason I did not hear from residents in this category is because they were too busy to participate in interviews.

having a minimum of six social ties. Residents' social ties were scattered with the exception of one respondent whose contacts were local and isolated. The characteristics of engaged residents who were tenants were one or more of the following:

1. Familiar with neighbors from previous tenure as a St. Thomas neighborhood
2. Prior experience living in a similarly structured neighborhood
3. Open to making new social ties
4. Bound to the neighborhood due to limited mobility or living in neighborhood by choice

Homeowners exhibited the same tendencies mentioned above. Additionally, their comfort zones extended beyond River Garden borders to include Magazine Street, a busy corridor of restaurants and boutiques. Their social ties were all plotted in clusters around their homes, indicating other homeowners with the exception of a dog walker who had social contacts along his dog walking route.

Neighborhood Attachment in River Garden

The manner upon which engaged residents participated in the neighborhood is a demonstration of the sentiment and activity that caters to neighbor interaction. I proffer this as an important variable for neighbor interaction. Residents who exemplify the characteristics of attached neighbors create a more inviting, interactive space and are the building blocks to a more stable neighborhood given that frequent interaction among neighbors are thought to elevate control of the neighborhood (Bellair 1997).

Neighborhood attachment describes the residents' sentiments toward and involvement in their neighborhood (Woldoff 2002; Lee and Guest 1983). Previous studies found positive correlations between neighborhood attachment and length of residence, number of neighborhood relationships such as with neighbors, relatives, and formal organizations (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974), and environmental conditions (Mayans and Rodgers 1975). Woldoff's (2002) conceptual model of neighborhood attachment includes the behavioral acts of neighboring (neighbor interaction) and problem-solving (informal or formal responses to forces that threatened the neighborhood).

I consulted the responses that residents provided to my question regarding what the neighborhood meant to them and found that responses reinforced my analysis of engaged and guarded residents' levels of neighborhood meaning. Residents either regarded the neighborhood as a) part of a community, b) home but did not want to know neighbors, c) uncomfortable, or d) temporary (see full responses, Appendix A). Based upon self-reported regards for the neighborhood, the characteristics of the engaged and guarded groups were consistent and logical. Homeowners considered River Garden as a community; former residents chose community or home; and guarded residents indicated it as uncomfortable or temporary.

Neighborhood attachment in River Garden further conveys residents' motivation and connectedness to the neighborhood. For engaged residents, neighborhood attachment is evident. For guarded residents, it is rather weak. My arrival at the overall characteristics of neighborhood attachment as it plays out in River Garden is supported by Woldoff (2002) who asserts that local context is important in measuring

neighborhood attachment. The characteristics that define engaged versus guarded residents are based upon the experiences and perceptions of the residents. Additionally, their mental maps further demonstrate their involvement in the neighborhood. Neighborhood attachment in River Garden captures the following group attributes:

- Neighborliness (has existing ties, willingness to form new ties; “watching out” for neighbors, which means looking after the neighbor’s home while he or she is away);
- Demonstration of passion for the well-being of the neighborhood (problem-solving and commitment to stay); and
- Open boundaries (socially constructed boundaries are at least the size of official neighborhood subdivision).

Further in the chapter, I describe engaged residents as demonstrating these three attributes of neighborhood attachment.

Neighborhood of Limited Mobility

More than half of the respondents that I interviewed were bound to the neighborhood due to financial constraints. Residents of limited mobility are representative of three major groups of residents – market rate renters, former residents, and homeowners.²⁴ A number of renters in this category moved into River Garden without full knowledge of the neighborhood’s composition and indicated that the neighborhood did not meet their expectations. Most want to move out of the neighborhood but are bound by the legal contracts they signed when leasing their units.

²⁴ Sub-payers also experience limited mobility for the same reasons as former residents but are mostly dissatisfied with the neighborhood for the same reasons as renters.

Early departure would result in financial consequences such as forfeiting their deposits and being liable to pay the amount owed for the remaining months of their leases.

These fees, in addition to the expense of moving to a different location, represent a considerable financial undertaking for those wanting to leave. Other renters, living from check to check, expressed that they simply could not afford to move. Former residents, who are experiencing limited mobility, feel degraded by the level of monitoring conducted by HRI. Their units are inspected on a regular basis for cleanliness among other unstated reasons (e.g., presence of individuals not named on the lease) and NOPD patrol cars are stationed on nearby blocks and treat all gatherings the same. It does not matter if residents are simply shooting the breeze or about to engage in a fist-of-cuffs, all groups are treated the same and are dispersed by police. Residents who do not like the feeling of being monitored and controlled do not have many options given their low incomes and the shortage of affordable housing options. Homeowners are also in this category although their movement into the neighborhood was a result of unrestrained residential mobility. Homeowners knowingly moved into the mixed-income community but at the time of purchase, River Garden had not been completed.

Although homeowners were assured that condo homeownership opportunities were being incorporated into the space, the plan for condominiums did not materialize.

Instead, rental property was added to the development making owners in River Garden a very small minority. Property values have been diminished by the additional rental properties and the real-estate crash circa 2008. Homeowners are obligated to upside-down mortgages; decreases in their property value have left them with negative equity.

Limited mobility resulted in two consequences. Residents resigned to feeling limited and withdrew from River Garden or residents decided to make the best of the place that they were forced to call home. In other words, residents chose to be guarded or engaged.

Guarded Existence

Some of the emptiness in the neighborhood is explained by the absence of a considerable amount of guarded residents who stay inside their socially constructed boundaries or stay outside of the neighborhood due to competing interests such as work, family obligations or a preference to socialize with people who do not live in River Garden. Whether the “busy” residents in this category created busy-ness as a strategy to avoid their neighborhood is unknown but at any rate, busy residents are just as absent as other guarded residents. “*Community* was not high on the list” when they searched for accommodations. Affordability, location, and the newness of the development were motivating factors for moving into River Garden.

Guarded residents confine themselves to certain space and certain times. They are impacted by crime and poverty, and without a history of having lived in similar space, their decisions are informed by paranoia and prejudice. Their preference to withdraw is not indicative of residents’ social skills but rather outward signs of how they perceive the neighborhood, how they process crime, and how they judge the different lifestyles of their neighbors. Guarded residents do not exhibit neighborhood attachment. Instead of being neighborly, they avoid neighbors and are bound by constraints. Guarded residents who are in the financial position to move out of the

neighborhood are planning to do so once their leases expire. Other guarded residents simply re-construct their neighborhoods and identify boundaries and routes that make them feel more protected from neighbors who might attack them or intrude upon their space with undesirable language and behavior.

You really expect me to be friends with people like that?

Residents' aversion to others who are not like them manifests in dissociative behaviors. Prejudices about particular persons are applied to the general group and avoidance of all neighbors has become habitual. Their mental maps depict neighborhood limitations that are confined and strategic with few social ties. Guarded residents are programmed to reduce chances of harm and discomfort which means detaching from the neighborhood.

One sub-payer indicated that he was tired of "the jects." He recently lived in California and came back to New Orleans upon learning that his wait for Section 8 was over. Although, he loved being in Los Angeles, there were no chances of receiving Section 8 or even being added to a waiting list because L.A. did not have the capacity to accommodate any more people in need of subsidized housing. He does not like his neighbors or HRI. His neighbors have "no class" and HRI has created "tension so thick in the office you can feel it." Most of his frustration with HRI stems from the complaints he made about his noisy neighbors, and his impression that HRI has not done anything to address his complaints. He is really "put off" by the way "these people talk to their children," and described how one mother called her daughter a "bitch" and used four-lettered words as she screamed at her daughter who had asked for money for the ice

cream truck. He interrupted my question about social interaction with “you really expect me to be friends with people like that?”

Other guarded residents also feel their lower-income neighbors lack “values” and have nothing in common with them. These residents preferred to be around people who are more “like [them]” but do not know who or where those people are. The safe option is to simply avoid neighbors. Uncomfortable with the subject of explaining why she did not know any of her neighbors, one resident offered a number of explanations. Her first justification was she was busy and the second was because of her need to “just chill out.” Yet another reason was because she felt like a New Orleans outsider:

I see them talk often. I'll see them sitting on their porches talking and things like that and when people walk by, they'll be talking to each other...for some reason, I feel like everybody knows each other here. Maybe because they grew up in New Orleans or I don't think it's necessarily just because they know each other... I think it's maybe they see people in passing that maybe they grew up with or they went to school with or something.

After a series of questions, she admitted that the underlying reason for not interacting with her neighbors was that she does not believe there is anyone in the neighborhood who she can “relate to like that” and does not see herself “being like really good friends with them.” By the end of the interview, she revealed that she had no idea “people like [me]” lived in River Garden. She further explained her comment:

What do I mean by people like you? I mean honestly it's probably wrong but I'm going to be honest...I guess people

who...a lot of people I just see hanging around the neighborhood. When I leave the house, they're hanging around. When I come home, they're hanging around. So I guess maybe people who have more drive about themselves.

Other guarded residents presume that they “do not have anything in common” with neighbors and rather than taking the chance to meet people and make a fair assessment, they have dismissed opportunities to meet like-minded peers altogether. Some residents were very vocal about their assumptions about public housing residents:

I'm totally negative against that side. I'm prejudice on the whole people ...just want to be there, they want things given to them, it's a certain -- everybody ain't like that and my son think I'm a little too prejudice sometimes, but you can't avoid statistics, you can't avoid what's actually happening. People hanging all night and all that, but that was the way that they was raised and they think it's okay.

For these guarded residents, heterogeneity is a barrier and the dividing factor is class rather than race. African American respondents in the guarded category are more vocal about value differences between themselves and African American public housing residents. They provided specific examples regarding language, “hanging out,” domestic issues, and welfare dependency. This was contrary to Pattillo's (2007) account of middle-class Blacks who were mediators between lower-income residents and gentrifiers. The African American renters in River Garden do not demonstrate tolerance but are rather frustrated by the notion that “these people” do not appreciate a

nice neighborhood and certainly do not know how “to act.” They are deemed the reason that “Blacks can’t get ahead.” The African American respondents that I interviewed challenged Pattillo’s (2007) assertion that Blacks had not divided into two separate nations divided by class.

Whether they entered their leases understanding the nature of their lower-income neighbors or came in blindly, they were living in contested space. Guarded residents are among the residents that HRI has been attempting to placate and retain by exercising social control over the use of common space. However, for renters and sub-payers, those measures have not been enough to make them feel more at ease when using the neighborhood. Guarded residents feel hostage to their neighbors’ behaviors and are uncomfortable in the neighborhood. Although, guarded residents’ perceptions are influenced by several structural forces (e.g., poverty, crime, class structure), they dismiss the idea that opportunity structures (e.g., poorly run schools, unaffordable day care, dearth of low-skill jobs, etc.) impact the livelihood of low-income neighbors. As such, they have developed several strategies to avoid their poorer neighbors.

Temporal construction of the neighborhood

Guarded residents have created ways to navigate space in a manner that limits interaction with former residents. One strategy is to use the neighborhood when fewer people are outside. Anytime Fitness, the on-site fitness club, is open to members 24-hours per day and Walmart’s extended hours from 6:30 AM to 10:30 PM allow flexibility for guarded residents to shop without having to encounter too many of their neighbors.

Being able to shop at Walmart during the first hour of operation prompted one respondent to create the routine of waking up extra early to satisfy her “Walmart fix”

Walmart is different. I think it depends on the time that you go, too, I’ve noticed... Sometimes, it’s like a lot of loitering, I guess, depending on the time that you go.

This respondent is an African American recent college graduate who was mostly attracted to the neighborhood because of its newness and proximity to downtown New Orleans where she prefers to “go out.” She is congenial and is comfortable in social settings. She “always wanted to have that sense of oh I know my neighbor’s name... If I need anything, I can knock on their door and ask them for it.” However, she admitted that after living in her apartment for two years, she did not know the names of any of her neighbors although she runs into them in the parking lot. She knows “their faces and cars” but does not know anything else about them despite her interest in developing “a sense of community.”

She copes with her apprehension to interact with neighbors by utilizing the physical neighborhood when most residents are asleep such as shopping at Walmart no later than 7:30 AM even though she does not have to report to work until 10:00 AM. While her neighbors are awake and outside, she stays gone. She works late, volunteers, eats out and looks for opportunities to stay outside of the neighborhood. In her attempt to avoid being spoken to, she distances herself by walking with her arms folded to signal that she is not open to creating new social ties. She is uncomfortable in her neighborhood but does not feel that she can find another apartment complex that offers the convenience or affordability of River Garden.

Rush hour

In the mornings, residents seem to be on automatic pilot as they head to work. Most are traveling with coffee mug in hand and only give half-glances or half-smiles to each other. Although neighbors are within close vicinity to each other, they seem very distant. Guarded residents overwhelmingly admitted to not knowing many of their neighbors. A female renter living in The Highrise says it is because she is too busy to get to know people. She works a lot of hours, is busy with her kids' extracurricular activities schedule, plus she is just "not interested in getting to know [her] neighbors." She does not have "time to mingle" and when she does want to socialize, she does so with friends across town. Her comfort zone is limited to the perimeter of The Highrise. On the depiction of her mental map, she made it a point to mark out areas adjacent to the area. A second Highrise renter's boundaries are also limited to the immediate area of the building (see Figures 8 and 9).

The notion of being too "busy" to meet residents may have served as an excuse for this respondent as well as several others. Each of these respondents indicated busyness but also made reference to their lower-income neighbors in derogatory ways by referring to them as "those people," accusing them of "hanging out" at all times, and characterizing the neighborhood as not being up to par because of the individuals who resided there. One "busy" resident even invited me over to share a meal, which was an indication to me that she was not too busy to make new friends, but rather selective about who she was willing to allow into her space.



Figure 8: Highrise resident's mental map indicates tight boundaries. Map data: ©2011 Google, Sanborn.



Figure 9: Comfort zone of busy resident. Map data: ©2011 Google, Sanborn.

Hiding from crime

The shootings, rumors about crime, and actual witnessing of crime forced some guarded residents into very confined spaces of the neighborhood. One respondent who is in her 50's moved into River Garden after losing her suburban home to Katrina. After having lived in River Garden for about a year, she altered her routine of coming straight home after work one day to take advantage of a free golf lesson. While at City Park, she received a call prompting her to drop what she was doing to come home immediately. Upon arriving to her street, she encountered numerous police cars and a mob of people in front of her home. Crime scene tape surrounded her duplex as a fatally wounded man lay in front of her duplex neighbor's door. Now, this respondent will not sit or stand in front of windows in her home. She has designed her daily routine to ensure that she has no contact with neighbors:

I leave home at about 7:40, out my side door. I kind of look around to make sure nobody is lingering...Get in my car. Go to work. On a good day, come home a little after five o'clock. Come through, park in my space. Look around and hurry up and go into my side door and go upstairs.

She, along with other guarded residents who indicate a fear of crime, perceive that they may be harmed if they venture past their socially constructed boundaries. Not having lived in pockets of crime, guarded residents envision themselves as potential victims and perceive their neighbors as victimizers. This respondent wanted to move but was not financially able to relocate. In the meantime, she exists in a very tiny segment of the neighborhood that consists of the immediate area of her home and the homes of two friends that she knew before moving to River Garden (see Figure 10).

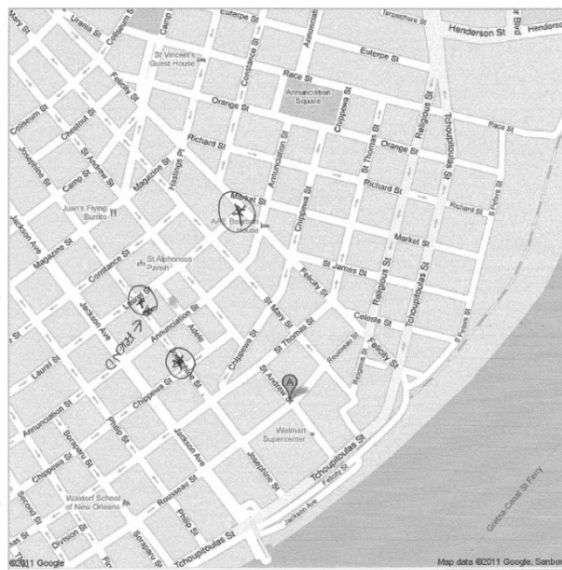


Figure 10: Mental map of resident afraid of crime. Map data: ©2011 Google, Sanborn.

Other renters also expressed how crime in the area altered their routes, minimized their mental maps and impacted social interaction:

We were heating our car up in the morning and they stole the car keys, like I ran inside, got a cup of coffee, turn around to jump in the car and the car keys were gone, which our neighbor stole them. So, no, I don't talk to anybody outside of my family.

I just feel like a lot of people maybe are paranoid or skeptical and they're just not speaking anymore. I guess they feel like with a lot of crime that has involved residents, you don't really know who you're talking to so they just keep to themselves. I can understand it.

A male respondent who did not have a car was forced to travel by foot at times. He stayed within his comfort zone by "walking the long way around" to get to Magazine Street. He did this to avoid "the thugs" and diverted from his path anytime he saw a bunch of young men gathered on the street. His comfort zone excluded the areas known to be "hangouts" for "those people." His boundaries were outside of River Garden's borders because of the safe route that he discovered to get to Magazine Street, his "getaway" (see Figure 11).



Figure 11: Mental map of resident with who avoids “thugs.” Notice the right side border of his comfort zone, which represents his route outside of neighborhood boundaries to safely get to his destination. Map data: ©2011 Google, Sanborn.

From Engaged to Guarded to Engaged

Upon characterizing myself as a guarded or engaged River Garden resident, I actually experienced moving in and out of these categories. I moved into the community as an engaged resident but after several incidences, I became guarded. I moved into River Garden with a very open mind. Although I had memories of being fearful of the projects during my earlier years, I reasoned with myself that prior experiences had prepared me for this journey and that I was not actually moving into “the projects.” I grew up in South Central Los Angeles with “gangbangers,” had visited family friends who lived in the projects, and later made friends with folks who grew up in the projects. I looked forward to moving in, engaging neighbors, and conducting my research. That feeling changed just a bit after finding out that just a week before I moved into River

Garden, Keith Berry, a 21-year old African American male was fatally gunned down while knocking on his neighbor's door. According to Sweetie who served up Seattle's Best Coffee every morning, Mr. Berry was not the intended target and the suspect had revisited the neighborhood to let potential witnesses know he would be back if necessary. Admittedly, my senses were heightened by the thought of stray bullets. The perception that I could be harmed became very real for me. My paranoia elevated after someone tried to gain my attention at 4:00 AM after I had spent a long night of writing. As soon as I turned off my lights, my doorbell rang. I immediately responded but the bell ringer was not visible through the peephole or window. From that moment on, I kept on all the lights from dusk to dawn. This incident gave me a compelling reason to knock on the door of the guy who snored loudly through the shared bedroom wall of our duplex. He cracked open the door and I recounted the morning's event. He told me that it was probably kids in the neighborhood and that I should not worry. My neighbor told me how he was never home because he worked long hours. He offered me his cell phone number in case I ever needed to call. Although, I heard him come and go, usually in the wee hours, I never laid eyes on him again. *Could my neighbor have been the one who rang my door bell? Or was the guy who I thought was a lookout really casing out my joint for the last few days?* I felt the paranoia taking over me.

This 4:00 AM incident pushed me into becoming guarded. I only left my unit if I absolutely had to for campus visits or groceries. When I pulled into my parking spot, I looked all around to make sure that I was not being watched. With proper key in hand, I speed-walked past my neighbor's unit, bee-lined to my door, got inside and locked the deadbolt without haste. Going out to dinner with friends was not an option because that

meant coming home in the dark into an area where the landscaping favored intruders. Thick bushes blocked vision from Annunciation Street and from the houses whose front doors faced St. Andrew Street. When parking, tall bushes were to my right and my building was to my left. If someone was hiding in those bushes as I exited my vehicle, he would have the advantage and no one would see me being attacked from the street. This was the same case for the patio in back of my unit. I understood the attempt to create privacy but dared not get caught in-between my building and bushes. Since the landscapers were so big on planting bushes, I wondered why they had not planted bushes directly underneath my windows that faced the windows of the duplex next to mine. Without any shrubbery to deter intruders, these windows increased vulnerability. The breezeway formed by the two buildings was definitely in-defensible space.

Although I was feeling like I had to guard myself from my neighbors, I still had to talk to people for my research. I arranged to meet with them at Seattle's Best Coffee because I sensed that Sweetie was "watching out" for me. She knew all the customers and from our conversations, I figured that she knew how to get rid of anyone who might be a potential threat to her customers' sense of comfort. The more I talked to my respondents, the more nervous I became. They had known of too many criminal incidents and shared them freely. I thought about Bob's and Nia's warnings. "Do you really have to move in there to do your research?" A resident of four years was more direct upon learning exactly where I lived within River Garden, "Get out of there as soon as you can." I took her advice seriously and like other guarded residents, I was fixated on moving out as soon as I lived out the final three months of my six months lease.

I realized my neighbors were becoming more invisible and thought it would be a good idea to connect with someone who could bring about a sense of normalcy. Three days after the warning to move out, I had gotten a bite to eat with Jeanine because she promised to drive and drop me off right in front of my door. When I returned to see Kameron, my 17-year old nephew who was visiting me for a week on the stoop, I was immediately concerned. This was disconcerting to me because I had heard about mobs of teenagers picking on other teens even if unprovoked. He made the mistake of running out of the unit without realizing that it opened from the inside but was locked from the outside. When I asked him why he ran out in the first place, he described a loud crashing noise that spooked him. We walked in and I could feel a breeze coming from my bedroom. There was shattered glass across my entire bed and the carpeted floor. HRI was super responsive and boarded it up quickly. NOPD responded 90 minutes after my initial call and classified it as “criminal damage.”

On Monday, I contacted HRI to be moved to a higher floor and assumed that if they agreed to move me, I would feel safer in one of the upper unit townhomes. I was swiftly transferred to one of the secured mid-rise buildings to complete my lease. The thought of the secured building immediately brought me security and I extended my pre-existing lease by another two months. On the fourth floor, no one could reach me through windows or doors. I felt safer and less tense. Besides the fact that guests had to be buzzed into the building, I was also comforted by the absence of bushes in the open-space parking lot visible from many Highrise windows and balconies as well as from the units on the backside of Stoop Row. I gradually felt myself engaging neighbors and the neighborhood again.

Guarded residents paint the neighborhood as being dysfunctional. They contend that their neighbors lack values, tact, and share no common interests with them. Their interpretation of the complex symbols they perceive being used by neighbors lacks the sophistication required to truly conceptualize their neighbors' plights but are rather similar to the negative portrayal in the media of welfare recipients as irresponsible and not motivated to work. Former and sub-paying residents have been classified as the "undeserving poor" and therefore do not elicit the same kind of sympathy or support for government aid recipients who are considered to be "deserving poor" such as individuals in the categories of elderly or in need of medical care. The perception that River Garden residents are unwilling to work casts an unfavorable light on all poor residents regardless of their individual circumstances (Gilens 1999).

Guarded residents may have moved in anticipating that they would become attached to the neighborhood but were dismayed by the realities that they perceived to be disconcerting. Rather than attaching, they are un-neighborly and live within tightly constrained boundaries. The coping mechanisms that they have developed to deal with their incomprehensible surroundings include "staying inside", "avoiding" conversations with neighbors, and spending leisure time outside of the neighborhood. Busy residents do not know their neighbors because they spent considerable time away from home. This phenomenon is discussed by Putnam (2001) who asserts that busy lives equate to disengagement with the community. Time that could be allocated toward community building is being consumed by the prevalence of dual income earners, electronic entertainment, and commuting time (Putnam 2001). For residents who indicated "busy-

ness” as an excuse, the discomfort of judging others may have prevented them from being more direct about their sentiments toward their lower-income neighbors. Guarded residents perceive the neighborhood to be abnormal and they are not motivated to engage and it is because of their unwillingness to engage that their perceptions will remain unaltered. If they allow themselves to become attached to the neighborhood, the more comfortable they will feel. Neighborhood attachment comes along with meeting people in the neighborhood and developing social ties. In neighborhoods such as River Garden where crime is a problem, attached residents view the neighborhood to be safer than unattached residents (Brown, Perkins, and Brown 2003; Delisi and Regoli 2000). Guarded residents who shy away from meeting neighbors actually do themselves a disservice. If they ever want to become comfortable with the neighborhood, they will have to engage it. Otherwise, they will either move out or continue to be “held hostage” by constraints.

Engaging the Contested Neighborhood

Engaged residents are comprised of all housing tenure including homeowners, with former residents being over-represented in the engaged subgroup of tenants. In essence, engaged residents are at both ends of the class spectrum – they are the haves and the have-nots of River Garden. Both groups are fending for space that is contested by the other group. Former residents claim that the space should be fully utilized and conducive to families with children while homeowners want a more controlled space indicative of the kind of space that increases property value. Although they are at polar opposites, both groups share a common reality. They are primarily wedded to River Garden due to constraints. Former residents are limited by financial

barriers and homeowners would lose considerable capital if they were to sell their properties in a depressed real estate market. Although limited mobility governs their existence in River Garden, these residents decided that they were going to make the best of their living situation by claiming the neighborhood. This decision to make a stake in River Garden is part of what colored their perception of the neighborhood with more positive regards.

Without options to live elsewhere due to lack of income, former residents have learned to adapt to their neighborhood and they exhibit signs that they have claimed the space. The spatial practice of territorializing the stoops (as described in previous chapter) demonstrates their stake in the space. In the process of making the best out of their situations, former residents develop systems to help each other survive such as watching out for each other which creates a sense of security (Manzo, Kleit, and Couch 2008). In their attempt to survive financially (Hayden 1997), they use their social networks for babysitting, meals, transportation, job leads, and so on. The dependency on neighbors combined with limited mobility constraints compel former residents to cling to the neighborhood. Their initial reasons for claiming the neighborhood, therefore, generates from needs but develops into full-blown neighborhood attachment demonstrated by their maintenance of social ties, passion for the neighborhood, and open boundaries. Leaving the neighborhood, for whatever reason, would mean having to recreate trusted ties – a process in which they have already invested considerable time first as St. Thomas residents and then as River Garden residents.

Most of the twenty-nine homeowners purchased their homes between 2004 and 2007 during a seller's market. At the time when they purchased their homes, the land

beyond Boettner Park was empty. They were shown project plans depicting “fantastic” condominiums and retail. This was comforting for homeowners who did not want to be completely surrounded by rental property. Unfortunately for homeowners, the plan to develop condominiums did not materialize, reportedly due to real estate market conditions resulting from the 2007-2008 economic downturn. Instead, additional units of new rental property was constructed and River Garden’s homes were completely enclosed by subsidized and market-rate rental property. To the dismay of homeowners, they were literally “stuck in the middle.”

If he had said that oh this is the second stage and then we’re building some more rental homes over there on the other side of the park, I would never have bought a house here. I don’t want to be surrounded by rental homes on all sides. That’s just idiotic but the salesman said, “No these are all going to be private condos...Well geesh! That sounds good to me so I bought on that basis and then later on I discovered wow they’re not even duplicating what they had in the back. They’re building a really high density complex of rental houses on the other side of the park. Well I wasn’t happy about that!

Homeowners are frustrated about the outcome and many would not have purchased their homes had they known that the condominium development plans were going to be altered into plans for rental property. Since 2008, property values have decreased and most owners are “upside down.” Faced with the choice of moving out and taking a “big hit” financially or “sticking it out”, with just a few exceptions, homeowners have chosen the latter.

Both groups of engaged residents' have been led toward embracing optimistic perceptions of the neighborhood and are motivated to interact with their neighbors. Both groups demonstrate neighborhood attachment by creating social ties, expressing their passion for the neighborhood, and depicting open boundaries. They also know how to negotiate space when their space is contested. Former residents create other social space such as Walmart while homeowners enjoy the established corridor of restaurants and shops a few blocks away on Magazine Street. Their passion is expressed by their determination to fully participate in the neighborhood and to solve neighborhood problems.

My goal with the next sections of this chapter is to demonstrate how engaged residents live more openly in contrast to the patterns of guarded residents while comparing the lived realities of engaged former residents and engaged homeowners. These sections also demonstrate the neighborhood attachment that former residents and homeowners exhibit through developing social ties, exhibiting passion for the neighborhood, and utilizing open boundaries.

Engaging social ties

Most of the visible interaction taking place in River Garden is among former residents. Their motivation to interact within their normal environment stems from familiarity with many neighbors and their surroundings. The reasons for wanting to get to know their neighbors are differently motivated but the desire to meet them is apparent. Whether it was to feel like someone was “watching out” for their home while

they were away or in the event that someone required medical attention, former residents want to feel like their neighbors would respond.

Well, they got some good people here, being honest with you. If you need something, they'll look out for you. I mean, I'd even sit there and took people in my house. That's how New Orleans people is, period. They're lovable people. They got some bad and they got some good, but we're friendly people

I feel like everybody should know their neighbors. If a person takes sick, you have to. If you don't know them, you don't communicate with them before you take sick and your family is not around and if you are close with your neighbors, they might would help you. That's how I see it.

We watch each other's houses, we do this every year, we watch each other house front and back.

Neighbors sought each other out just to have "someone to talk to" and to run their "situations" by someone who might be able to help. Former residents spoke about neighbors who they could rely upon for advice, holiday meal invitations, and to look out for their homes when they were away. Similar to the residents in Woldoff's (2011) study, residents are particularly mindful of older residents in the neighborhood who they considered to be resourceful advisors.

I've always liked being around elderly and older people anyways because I grew up with a parent saying you learn more from an older person than you do being around younger people your age.

Residents did not describe reliance upon neighbors as a one-way expectation but also expressed their willingness to help others in time of need – even if neighbors were not necessarily friendly. Respondents described being neighborly despite not being particularly fond of neighbors. For them, neighborliness signified that willingness to assist neighbors superseded maintaining cordial relationships:

...we have two neighbors in the neighborhood I don't speak with but if I was to see something going wrong with their apartment, I'd tell them. You don't have to get along to help someone out. It's called being neighborly.

She was a messy little old lady, but regardless, I loved her though because she watched my house.

Homeowners believe that their homes are also being “watched” but in a very different manner from the watching that former residents discussed. Homeowners have reported a rash of burglaries and believe that their lower-income neighbors are responsible. The incidences of property crime has created cohesiveness among homeowners as they now gather together to brainstorm how they will protect themselves from intruders. One of their ideas was to establish a formal version of former residents’ agreements to “watch out” for each other. The idea of a Neighborhood Watch was discussed among homeowners but was scrapped because no one wanted to be identified or potentially targeted as a block captain.

In the meantime, homeowners insulate themselves from the livelihood of former residents’ social space by utilizing exclusive indoor and backyard space for socializing. Homeowners have attempted to establish a “sense of community” although some prefer

to “keep to themselves” or only know the neighbors immediately adjacent to them. The majority of homeowners are a cordial group who interact regularly and socialize over dinners on occasion. When viewed as a microcosm within River Garden, their neighborhood represents the concept of a sociologically-ideal community:

I know who my neighbors are and I feel comfortable with them both the black neighbors that I have as well the white neighbors ...we're on a first name basis and we talk to each other quite a bit and then I have other neighbors that I've gone out to dinner with, done social things with them in the neighborhood and so I've even reciprocated by having some people over from time to time.

One particular homeowner was very excited about getting to know his neighbors and was searching for the kind of friendships that he had established when living in the Midwest. He organized a game night for his neighbors and plans to create future events to include neighbors. With such a small community of homeowners, it is quite possible for him to know them all.

Every time someone moved in, I went over and knocked on the door and introduced myself and got a conversation going and sometimes the next step was we had lunch or dinner together or something like that or just a conversation on the front porch but that's how it started.

Conversations started with introductory knocks on the door and as homeowners figured out what they had in common with each other, they joined up for music festivals, restaurant outings, and barbecues. Although interaction is primarily limited within their

own domain, homeowners are definitely in the neighborly category as they continuously reinforce older ties and develop social ties with newer homeowners.

Both groups – former residents and homeowners - are neighborly and make an effort to develop and maintain social ties; however, financial considerations dictate how former residents versus homeowners are able to socialize. While homeowners have the financial resources to escape the neighborhood as they please, former residents do not have such options. Limited mobility for former residents is therefore twofold in that it restricts where they can live as well as inhibits them from being able to socialize outside the neighborhood.

Former residents and homeowners perceive their neighborhood as normal and optimistic, respectively. They demonstrate neighborhood attachment through neighborliness and open boundaries. Both groups want to know their neighbors. For former residents, it is especially important to know who is living next door because a new neighbor could be a source of neighborliness or cause for concern. Homeowners are looking to create social ties and allies against the invasions they are experiencing. As former residents “watched out” for each other, homeowners contemplated establishing a Neighborhood Watch association. While former residents use their stoops for social interaction and create additional social space by utilizing Walmart, homeowners socialize indoors and in backyards and escape to Magazine Street to create more social space.

For both groups, mental maps were inclusive of friends who lived all over River Garden or within the homeowners' microcosm within River Garden. Maps varied in size and shape but mostly included the entire River Garden subdivision (see Figures 12 -15).

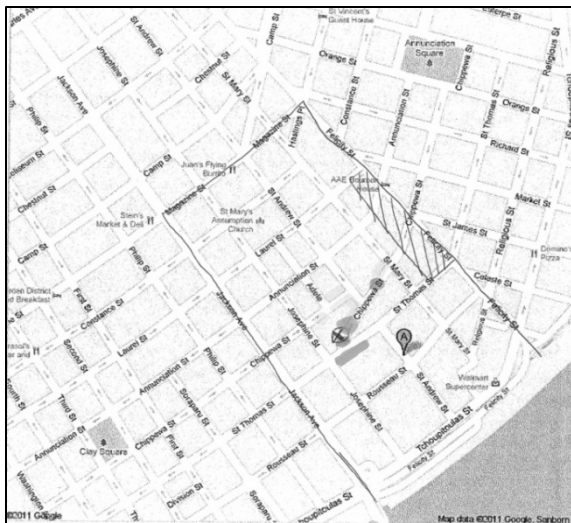
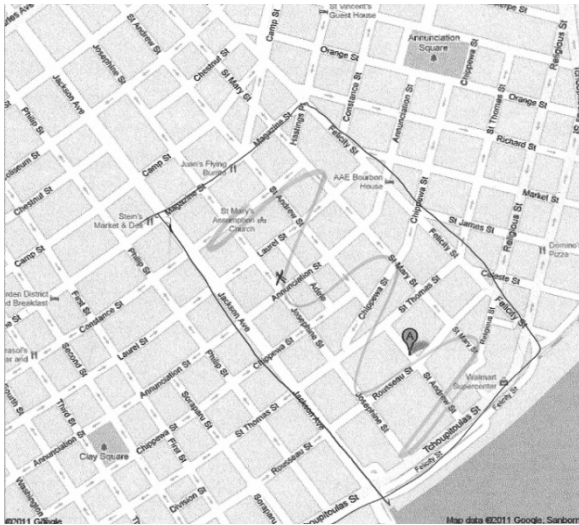


Figure 12 (top left): Mental map of former resident. Squiggly line illustrated that respondent has social ties throughout entire community. Map: © 2011, Google, Sanborn

Figure 13 (top right): Former resident's mental map. Map: ©2011 Google, Sanborn

Figure 14 (bottom left): Homeowner's mental map includes Magazine Street, a corridor of shops and restaurants but excludes a certain section of River Garden. Map: © 2011, Google, Sanborn

Figure 15: Mental map of homeowner which also includes Magazine Street. Map: ©2011, Google, Sanborn

Passion kept under control and the passion to control

Former residents consider River Garden to be home and are passionate about having full access to the neighborhood. My conversation with a former resident in his 30's, a single dad who dropped out of high school, captured some of that passion. He heard that I was talking to folks about River Garden and wondered why I had not approached him earlier. "We were excited when we was first moving back to River Garden" he began and then quickly shifted to vocalizing all of River Garden's shortcomings. "This is like a place for college people, college kids that don't have no children..." Before going to his next point, his attention was taken away from me and directed toward a young woman telling him about getting her neighbor's mail. She was reporting this information to the respondent because he represents his neighbors at a weekly session conducted by the Southeast Louisiana legal aid office. He confirmed that he knew "everybody back here" and I witnessed this myself as our conversation was repeatedly interrupted by residents who I initially thought were talking to him but later figured out otherwise. The complaints about HRI's management office were directed towards me, the "lady interviewing people about River Garden." Residents were very upset about the territorializing and social control of Boettner Park and were growing tired of looming threats of eviction. They had received notices about noise and overnight visitors and for them each piece of paper represented one less chance to "mess up their housing."

An eviction from public housing could create challenges for residents without many housing options, which is why I was turned down for several interviews. They refused to meet with me because they felt I was investigating on behalf of HRI. They

were not incentivized by the gift that I offered nor by the opportunity to air out what they were feeling about the community. Another set of residents refused to talk to me because they did not want to be seen on the stoop. When I knocked on a resident's door on The Backside, I explained my intent but was declined because she "ain't getting evicted" and was convinced that my presence on her porch was going to jeopardize her housing. These residents showed their attachment to place which derived from limited mobility.

Residents also showed passion for the neighborhood by looking out for neighbors' well-being. New neighbors were monitored until former residents could be certain that they were of no harm. Their prior experience informed them that the person living next door to them could be linked to drugs or other criminal behavior. Knowing who your neighbors are and what they do determined just how neighborly residents are willing to be with each other. Their neighbor could be a "trouble face" or someone who intended physical harm.

Because you want to know who you living next to in a way and you want to know if that person -- the company that they carries, and I just watch my surroundings, day and night. I come outside and look, day and night, and see who's outside and who's not, and I go to the front and back and look both ways.

Sometimes it is important for you to know who your neighbors is because you don't know if they got -- like sometimes they have sex offenders staying in neighborhoods and you don't know nothing about it until

something happens to somebody's child back here or something like that.

Determining if someone could potentially harm the children or other neighbors was residents' way of protecting their community. Former residents were fervent about staying, protecting their neighbors, and being able to have full access to the entire community. As I met with them, I sensed that they were angry with HRI regarding the lack of dedicated play space for children. They questioned the use of Boettner Park as a dog park and surmised that more importance was given to residents with dogs over residents with children.

Why would you put a sign up and say dog walk, dog park?
That's a big old park. You need all this for a dog? If you took half and half, half could have been for the dogs and the other half for children...I was raised up, we were at a park or a field where we could play football. They had all kinds of arts and crafts and swings and drawing and skating for the children and ping pong. They don't have nothing like that...
They got dogs and that mother fucker needs to be a pool. If a child is in the park playing, the dog bites them.

Boettner Park will never have a pool or a playground as long as homeowners have a say in how things are managed at River Garden. They are the ones who took measures to preserve the park as unused space. Boettner Park was frontage for their homes and the emptiness of the park gave them peace of mind. The struggle over the use of Boettner Park has been won by homeowners, whose investments gave them the collective power to exert social control over their neighbors.

The cross-tenure integration of the park would represent an invasion of space and would create discomfort for homeowners who admitted that they had limited to no interaction with lower-income neighbors. One homeowner summarized the relationship between homeowners and renters as being “zero” until one of them broke into his house. The interaction that he did have was because a “fifteen year old boy” “attacked” his property. Most home-owning respondents that I spoke to had been burglarized. Although they realized that there was “risk” involved in moving into the community, the projection for more homeowners in the neighborhood made it a more “calculated risk.”

I felt comfortable with that dynamic and that mix and now that so many things have happened including my home being burglarized and really being fearful every time I leave my home there's a possibility because the way it's set up, as beautiful as our community is, anyone can stake out any of our homes...just by watching patterns.

Repeated intrusions led to the erection of fences which now diminishes backyard socializing among homeowners. The possibility of being robbed is one of the reasons that homeowners do not want their neighbors hanging out across the street from their homes; however, homeowners' social engineering of their surroundings extends well beyond the park; they are primarily interested in changing their neighbors' behaviors altogether. During my focus group with homeowners, it became apparent that they are well-versed about HOPE VI and its intended effects. They knew about the program when they purchased their homes and although they had mixed feelings about the theories behind it, they were committed to waiting out the transformation process.

We understood Hope 6. We knew these existing ones were there and we kind of went back and forth about it and said well you know if you want this type of thing to work, somebody has to do it. You can't just sit back and wait for somebody else to make change. If you want to see it, you should make it happen.

I think there's got to be some kind of glue. There's got to be mechanisms that will help make it work and again I feel most strongly about that income gap. There have got to be things that help people close that. There have got to be things that enable people to develop skills that allow them to become employable, to get off assistance, to move ahead and eventually to break that cycle and to do so for their children and to turn things around...I'm supportive of what's happening here. I just think realistically it will take time.

Homeowners want to solve the same problems that Kabacoff wants to solve. When meeting with him, he mentioned that the key to River Garden was ensuring that it was well-maintained and well-managed and he was not just referring to the property; he wanted to be able to control the experience that residents were having while living in River Garden. Kabacoff was pleased about gaining "financial capital" to deal with "social issues" to help with the "fine line" that he has been trying to balance. HRI had been awarded the grant to serve as River Garden's social services administrator.

Homeowners have heard rumors about HRI's grant money and have decided how it should be spent. They want educational programs, job training, and neighborhood economic development initiatives to bring in "more jobs for the people that are living here that would be easy transportation wise." They also believe that more

retail in the area would mean more traffic from the outside and more shopping options to increase the city's tax revenue. On the surface, it seems that homeowners are concerned about the plight of their neighbors, but given their own limited mobility, they are essentially in an intervention mode. Their analysis of the structures that dictate their lower-income neighbors' status has forced them to become involved as a means to salvage the neighborhood and their property value.

Contrary to neighborhood effects theory, homeowners do not see themselves engaging in direct interaction with their neighbors as a way to improve their financial and social conditions. Instead, homeowners are opting for solutions to address the root of former residents' plights. What they have proposed is essentially the next iteration of HOPE VI. President Obama's Choice Neighborhoods Initiative places a "strong emphasis" on "local community planning" and encompasses "linking housing improvements with appropriate services, schools, public assets, transportation, and access to jobs."²⁵

Summary

Both engaged and guarded residents in River Garden experience the constraint of limited mobility; however, their overall existence in River Garden exemplifies how perception and motivation combines to shape neighbor interaction. For engaged residents who demonstrate neighborhood attachment, neighbor interaction is likely. The opposite effect is the case for guarded residents. Guarded residents feel that their

²⁵ Accessed at http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/ph/cn on April 14, 2012

space is being contested by cultural norms of others that they find offensive, threatening, or foreign. Some guarded residents are also impacted by the fear of crime. Their response has been to navigate around and through contested space by adjusting their schedules and routes to avoid potential threat or discomfort. Busy residents are just as absent and disengaged. Guarded residents therefore created a dearth of potential neighbors for engaged residents to interact with, thus decreasing overall social capital for the neighborhood and further diminishing the amount of social space for cross-tenure interaction. Their lack of interaction with neighbors is counterproductive to increasing comfort with the neighborhood.

The meaning that engaged residents attached to the neighborhood is demonstrated by their efforts at maintaining social ties, their passion for the neighborhood, and open boundaries. Former residents demonstrate neighborhood attachment by engaging each other and expressing concern for each other's well-being. They show passion for their neighborhood by advocating for park amenities on behalf of their own children and their neighbors' children. They know many neighbors and do not place limitations on how they use the neighborhood. The limitations that they do encounter are put in place by the other set of engaged residents – the homeowners.

Homeowners have a vested interest in the entire neighborhood. However, the neighborhood that they invested in has not come to fruition. The vision they bought into was of a more balanced neighborhood of owners and renters, which would presumably stabilize some of the deleterious activity in the neighborhood. They contend that the neighborhood is not as normal as they would like for it to be but they believe that conditions will improve. At some point, there will be less crime, less loitering, and less

littering. In the meantime, they are working towards improving outcomes for their neighbors which will in turn have a positive impact on the entire neighborhood. They are pushing for comprehensive programming and economic development initiatives as a way to mitigate some of the constraints being experienced by their low-income neighbors, which have a direct impact on homeowners' financial well-being. If homeowners' theories are correct, they are being robbed by their poorer neighbors who would stop robbing them if they had other economic means. In River Garden's current state, property values will not increase if the neighborhood is perceived as dysfunctional and the repeated home burglaries create additional financial burdens and stress for homeowners.

Former residents and homeowners are attached to the neighborhood for various reasons. Many former residents feel bound to the neighborhood due to limited mobility. They live in a city where several public housing sites have been redeveloped into mixed-income communities creating an affordable housing shortage. Besides, they like the newness of their neighborhood although it comes with additional controls at levels they had not previously experienced. Homeowners were "lured" to River Garden by new urbanist design concepts such as walkability, cohesiveness with the greater neighborhood, and nicely appointed architectural elements. The location of River Garden and new home construction were also major factors. They knew that the neighborhood was undergoing change and were willing to wait out the process, but they did not anticipate their property values dipping due to being completely enclosed by rental property combined with a depressed real estate market. Homeowners are also financially bound to the neighborhood.

Former residents and homeowners who have become attached to the neighborhood will serve to effect change in the neighborhood. Former residents' limited options means they have to follow the rules. They are not allowed to invade common space and they must maintain control of what happens in front of their units in order to preserve their residency. Homeowners are compelled to exert pressure on the developer and the city to ensure the neighborhood is monitored and controlled and to bring about direct services to improve outcomes for their neighbors. It is in this sense that gentrifying forces are not only speeding up the neighborhood change process but also presenting opportunities that could speed up the self-sufficiency process for the lower-income neighbors.

VII. NEIGHBORHOOD OF CHOICE

Not all residents are bound to River Garden by limited mobility. A number of residents in the engaged category expressed that they wanted to be in the neighborhood and they actively engaged it. The actions of these 'renters by choice' are representative of what Savage (2010) refers to as 'elective belonging.' These self-selecting residents enjoy the aesthetics of the neighborhood, may have few prior connections in the community, make a conscious decision to move into the neighborhood, and become highly vested (Savage 2010). In as much as a comparison can be made, they share similarities to Brown-Saracino's (2009) social preservationists in that they feel that the cultural aspects of former residents are positive attributes of the neighborhood that should be embraced. In River Garden, residents in this category foster the cross-tenure interaction that has not been mentioned in previous HOPE VI studies. I point to these individual realities to highlight alternative narratives to the generalization that neighbor interaction is unlikely across housing tenure in mixed-income communities.

It should also be noted that a number of former residents are also not in the neighborhood for the primary reason of immobility. I came across residents who are attached to place and people. They have life-long friendships and are rooted in the neighborhood.

The examples that I offer in this chapter are of engaged residents who are in the neighborhood by choice, and just like residents in the neighborhood due to limited mobility, they, too, demonstrate neighborhood attachment through active neighboring,

the desire to solve problems for the neighborhood, and by using open boundaries. Rather than coming into the neighborhood to claim space or control their poorer neighbors, renters by choice intend to put down roots and “rub up” against former residents “with historical attachments to place” (Savage 2010, 116). As Savage (2010) explains, residents who self-select the neighborhood move in with the intent of mingling with original residents and do not intend to disrupt the cultural fabric of the neighborhood. Their presence in the neighborhood is symbolic of their attempt to become part of the neighborhood’s history. Their agenda is to stake a claim in the neighborhood by becoming a part of the existing structure; therefore, they maintain positive attitudes about the neighborhood that they elect to belong. Their participation in the neighborhood points to several practices that encourage cross-tenure interaction. They use the routine of dog walking for the purpose of meeting neighbors. Once they meet neighbors, they begin developing social networks. Seniors in this category view themselves as resources for their neighbors and effortlessly exhibit neighborliness. Because these residents have a full understanding of the composition of the neighborhood, they also exemplify how full-disclosure may help to shape residents’ expectations and perceptions which factor into residents’ motivation to engage the neighborhood.

In this chapter, I also include a discussion concerning the lack of attention to children in River Garden. At the outset of my research, I expected children to serve as mechanisms for bringing adults together in the same manner that Varady et al. (2005) and Kleit (2005) found in their respective studies. Instead, I found that children are scattered throughout New Orleans’ school systems and many kids are kept inside due

their units due to the lack of dedicated, safe play space for children. HOPE VI sites that do not incorporate children into the design seem counterintuitive to the concept of mixed-income housing given the considerable allotment of housing needed by female householders. The ‘where are the children?’ phenomenon in River Garden further speaks to the overall plan to provide desirable housing for market-rate residents rather than subsidized tenants.

Former residents by choice

A number of former residents enjoy living in River Garden. Their presence in River Garden is the equivalent of living in a neighborhood of choice because even with other options, they would still choose River Garden. Former residents find comfort in knowing many of their neighbors from their previous tenure as St. Thomas residents, “Right now...we all know each other. We all from here so we all just get along.” Some residents had lived in the community their “whole life” and had seen kids in the neighborhood grow up to become parents. Residents considered some of their neighbors to be like “extended family.”

I love the fact that I can still see all of my friends I grewed up with... we have nice days back here where everybody get along, we also have our drama, but I love being where I’m from, where it’s home to me.

They center their livelihood around spending time with each other, entertaining each other to “make the day go by” by going “down to the nail shop” and at other times, they escort each other to Walmart. They also entertain neighbors inside their homes:

Sometimes we invite each other to each other house for a basketball game or football, that's how we do our time for...we'll sit outside and drink or we sit out and enjoy and our conversations.

Rootedness in the neighborhood lent towards River Garden being a neighborhood of choice. While some residents may have been “working to get out,” others saw the neighborhood as their legacy and anticipated being in the neighborhood for a while. They “ain’t going nowhere but here” because this was their “home.” The presence of former residents, particularly those who enjoy the neighborhood, allows for the exhibiting of traditional neighborhood culture of which residents by choice embrace.

Leashed Mechanisms

While meandering through The Backside one day, I spotted Patrice and Amigo near St. Mary and Chippewa Streets. A crowd of pre-school children were gathered around to take turns playing with Amigo who was almost just as tall as they were. “My turn, my turn” could be heard over and over again along with spurts of cheerful giggles. Patrice’s stature and white complexion starkly contrasted the tiny light-brown to dark-brown hued children grabbing onto Amigo’s leash. A woman exclaimed, “enough walking the dog” and Patrice and Amigo eventually forged towards completing their daily route.

When Patrice walks Amigo, she crosses the paths of other dog walkers, leisure strollers, children playing, and residents sitting on stoops. Her dog serves as an icebreaker creating the opportunity for neighbors to speak to each other. Amigo has become a neighborhood favorite among the kids playing on the sidewalks, who Patrice

describes as “friendly but aggressive”. The kids usually begin the conversation by asking to be introduced to Amigo, but only after making sure that Amigo does not bite. Patrice invites them to pet him and take turns holding the leash.

Patrice is a market-rate resident in her 50’s who relocated to New Orleans from a nearby southern state within the last year. She was attracted to River Garden because of the architecture and because her dog was welcome. She understood the concept of a mixed-income community and viewed herself as “part of the solution.” She has contemplated the role of management in bringing people together and ponders ideas to bring neighbors together:

I do think that there needs to be a little more at least instigation from the management community to say we’re going to have ice cream on Saturday at the park. I’d go. I’d go get free ice cream and take my dog. I bet everybody here would. I mean I think there needs to be a few more things. I don’t know that the neighborhood is strong enough for it to plan those kinds of things itself so I feel like somebody needs to...

Patrice maintains a “pretty busy” schedule but because her routine includes walking Amigo once or twice a day this means she gets to see the neighborhood and her neighbors on a daily basis. Patrice has met a few residents throughout the community and in the instances when she has discovered that individuals shared commonalities with other neighbors, she has made introductions between households. For example, upon discovering that one young couple had just moved in from a particular town in an adjacent state, she connected them to their neighbors who lived

down one block across the street who were also from their hometown. Patrice's dog walking not only creates direct interaction between herself and neighbors but has initiated a social network that has the potential to strengthen and expand. Although the majority of dog owners were market-rate residents, their dog walking routes also allowed for cross-tenure interaction among former and sub-paying residents who lived on the route or were walking along similar paths. Dog walking definitely served to connect renters with each other as one respondent indicated, "I have met almost everybody in my building that has a dog."

As Patrice mentioned, it was HRI's allowance of pets that attracted her to River Garden. Dog walking got Patrice out into the neighborhood but it was also her positive perception of the neighborhood and the people that motivated her to create a dog walking route that extended into neighborhood streets rather than just around Boettner Park. Patrice's involvement in the neighborhood is representative of both the pet allowance policy and individual agency that began with her deciding to move into River Garden with full knowledge of who lived in the community and desiring to embrace the neighborhood's culture in a similar manner to Brown-Saracino's social preservationists (2009).

Knowing Who's Who and What's What

Dave's story is similar. He is a white male in his 40's who originated from a mixed-community in a southern state and moved into River Garden with realistic expectations of the neighborhood. He, too, is a dog walker and has experienced the neighborhood as he walks his dog and on occasions when he jogs through the

neighborhood. He has participated in at least two HRI events where he has met neighbors who remember him from the events. Dave likes knowing his neighbors and is convinced that HRI should do more than just events “here and there” but should also incorporate common amenities to help bring people together:

Why not have a basketball court in there or a tennis court or something in there because I tell you that would definitely bring everybody out, you know?... there's nothing outside except for parking lots for everybody, and stoops to hang out on... There's still not too many gathering places... I'd build a park, a community little area over here, an outdoor place where more people could come and gather in a setting. Even, I'm talking there's no picnic tables out there. There's no grills out there. I mean, I really think they should do that.

Dave confirmed that “99%” of his interactions have been positive and he makes it a special point to know his closest neighbors by name. Dave keeps “his ears to the street” and can tell you the details of most of the events in the neighborhood that have warranted police involvement. Dave is engaged because he perceives the neighborhood to be normal, stemming from his expectations based on prior experience living in mixed communities. Both Dave and Patrice illustrate how positive perceptions and realistic expectations greatly influence how residents live in the neighborhood. They understood the complexities of the neighborhood even before they moved into it. However, their experience is contrary to several respondents who indicated that they did not have any idea that River Garden was comprised of subsidized residents:

The leasing agents don't talk about it at all, even with a positive spin they don't talk about it at all. They just talk

about the fact that it didn't flood during Katrina. But they don't talk about the history of the area in any light, as even an experiment or a mixed-income place or anything like that. It's just very interesting.

An anonymous poster on ApartmentRatings.com who lived in River Garden for a year warned potential renters that they should not believe what they see during the day but also ride through the community during the evening, Anonymous also stated:

Shame on the River Garden Leasing Staff for conning good people into moving into a neighborhood like this just so they can make a buck.²⁶

Residents with very strong opinions against "welfare housing" found themselves living in a situation that they would not have agreed upon had they been given full disclosure about the neighborhood.

I think it's a little, I'm going to say, unfair that I'm sitting here paying \$875 for my one bedroom and then there's somebody living either underneath me or whatever that's paying however much a month. We're doing the same thing and I'm working hard and my boyfriend's working hard to pay for our rent.

I would change that the River Garden Apartments does not accept, should not accept low income or whatever it is. I hate to judge, but it seems like those few bad apples just ruin the whole neighborhood.

²⁶ Accessed at <http://www.apartmentratings.com/rate/LA-New-Orleans-River-Garden-Apartments-on-Felicity-1008102.html#ixzz1s9RPnuFI>

Prior to moving in, these residents did not know that River Garden included public housing residents and they did not appreciate being in the environment. They live in River Garden as guarded residents who are waiting out their leases. As guarded residents, they are not neighborly, their boundaries are tight, and they are detached from the neighborhood. They also utilize space that could be otherwise used by people who would live as engaged residents.

Neighboring with Grace

One day while walking through The Backside, I was spotted by Grace who invited me to come up to her porch. The porches are a lot roomier than the row home stoops and on The Backside, residents were more likely to be standing on their porches leaning over the wooden railings rather than sitting on the concrete steps. I already knew Grace because she was one of the first residents to respond to my postcard request for interviews. Grace wanted to know if I was thirsty and my inklings about southern etiquette informed me to accept a “cold drink.” Grace was talking and was happy to have someone listen. She’s an older resident nearing her 70’s and lives alone. She assured me that she was not lonely. She knew about a bus for seniors that transports them to activities and told me that she would be taking the city bus that runs down Rousseau Street to the Canal Place Theatres where she finds solace in a good “show” especially in the summer when she can get “free air-condition”. Grace is a native Louisianan but is new to New Orleans as of two years ago. She says she does not have a whole lot of friends but people seemed to know her. Three people walked by during my visit. Two of them waved and asked her how she was doing and an older teen wanted to know if she needed anything from “the Walmart.” Grace smiled and let

him know she was on her way to “the show” and reminded him to be careful. He responded as if he already knew those words would be spoken.

Grace is a retired counselor and she generally looks out for her neighbors. During our interview, she told me about meeting a lady who attended her church who also happened to live in River Garden. Grace and her church buddy walked with each other to church often and as Grace learned more about her newfound friend, she offered her useful information. For example, Grace’s friend did not realize that she was due certain benefits from the government as the widow of a veteran. Grace gave her the information to make her claims. Grace shared other accounts that demonstrated her resourcefulness and before I left her porch that day, she insisted on getting me “all the people” I needed for my interviews. I told her that I just needed one and I later heard from three different people who were referred to me by Grace.

Where Are the Children?

One Sunday afternoon while driving toward my unit on Annunciation Street, I encountered about twelve children between the ages of five and twelve playing kickball in the street. Upon my approach, they gave me hard stares because I had interrupted their game. I wondered why they were not playing in the park and later realized that Boettner Park had been designated as a dog park and parents had warned their kids about running through the grass there. Playing in the park was not allowed by parents who were trying to prevent their kids from tracking dog remnants into their homes. Since they do not play in Boettner Park and lack designated play space such as a playground or sports court, they invent other kinds of play space:

I donated a van to my friend here who used to be an ice cream vendor. I never drove the van. It had a bunch of Popsicle stickers on it. Young kids, I'm talking three to six years old, took a rock and busted windows out of the van, used the van as a playground daily...

While living on The Backside of River Garden, I frequently encountered neighborhood children in the early morning as they waited on various corners for school buses to transport them all over the city. The bus-riding children seemed to outnumber children walking down Annunciation Street towards Jackson Avenue where SciTech Academy was located. In New Orleans, school choice means that parents can opt to have their children attend any school in Orleans Parish Schools or the Recovery School District. Varady et al. (2005) found that school functions provided a platform for neighborhood parents to interact. In fact, at least two respondents indicated meeting each other through their children's private school located nearly five miles outside of River Garden. Since many of the neighborhood's children attended outer-neighborhood schools, opportunities for parent interaction at school functions were diminished.

To the extent that parents felt compelled to monitor their offspring, children could also bring parents together in the neighborhood as well. As parents minded their children, they would certainly encounter other parents doing the same; however, in River Garden, there were no central locations where kids could be expected to play. Certainly children can be seen throughout River Garden on sidewalks, in the streets, and in parking lots, but they are not seen to the extent that one might expect. A number of respondents reported that they met several neighbors through their children while other respondents indicated that they kept their children inside because they were

concerned about safety issues or because they were not comfortable with having their children in the vicinity of the older teens who liked to hang out in larger groups. At any rate, the failure to incorporate children into the design of River Garden is a revealing oversight. The spatiality of River Garden is a clear indication of why and for whom the community was redeveloped. Families with children are not the intended consumers.

Summary

If the goals of mixed-income communities include encouraging neighbor interaction among residents, these examples provide concepts for further consideration. In the final chapter, I provide recommendations based upon these specific examples and other observations of the community.

Residents who selected the neighborhood and are satisfied with the neighborhood provide some hope for the community. For some former residents, River Garden is all they know and they have developed systems of mutual exchange which increases their ability to survive in the neighborhood. They experience a sense of belonging with respect to the friendships they share and would not live anywhere else even if they had the choice. These residents were more open to interacting with new neighbors, particularly renters who demonstrated elective belonging or social preservationist traits (Savage 2010; Brown-Saracino 2009).

Mechanisms were used in this space to increase cross-tenure interaction. Dog walking was repeatedly cited by residents as a mechanism for meeting neighbors and respondents convincingly conveyed the impact that seniors have in the community. Respondents also indicated that the lack of community amenities have inhibited

interaction to the point of creating tension for parents concerned about the absence of kid space. Lastly, some tension could be alleviated by providing full disclosure about the property to prospective renters. I contend that it would take hundreds of residents like Patrice, Amigo, Dave, and Grace to make an impact in mixed-income communities such as River Garden, but knowing that there are residents who elect to belong to these communities shows some promise for the next iteration of publicly-funded mixed-income developments. If developers desire a true integration of residents, then being just as selective of market-rate residents as they are of public housing residents may prove to make a difference. Mixed-income communities would also have to consider that many of their subsidized residents will have children in the household. In the same manner that developers design the community to ensure the preferences of market-rate renters and homeowners, planners and developers must also challenge themselves to create balance in being able to serve both sets of residents. I provide more discussion about these issues in the concluding chapter where I present strategies and recommendations for policy development.

VIII: CONCLUSION

Summary and Implications

Neighbor interaction evolved as the focus of my study as a result of disentangling the theory of neighborhood effects. Neighborhood effects posits that lower-income neighbors benefit from higher-income neighbors via interaction. I sought out to better understand the complexities of neighbor interaction in a mixed-income setting and utilized qualitative methods to answer my initial questions regarding how mechanisms, perceptions, motivations, and processes developed by residents converged to shape neighbor interaction. I also studied the constraints that had bearing on the availability of social space. The purpose of my project was not to determine if neighborhood effects were visible in River Garden; however, my findings do speak to important considerations of the theory. If cross-tenure interaction is required for neighborhood effects to occur, my findings offer a partial explanation for the lack of effects. Lack of interaction was a result of 1) how residents perceived the space and their neighbors; and 2) mechanisms and practices that inhibited social space. With respect to how mechanisms and perceptions impact social space, I found that residents are not interacting across tenure for three major reasons: 2) residents with negative perceptions are not motivated to engage with neighbors due to fear of crime, feelings of exclusion, or the perception of disparate value systems; 2) guarded residents create high turnover or are simply absent from the community due to competing interests; and 3) 1) several practices (i.e., territoriality, social control/spatial design, gated communities, and smoke and mirrors) compromise how space is used in River Garden and lend toward segmented use by residents or limited use across housing tenure.

Important findings of my study came in the form of separate socially constructed neighborhoods (mental maps) based upon respondents' perceptions of how normal the neighborhood was. Those perceptions were shaped by previous experience in similar neighborhoods and how residents chose to deal with living in a neighborhood of limited mobility. They either reject it or claim it. Those who reject the neighborhood have been given the label of guarded residents; they physically and socially withdraw from the neighborhood. Those who claim the neighborhood and fully participate in it are engaged residents. Guarded residents are ruled by constraints such as crime and their judgments about their poorer neighbors. Within the group of guarded residents are also busy individuals who are too consumed with long work hours and other outside commitments to interact with neighbors. Engaged residents fully participate in River Garden and demonstrate neighborhood attachment - an important variable in describing one's proclivity towards positive neighbor interaction. Additionally, I identified residents who elected to belong in the neighborhood as positive influences towards creating cross-tenure interaction.

When thinking of social space as spatial proximity combined with time and opportunity to interact, several factors influence the amount of social space in River Garden. Most space is controlled by entities that either made the space exclusive or intimidating. While the combined routines of stoop sitting and dog walking along the south side of the park add cross-tenure social space, the territoriality of those spaces limit the amount of cross-tenure interaction. Former residents on their stoops and dog walkers in the park are more likely to interact with fellow former residents and dog walkers, respectively. Furthermore, stoop activity is monitored and controlled as is

Boettner Park, thus eliminating potential social space. The Highrise elevators and the backyards of homeowners are exclusive “gated” spaces that promote within-tenure interaction while the park’s perimeter of mostly homes limits possibilities for any cross-tenure exchanges. HRI’s community events have the potential to add social space but the nature and timing of events signal a different agenda – HRI staff members are either poor planners or are avoiding potential conflict that could arise by bringing residents of different housing tenure together in the same space.

These findings point to the underlying reason for the lack of cross-tenure interaction in River Garden which is the huge conflict of interest inherent in such a space. A mixed-income community in the early stages of neighborhood change requires a surplus of incentives to attract investors (Logan and Molotch 2007). River Garden has many lures such as its proximity to downtown and trendy shops and restaurants, new construction, and well-designed neighborhood paths and landscapes. To deliver the privacy that home purchasers seek, River Garden’s homes offer expansive backyards and three acres of green space directly across the street from most homes. Upon examining the layout of River Garden’s many different housing types, it is apparent that the cluster of homes surrounded by backyard space and the park are somewhat insulated from the rest of the community of rental units. The other incentive for homeowners was the plan for more homeowners to buy into the neighborhood creating a more balanced ratio of homeowners and renters. When the condominium plan fell through, homeowners were basically guaranteed concessions in the form of social control over tenants, the ear of the City Council, and additional police detail within the neighborhood.

Control of social space combined with guarded residents' withdrawing from the neighborhood reduced opportunities for cross-tenure interaction or any interaction at all for that matter. As guarded residents wait for opportunities to move out, they describe themselves as being in "hostage" situations. This should be of concern to management because guarded residents increase the workload of the management staff first by having staff to address their complaints and then by having staff to find new tenants once their leases expire. If residents want to socialize without feeling controlled or fearing repercussion, the neighborhood Walmart offers safe space. Interestingly, Walmart, an entity outside of the neighborhood, may offer the most likely space for cross-tenure interaction to occur. One can only wonder what the neighborhood would be like if Walmart was not within walking distance.

I designed my study based on previous works by scholars investigating social conditions within HOPE VI mixed-income communities. I offer a comparative analysis of our findings. Neighbor interaction does occur in River Garden within-groups and also across housing tenure to a much lesser degree. Like Chaskin and Joseph (2010) and Tach (2009), I found that pre-existing relationships among former residents were prevalent and that there was selective participation in the events sponsored by the property's manager, HRI. Former residents in my study expressed that HRI provided preferential treatment to market-rate residents and referenced broken promises in relation to community amenities that were to be included in River Garden. These sentiments did not necessarily dissuade social interaction but rather provided a common cause around which former residents could rally. While Graves (2010) indicated that the biased treatment thwarted social interaction, I found the opposite.

In 2005, Kleit reported that social interaction in the HOPE VI community that she studied was compromised by cultural barriers and language differences. In River Garden, guarded residents that most reflect this finding are those who are opposed to interacting with their neighbors based on perceived class and value disparities. I did not encounter non-English speaking residents to determine if language barriers were present in River Garden. To the degree that River Garden is heavily English-speaking, language barriers would only apply to a very small percentage of residents.

Tach (2009) determined that former residents would be more likely to intervene when witnessing a crime; however, my study did not measure for such intervention. What I did find was that former residents felt that circumstances were different from previous generations when it was expected for residents to intercede when trouble was brewing. Residents indicated that they were extremely reluctant to say anything to teenagers who might retaliate with weapons. They were also hesitant about discussing teenagers' behaviors with the teens' parents who they felt would respond negatively. Residents were not willing to take such risks. Tach's former residents were also more pleased with the neighborhood than market-rate residents – sentiments that were linked to residents' perceptions of crime. I found that former residents and market-rate residents alike were satisfied with the aesthetics of the neighborhood but both groups were equally disturbed by crime. There were, however, slightly different nuances with respect to how we interpret respondents' reaction to crime. Tach's former residents viewed the community as having less crime than their previous neighborhood. River Garden's former residents reported that crime was just as prevalent as before but because they were more accustomed to living in crime-ridden neighborhoods, they had

a different set of coping skills, allowing them to readily function in the neighborhood. Market-rate residents either accepted crime as a byproduct of living in New Orleans or like Tach's respondents, they withdraw from the neighborhood in order to feel more safe.

The fear of crime or perception of crime reported by guarded residents was not alarming but what was surprising was the divisiveness of middle-class and poorer African Americans in River Garden. Race was not explicitly cited as a barrier to social interaction in my study; however, in some instances, the characteristics and behaviors ascribed to African Americans in the lower-income categories were identified as deterrents to social interaction by middle-class African Americans. In River Garden, where market-rate residents were predominantly African American, it would seem that the inability to effectively communicate with other African Americans would be due to class differences. This was somewhat contrary to what Pattillo (2007) found in her study where middle-class Blacks served as mediators between lower-income African Americans and developers and city officials. She argued that the Black middle-class was not so detached from the Black poor as to not feel any connection to them. In fact, she asserted that the Black middle class felt that they were personally obligated to help. In her gentrifying neighborhood, black middle-class residents were adamant about not pushing out poorer blacks. They reasoned that their work to improve the schools and neighborhood would not mean as much if the results produced were due to a removal of poorer families. If the system worked for poorer families, it is then that they could say the system had been fixed (Pattillo 2007). Middle-class Blacks in River Garden came across as being detached. Their use of "them" and "they" signaled the desire to

disassociate. Only one respondent out of nine African American market-rate respondents expressed the aspiration to help poorer neighbors by suggesting that she volunteer to work with kids who needed tutoring. Guarded residents who cited busy-ness as a reason for not interacting were at least more implicit about their aversion to their poor neighbors. In every interview that respondents indicated they were too busy to socialize, value judgments about former residents were also presented. The intra-racial dynamic in River Garden would make for a rich study of African American class-relations in a southern city but more importantly, this dynamic speaks to Massey's (1990) concern about how race and class are interacting to undermine African Americans; an issue that he believes must be addressed through public policy.

Lees (2008) asks the question as to whether or not HOPE VI statements to address self-sufficiency are simply rhetoric. Her contention is that HOPE VI is a smokescreen established for the purpose of promoting urban renewal and gentrification. It is a legitimate question for my study given the prime geography that River Garden occupies and the 40% decline of African Americans over the past fifteen years. River Garden is surrounded by progressively gentrifying blocks in adjacent neighborhoods (Goetz 2011; Lauria and Stout 1995). It is also a legitimate question because of the diminishment of cross-tenure social space, the design of River Garden which favors the private market, and the lack of concerted efforts to improve outcomes for River Garden's former residents. The prospect of gentrification is the underlying source of tension and discomfort that is felt in the neighborhood.

The impending gentrification of River Garden makes it a site of contested space. It is a contest between the former residents who have been living in the space (the gentrified) and homeowners who have moved into the neighborhood with their sights on neighborhood improvement (the gentry). Renters are caught in the middle and feel just as much tension. They are uncomfortable because of the social ills that accompany impoverished areas. Property and violent crimes, “rowdiness,” “drama,” and disparate value systems were cited as reasons for discomfort within the neighborhood. Homeowners’ and management’s reactions to the conditions of the neighborhood have been to establish controls to curtail disruptive behavior and loitering in order to bring some “balance” to the neighborhood. These controls are directed toward former residents who are constantly monitored, written up, and threatened with evictions. This discomfort manifests itself in hostility; however, former residents comply with community ordinances. This explains the typical quietness of River Garden. While these measures do not work on all residents, the impact of social control measures were obvious to the researcher. This sort of control further marginalizes former residents, which is not the intended goal of HOPE VI and is certain to manifest into negative outcomes (Harvey 1997).

Homeowners are responding to the discomfort created by repeated burglaries and vandalism of their properties. They have determined that more direct measures are needed to speed up the process of neighborhood change and have concluded that addressing the structural constraints of their poorer neighbors is the most strategic method to achieve their goal of preserving the value of the neighborhood. Their lobbying of direct social services in the form of education and job training for their neighbors has

the potential to improve self-sufficiency outcomes for former residents who are able to capitalize on such opportunities – this speaks to HUD’s HOPE VI goals.

In actuality, River Garden’s homeowners are attempting to address the problems of former residents utilizing HUD’s newer strategies that have evolved from lessons learned through HOPE VI. In addressing the problems of poverty and the lack of self-sufficiency, Choice Neighborhoods will partner with nonprofit organizations, businesses, schools, city agencies, and private entities to transform public housing into communities of change rather than just focusing on physical re-development. Incorporating such structures are promising in light of HUD’s previous program strategies that did not address the constraints of former residents. Planners of these transformed communities will also have to reconsider how they address the conflicting interests of the haves and have nots who will live in their communities. Neighborhood attachment should be the goal for their residents rather than neighborhood discomfort as is the case with River Garden.

Policy and Strategy Recommendations

Based upon findings gathered specifically from respondents’ interviews and my observations of interaction in River Garden, I offer the following recommendations as concepts to be further researched and put into practice with the goal of increasing cross-tenure interaction within publicly-funded mixed-income developments.

Support dog ownership and dog walking

A number of residents indicated the effectiveness of dog walking throughout the neighborhood as a means for cross-tenure interaction. Dog owners commented on how

they met many residents while with their dogs, and residents without dogs grew to know the dog walkers from routine encounters. In River Garden, the majority of dog owners are market-rate residents. If public housing residents also walked dog, neighbor interaction could potentially increase. For public housing residents in River Garden, pet ownership is an option; however, the \$275 deposit and requirements for vaccinations, spaying and neutering, and a veterinarian on record may create barriers (HANO 2011). Of the 22 subsidized residents (former and sub-paying residents), one respondent owned a small dog. Section 526 of the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 established that local public housing authorities (PHAs) be given the leeway to establish their own pet policies to be consistent with state public health policies. On a nationwide basis, some PHAs limit pet ownership to elderly residents and only allow residents to own pets that are assistance companions.²⁷ Given the impact that dog walking has had on cross-tenure interaction in River Garden, pet ownership should be allowed for all residents in government-subsidized mixed-income communities and to the extent that health regulations are met, pet policies should be consistent for both renters and former residents. In River Garden, renters pay a \$250 deposit and have to show pet vaccination records, but they do not have to have their pets spayed or neutered and a veterinarian of record is not required.²⁸ Communities encouraging dog walking should also incorporate designated dog parks and be sure to enforce curbing.

²⁷ For example, Marin County only allows pets for residents at least 62 years of age. Accessed at http://www.marinhousing.org/ACOP/2012/acop%20ch%209_001.pdf

²⁸ From HRI Pet Rules and Regulations Addendum to Lease as of March 2011.

Provide full disclosure to prospective tenants

Residents who live in River Garden and knew of the socio-demographic composition of the neighborhood before moving in were either homeowners, native New Orleanians who knew of St. Thomas and its eventual redevelopment, or individuals who had done their own research. Leasing agents were not forthcoming with this information. When I leased my unit, I worked with an agent who was not aware that I was conducting research and she did not mention anything about the neighborhood being a publicly subsidized development or that it was a planned mixed-income community. One respondent indicated that not only did his leasing agent not disclose this information but also went through a home sales pitch without ever mentioning the neighborhood's status.

Private property managers are sales-driven and the desire to bring in paying renters is understandable; however, the eventual turnover inhibits neighbor integration and the transferring of neighborhood codes (Freeman 2006). If the goal for property managers is neighborhood stability, then long-term engagement of residents should also be the goal. This sort of engagement requires upfront buy-in which is not occurring at River Garden. Residents move in to later figure out they are not comfortable with their surroundings and they become disgruntled. As the apartment ratings poster indicated in the previous chapter, people feel “conned.” These are the residents that admit to registering frequent complaints with management all the while avoiding neighbors and withdrawing from the neighborhood. Conventional wisdom among HOPE VI researchers

indicates that allowing market-rate residents to self-select into mixed-income developments improves their outlooks and capacities to manage expectations.²⁹

HUD indicates that HOPE VI developments are to “lure” working- and middle-class families to these sites. In River Garden, the lures are working. Respondents enjoy the proximity to the Central Business District and Magazine Street and they are attracted to the newness, architecture, and walkability of the community. River Garden has also hit the correct price point. The Saulet, an apartment community that opened within a couple of years of River Garden’s opening, is located less than one-half a mile from River Garden and is priced at least 20% higher for units that are 200 square feet smaller than River Garden’s smallest units. The comparison to the Saulet is not completely apples to apples because the Saulet also has secured parking, a community pool, and a fitness center – amenities that incentivize renters to apartment communities. For some renters, River Garden’s location, newness, and affordability outweigh the social conditions of the neighborhood which suggests that the more incentivized the community is with respect to a particular renter’s preferences, the more tolerance the renter develops. What I am suggesting is that communities incorporate amenities to attract market-rate renters but also ensure that potential renters be given full disclosure about the composition of the neighborhood and be allowed to weigh their decisions accordingly.

²⁹ During a HOPE VI panel entitled ‘Mixed Income Challenges and Outcomes’ at the April 2012 Urban Affairs Association conference held in Pittsburgh, PA, a group of scholars discussed this very topic. Academic discussants included Robert Chaskin, Mark Joseph, and Lynne Wanzo – all who have published articles based upon extensive qualitative studies across numerous HOPE VI sites on the topic of neighbor interaction.

Public/private developments might also consider programs such as the Officer and Teacher Next Door programs operated by HUD and similar versions of the program offered by states and cities. These programs subsidize mortgages for home purchases or offer reduced rents to police officers and teachers who are willing to live in lower-income neighborhoods. Officers are targeted because of the reduction in crime that occurs when they move into neighborhoods while teachers model caring behavior and help to strengthen communities (HUD 2004).

Integrate seniors into the community

Senior residents such as Grace, who was highlighted in the previous chapter, were more available to their neighbors because they chose to live in the general neighborhood rather than in the River Garden Elderly Apartments which was an option for seniors over 55. To the extent that an older person's health status allows, government-subsidized mixed-income communities should encourage the integration of older residents into the neighborhood rather than segregating them into certain buildings. Upon studying a changing neighborhood in a northeastern city, Woldoff (2011) demonstrated how older residents improve neighbor relations. Woldoff found that seniors have a higher exchange value – they share stories and provide emotional and social support. I also found this to be true in River Garden as respondents repeatedly made reference to how they counted on older neighbors for friendly chats and advice. Older neighbors were also instrumental in making introductions among neighbors. The benefits were reciprocal in that residents looked out for their older neighbors by keeping them company and running errands for them.

Direct more attention to neighborhood children

It has been noted that River Garden is devoid of playgrounds or youth centers that could serve as a focal point for safe play *and* neighbor interaction. Communities that house lower-income residents should be required to design play areas for youth as well as older adolescents. Models for integrating kid space exist in New Orleans at the newly re-developed public housing sites of Harmony Oaks and Columbia Parc. Not only will incorporating such space address safety issues for children who have been resorting to playing in the street, but such space would also promote neighbor interaction among the adults of children according to Manzo, Kleit, and Couch (2008) who found that children playing together brought parents together.

River Garden should also be concerned that children have a tendency to create adventures using the built environment. The Pruitt-Igoe public housing development in St. Louis, Missouri and the Robert Taylor Homes in Chicago, Illinois offer classic examples of what can happen when children are not provided with options for play. There, designers neglected to account for the number of children in those communities forcing bored children to create alternative recreational options such as playing with elevators and fire escapes. Tragically, children lost lives and sustained injuries; consequently, elevators went out of service in these multi-storied buildings (von Hoffman 2000). In River Garden, children already took over an ice cream van by busting out the windows. Porch railings, fences, mid-rise elevators, and residents' vehicles are susceptible to becoming play equipment for River Garden's children.

Local knowledge suggests that neighborhood teens are the ones who have been breaking down doors, stealing bicycles, and vandalizing the neighborhood; residents

theorize that the “kids need something to do.” Youth centers provide positive options for teens and have been proven to successfully address issues such as violence prevention, civic engagement, disease prevention, and behavioral coping (Bayer et al. 2012; Farrell et al. 2007; and Ginwright 2007). Some services are provided to youth between the ages of 5 and 12 at the Kingsley House, a United Way community support agency adjacent to River Garden, but programming directed toward teens is limited to tutoring.

Dedicated play space and youth centers would increase social space for neighbor interaction at River Garden and similar sites while addressing needs of residents. Former residents in River Garden accuse HRI of favoring market-rate renters and dog-walking over children in the community; this sentiment has created hostility toward HRI and in a few cases, towards dogs and their owners. Incorporating children and adolescents in the community’s design would alleviate tensions and increase satisfaction with the community, making for more positive interaction among neighbors.

Increase scale of neighborhood change

Chartering or partnering with neighborhood schools offers an opportunity for developers/managers to become more directly involved in neighborhood transformation (Chung 2002). In doing so, developers would also further incentivize the neighborhood, create additional social space for the community, and direct more attention to the children of the neighborhood (Varady et al. 2005; Harris 2001; Kozol 1991). Most importantly, an effective school would address a major structural issue for poorer families. Developer, Richard Baron, partnered with community organizations and neighborhood representatives to reconstitute and redevelop Jefferson Elementary

School which was adjacent to Murphy Park- the public/private community that he transformed through HOPE VI - in St. Louis, Missouri (Turbov and Piper 2005). In New Orleans, charter schools have replaced many traditional public schools as a result of post-Katrina recovery, creating an avenue for developers and appropriate partners to establish schools as a part of their re-developed communities. Schools such as Lusher Charter School in New Orleans provide models of excellence that can be replicated.³⁰ A quality school provides an additional incentive for homeowners and market-rate renters to choose a particular neighborhood (Harris 2001; Kozol 1991).

Provide a platform for community involvement

Engaged residents, in particular, shared their ideas about how to increase neighbor interaction and increase a sense of community. Residents were willing to “volunteer as tutors” and mentors of the neighborhood’s youth and suggested starting up Girl and Boy Scout troops. As one respondent mentioned that she “miss[ed] working with kids” she suggested Saturday activities as a way to engage area youth. Other residents also shared the same sentiments and expressed being genuinely concerned about youth development.

Residents also made suggestions regarding the kinds of events they would attend such as “meet and greet happy hours,” “crawfish boils,” or events surrounding the Saints football team. The sports gathering suggestion could have significant impact according to Knoettgen (2012) who conducted an ethnographic study of the city’s

³⁰ For the 2010-2011 school year, Lusher Charter has received an A+ on state report card with 98% of students at or above grade level; River Garden’s neighborhood school, SciTech Academy at Laurel, scored an F with 39% of students scoring at or above grade level. Report cards accessed at: <http://www.doe.state.la.us/reportcards/>

football fans and found that “New Orleanians used association with Saints football to interact and build relationships in an urban environment characterized by segregated social patterning. The collective experience of watching Saints football carved out spaces for interacting with socially diverse people in a civil and positive way” (Knoettgen 2012,114).

If communities such as River Garden are interested in bringing residents together in meaningful ways, providing a platform for input from a cross-tenure panel would increase participation not only because activities would be developed based on residents’ interests but also because those residents would also bring their social ties to the events.

Limitations

My research presents the study of one HOPE VI development in a metropolitan city making findings generalizable to other HOPE VI sites with similar characteristics and demographics, but with the typical limitations emanating from a single case study.

Although Latinos are present in River Garden, I did not encounter any during my interview process. This limited my capacity to provide a representation of neighbor relations from the perspective of all racial groups who reside in River Garden.

Also, individuals were representative of all categories from anti-social to socially outgoing, however, respondents predominantly rated themselves as more social than not. Responses about social interaction were therefore coming from individuals who were more comfortable interacting with others meaning that my data was not inclusive

of individuals who were less social and that my findings may show more interaction than is common. Additionally, access to a wider sampling was compromised by the low response rate to my solicitation for interview mailings.

Further Research

The policy and strategy recommendations in the previous section are all considerations for further research. Studies across HOPE VI sites that measure the effectiveness of dog walking and the integration of seniors in the neighborhood would prove useful to assessing the potential to increase cross-tenure interaction. Additionally, a survey of market-rate residents regarding the impact of full disclosure about the community would give managers an indication to the significance of this concept. Also, comparing the impact of including residents in community event planning would prove useful. Lastly, with respect to the provided recommendations, a thorough review of wider-scale HOPE VI redevelopment projects will help to provide best-practice models for future Choice Neighborhoods.

An aggressive attempt to measure neighborhood effects in River Garden would provide an important contribution to the literature. This assessment should determine pre- and post- redevelopment employment as well as pre- and post- earnings of subsidized residents and provide a qualitative analysis of the variables associated with respondents' economic climb.

Also, the redeveloped sites of the C.J. Peete projects and the St. Bernard projects, now Harmony Oaks and Columbia Park, respectively, provide compelling sites on which to study neighbor interaction, neighborhood mechanisms, and neighborhood

effects. Both developments include community amenities such as a swimming pool, community theater, and community centers thus offering mechanisms for cross-class interaction. Additionally, both communities have integrated schools and robust community services into their projects. Compared to River Garden, the intentionality to improve outcomes for subsidized residents is more apparent, at least on behalf of the enterprises that have developed and currently manage these communities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Supplemental Materials



Figure 16: Front of interview request postcard.



Figure 17: Back of interview request postcard.

River Garden Respondents Interview Protocol

My name is Kelly Owens and I am working on a research project related to my graduate studies at the University of New Orleans. First, I would like to thank you for the time that you are about to spend with me. Because of your willingness to participate in my study, I will have a better understanding of how neighbors are getting along in River Garden and how you all are able to make connections with each other. I will be asking you a few questions and I would like for you to ask me to clarify any question if I am not clear. As you answer each question, I encourage you to speak freely. Please know that I may include parts of your responses in my report but I will not use your real name and I will not include anything that you say that would make it easy for others to figure out that you may be the person who said certain things. Also, although I am using River Garden's facility to conduct this interview, I am not working on behalf of River Garden. If the folks who work for River Garden decide to read my report, they will see your responses but they will not know that the responses came from you. I will do everything that I can to protect your identity – as a matter of fact, the university research review board requires that I make sure that you remain anonymous. If at any point, you do not wish to answer a question or if you want to stop the interview, you may do so altogether. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Review operational definitions:

Neighborhood is the River Garden development and includes the shops that are closest to you such as the Walmart – show a neighborhood map.

Neighbors are any persons who live within this neighborhood.

INTRODUCTION TO RIVER GARDEN

How long have you lived in River Garden? Where did you live before moving to River Garden?

How do you like living here in River Garden? What do you like about it?

What are the things that you do not like about River Garden?

EXPECTATIONS OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Why did you move to River Garden? How has it been for you? Did you think that it would be this way? What did you think would be different?

NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDARIES

This is where you live on the map. Show me the area that you consider to be your neighborhood. (Provide a map and ask respondent to draw neighborhood lines). Follow-up questions based on drawing: e.g., why did you not include this block? Why did you include this area? Etc.

PATTERNS AND ROUTINE ACTIVITIES

What is your average day like...what did you do yesterday from morning until night?

If needed: For example, where do you work or go to school? If you have a pet, when do you walk your pet? Do you have to give a ride to anyone in your household as part of your day? Do you have a favorite place to go eat lunch? Think about the places that have become a part of your daily or weekly routine...

[If the day that was described was a weekday, elicit responses that describe the weekend or vice versa]

SOCIAL INTERACTION

How many people do you know on your block? Do you know other people in the neighborhood?

How often do you speak to your neighbors? Do you ever get together to talk or do other things together? What sorts of things do you all do?

How did you first come in contact with most of your neighbors?

I am going to ask you to use these color coded dots so that you can show me where your friends in the neighborhood live; I want you to think about your very close, close, and not-so-close friends.

Think about a very close friend as someone who would watch your kids or someone's whose kids you would watch; someone who you share secrets with; someone that you would go out with like to a club, restaurant, or the movies – your neighbors in this category are considered 'very close'. Use the green dots to show where they live on this map.

Your close friends/neighbors are the ones that you would invite over for a cookout, borrow from or loan things like sugar, bread, or even a couple of bucks. You might not talk to them all the time but when you see each other, you usually spend some time catching up and talking about things that are going on in the neighborhood. Use the yellow dots to show where your close neighbors live on this map.

Your not-so-close neighbors are the ones that you really just say Hi and Bye to. You might know their names and the people who live with them; you might even share information with them that you thought they could use; if you saw them outside of the neighborhood, you would speak or wave or smile, but you don't know them well enough to consider them close. Use the red dot to show where they live.

SOCIAL INTERACTION / SOCIAL DISTANCE PROCESSES

When you think about your close and very close neighbors, how was it that you were able to become close? Did you make any sort of special effort to meet them? Where did you meet? Was there something special that made you all connect? How long did it take to become close?

How important is it to you to know your neighbors? Why?

Are there any neighbors that you avoid on purpose? Why?

What do you do when you see neighbors that you want to avoid? How do you make sure to avoid them?

MECHANISMS

When you think about how you met the neighbors that are now your friends, is there anything that stands out as having made it easier for you all to connect as friends?

What has worked for you in terms of making friends in the neighborhood?

What are your thoughts about the activities that are planned for the community? Do those activities allow for you to meet new people? Why or why not?

What about when you think about your daily routines – you know the ones that we discussed earlier. Are there certain places or activities that make it easier for you to meet people? Do you believe that your daily routines make it difficult to meet your neighbors? In what ways?

Do your kids have friends in the neighborhoods? Where did they meet? What do they like to do together? Have you met any of their parents? How did you meet?

Have you met any of your neighbors outside your block? In what kind of places? (Triggers – church, nearby stores, bars, restaurants, walking the dog)

If you have the feeling of wanting to socialize with people or just be around people other than the folks you live with, where do you go?

Are there places outside of the neighborhood where it seems like you always run into people from River Garden?

OPEN DISCUSSION

Would you say that you are very interested in getting to know most of your neighbors? Why or why not?

If there was anything that you could change about the neighborhood or your neighbors, what would that be?

Is there anything else that you can tell me to help me understand the neighborhood?

I have a form that I need you to fill out and once you are done, our interview session will be complete unless the form makes you think of some other things that you would like to tell me.

Data Collection Form and Survey - ALL INFORMATION WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL!

AGE	RACE – check all that apply	INCOME (gross annual)	HOUSING TYPE
<input type="checkbox"/> 18 – 22 <input type="checkbox"/> 23 - 29 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 - 39 <input type="checkbox"/> 40 – 49 <input type="checkbox"/> 50 – 61 <input type="checkbox"/> 62 – 75 <input type="checkbox"/> 76 or over <hr/> Do you have a dog? yes no Do you own a car? yes no	<input type="checkbox"/> African American/Black <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Indian <input type="checkbox"/> Asian American <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ Hispanic/Latino <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> \$0 - \$10,830 <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,831 - \$18,310 <input type="checkbox"/> \$18,311 - \$25,790 <input type="checkbox"/> \$25,791 - \$29,530 <input type="checkbox"/> \$29,531 - \$35,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$35,001 - \$45,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$45,001 - \$55,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$55,001 - \$75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$75,001+	I: <input type="checkbox"/> Rent <input type="checkbox"/> Own My home type is: <input type="checkbox"/> Affordable Housing <input type="checkbox"/> Elderly Housing <input type="checkbox"/> Market-rate <input type="checkbox"/> Public Housing <input type="checkbox"/> Section 8/Voucher
Did you live in St. Thomas before it was redeveloped? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		How long have you lived here? _____	
Highest educational degree completed: <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 12 th grade <input type="checkbox"/> High School/GED <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> Master's <input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate		What is your occupation? _____	
How many children are in your household?	List the schools that they attend: _____		
Have you met any neighbors at school functions?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Did you exchange any contact information so that you could keep in touch in the future?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
If you or members of your household attend church, please list the name of the church or churches that you attend: _____			
Have you met any neighbors at church functions?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Did you exchange any contact information so that you could keep in touch in the future?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
If you or members of your household visit any of the community organizations in the neighborhood , please list the names of the organizations that you visit: _____			
Have you met any neighbors at the community organizations?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Did you exchange any contact information so that you could keep in touch in the future?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
If you or members of your household participate in meetings/activities sponsored by River Garden , please list the activities that you've participated in: _____			
Have you met any neighbors at the River Garden events?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Did you exchange any contact information so that you could keep in touch in the future?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no

How do you prefer to keep in touch with people? (Check all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook <input type="checkbox"/> Twitter <input type="checkbox"/> MySpace <input type="checkbox"/> In-person Do you have internet at home or work? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Which method do you use the most? (Only check one) <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook <input type="checkbox"/> Twitter <input type="checkbox"/> MySpace <input type="checkbox"/> In-person
---	---

Where do you **mostly** conduct the following activities:

	Inside <u>RG</u> neighborhood	Outside <u>RG</u> neighborhood but within 3 miles	3 or more miles outside neighborhood	In my old neighborhood
Grocery shopping				
Restaurants				
Walking dog				
Physical exercise				
Child's school				
Church				
Hanging out with friends				

Place an X in the box to show how often you visit the neighborhood places that are listed below:

	Daily	2 – 5 times per week	Once per week	Once per month	Rarely	Never
Wal-Mart						
Seattle's Best Coffee						
Anytime Fitness						
List other places that you often visit in your neighborhood:						

When you visit these places in your neighborhood, which statement **best** describes how you feel about interacting with people from your neighborhood?

- ☐ I would rather avoid my neighbors because I am too busy to stop and talk
☐ I would rather avoid my neighbors because I do not want to get to know them
☐ I have said "Hello" or smiled when I see someone I recognize
☐ I have held conversations with people that I recognize from my neighborhood
☐ I have made friends with people who work here
☐ When I go, I look forward to running into neighbors. It is great to be able to chat and catch up
- OTHER: _____

What is the best description of where you live?

- ☐ It is part of a community and I like being involved and knowing who my neighbors are
- ☐ I consider it home but I would rather not get involved with neighbors
- ☐ It is very temporary. I hope to move to a different neighborhood where I already shop and hang out
- ☐ I wish I felt more comfortable about getting to know my neighbors but it doesn't seem safe enough

OTHER: _____

How would you rate yourself as a social person? Check the statement that best describes you.

- ☐ I would rather not socialize and keep to myself
- ☐ I socialize with people if they approach me, but I don't usually start conversations with people
- ☐ I like to socialize with people I already know
- ☐ I enjoy meeting new people
- ☐ I am usually the one who gets people together for social events

OTHER: _____

Appendix B: Codes and sub-codes used for interview transcripts

1. **Barriers:** Respondents spoke of actions and mindsets that inhibited social interaction such as fear of crime, class and culture differences, and anti-social dispositions.

- a. **social control:** social control mechanisms are at play
 - 1. **park issues**
 - 2. **stoop issues**
- b. **nothing in common:** an assumption made by respondent
- c. **class/values/culture**
- d. **crime**
- e. **antisocial:** respondent indicates that she is antisocial
- f. **race:** respondent suggests that race may be a barrier
- g. **high turn-over:** respondent cites this as a reason for not getting to know neighbors

2. **Boundaries:** This code captured references to social and geographic boundaries.

- a. **social preference:** prefers to stay within boundaries for social reasons such as doesn't want to get to know people
- b. **walking distance:** respondent's neighborhood is as far as he can walk
- c. **safety:** respondent indicates that certain areas are not safe

3. **Defines Neighborhood:** As neighbors proffered definitions of how neighbors should act or how they regarded ideal neighborhoods, this code was utilized.

4. **Dogs*:** Dogs became a prevalent topic throughout this study. Responses describing the role of dogs in shaping interaction were therefore coded.

- a. dogs creating (1) or inhibiting interaction (0)

5. **Former residency:** Statements indicating where respondents lived prior to River Garden were coded to determine if residents were out-of-towners or New Orleanians and whether they had previously lived in St. Thomas or other New Orleans housing projects.

- a. **St. Thomas**
- b. **other nola projects:** lived in projects prior to River Garden
- c. **nola city:** lived within confines of New Orleans proper - Uptown, Garden District, Irish Channel, Gentilly, etc.
- d. **nola suburbs:** lived on West Bank, New Orleans East, Kenner, Metairie, etc.
- e. **out-of-state**
- f. **other**

6. **Kids*:** In an effort to understand the role that children play in shaping interaction among adults, discussions about kids were highlighted.

- a. kids stay inside (0), kid is bussed to school (1), kids play with kids in neighborhood (2), kid attends neighborhood school (3), have met kids' parents (4)

7. **Management:** Discussions about management were all coded.

8. **Mechanisms:** This code was utilized when respondents mentioned behaviors including collective efficacy, developing social ties, how daily routines shaped interaction, and the role of neighborhood institutions in developing neighbor relations.

- a. **Collective efficacy/socialization:** norms being established or role modeled
 - i. **role models work ethics:** acknowledged as a role model or wanting to see role models related to work, careers, etc.
 - ii. **role models schooling:** being acknowledged as a role model or wanting to see role models in the area of education

- iii. **role models parenting:** being acknowledged as a role model or wanting to see role models related to parenting; or if someone corrects someone else's child
- b. **Social networks:** when there is mention of some level of interaction or intentional avoidance
 - i. **weak ties:** shares info re jobs, training, aid, etc.
 - ii. **attempts to form social ties*:** speaks to strangers (1), recognizes and acknowledges (2), chit chats, introductions (3), performs favors (4), visits and outings (5)
- c. **Institutions:** mentions interacting with neighbors at neighborhood institutions
- d. **Routines:** mention of routines
 - i. **facilitator:** routine facilitates interaction
 - ii. **inhibitor:** routine inhibits interaction

9.**Neighborhood Choice:** The Neighborhood Choice code captured respondents' motivations for moving into River Garden.

- a. **Katrina displacement**
- b. **original resident**
- c. **location**
- d. **new construction**
- e. **new urbanism:** makes mention of neighborhood being walkable, diverse, aesthetically pleasing, close to amenities

10.**Neighborhood Expectations:** Respondents' discussions about what they expected from the neighborhood were highlighted as such.

11.**Neighborhood Effects:** If anyone made reference to a positive or negative outcome resulting from living in River Garden, this code was utilized.

12.**Neighborliness*:** This code was used to identify respondents' behaviors towards neighbors and marked respondents' observations of their neighbors' behaviors and processes.

13.avoids neighbors (0), speaks (1), knows names (2), shares (3)

14.**Theory:** opinions about mixed-income housing

15.**Walmart:** Each time Walmart was mentioned, it was coded.

16.**Wants to move:** If respondents discussed the desire to move out of River Garden, it was coded.

Miscellaneous codes

Hope: reference to how things might get better

Wants To Move

Great Quotes

Personal Story

Then vs. Now: comparison of St. Thomas to River Garden

Afraid To Talk

High-Rise: references to mid-rise buildings

HOPE VI Buy-In

Property Value

Bait And Switch

Solidarity: mentions common causes that galvanize residents

*Codes marked with * include weighted responses

Appendix C: IRB Exempt Letter

***University Committee for the Protection
of Human Subjects in Research
University of New Orleans***

Campus Correspondence

Principal Investigator: Renia Ehrenfeucht
Co-Investigator: Kelly D. Owens
Date: December 8, 2010
Protocol Title: "Examining Neighbor Interaction in a Mixed-Income
Community"
IRB#: 05Nov10

The IRB has deemed that the research and procedures described in this protocol application are exempt from federal regulations under 45 CFR 46.101 category 2, due to the fact that any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation. In order to keep participants anonymous, do not collect any signed consent forms.

Exempt protocols do not have an expiration date; however, if there are any changes made to this protocol that may cause it to be no longer exempt from CFR 46, the IRB requires another standard application from the investigator(s) which should provide the same information that is in this application with changes that may have changed the exempt status.

If an adverse, unforeseen event occurs (e.g., physical, social, or emotional harm), you are required to inform the IRB as soon as possible after the event.

Best wishes on your project.
Sincerely,

Robert D. Laird, Ph.D., Chair
UNO Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research

Appendix D: Layout of River Garden Development



Appendix E: Respondent Demographic Details

Gender	Age	Income	Education	Race	Tenure
Female	40-49	75001+	Masters	African American/Black	Homeowner
Female	50-61	10831-18310	High School	African American/Black	Homeowner
Male	30-39	75001+	Masters	African American/Black	Homeowner
Female	30-39	75001+	Masters	White	Homeowner
Male	30-39	75001+	Masters	White	Homeowner
Male	40-49	75001+	Bachelors	White	Homeowner
Male	62-75	25791-29530	Bachelors	White	Homeowner
Female	40-49	550001-75000	Bachelors	White	Homeowner
Female	18-22	0-10830	High School	African American/Black	Public
Female	23-29	0-10830	High School	African American/Black	Public
Female	30-39	10831-18310	High School	African American/Black	Public
Female	50-61	0-10830	High School	African American/Black	Public
Female	62-75	0-10830	High School	African American/Black	Public
Male	40-49	10831-18310	Dropout	African American/Black	Public
Male	50-61	0-10830	High School	African American/Black	Public
Female	23-29	35001-45000	Bachelors	African American/Black	Renter
Female	40-49	55001-75000	Bachelors	African American/Black	Renter
Female	40-49	25791-29530	Some college	African American/Black	Renter
Male	40-49	55001-75000	Some college	African American/Black	Renter
Female	50-61	75001+	Bachelors	White	Renter
Male	40-49	75001+	Bachelors	White	Renter
Male	40-49	10831-18310	Some college	White	Renter
Male	50-61	55001-75000	Masters	White	Renter
Female	23-29	0-10830	Bachelors	African American/Black	Riser
Female	30-39	45001-55000	Bachelors	African American/Black	Riser
Female	30-39	29531-35000	Some college	African American/Black	Riser
Female	50-61	75001+	Bachelors	African American/Black	Riser
Male	40-49	29531-35000	Bachelors	African American/Black	Riser
Female	30-39	29531-35000	Masters	Asian American	Riser
Female	23-29	25791-29530	Bachelors	White	Riser
Female	18-22	0-10830	Dropout	African American/Black	Voucher
Female	30-39	25791-29530	High School	African American/Black	Voucher
Female	40-49	0-10830	Dropout	African American/Black	Voucher
Female	40-49	0-10830	High School	African American/Black	Voucher
Female	50-61	0-10830	Dropout	African American/Black	Voucher
Female	50-61	0-10830	High School	African American/Black	Voucher
Female	50-61	10831-18310	High School	African American/Black	Voucher
Female	50-61	0-10830	High School	African American/Black	Voucher

Respondent Demographic Details (continued)

Female	62-75	0-10830	Bachelors	African American/Black	Voucher
Male	18-22	10831-18310	High School	African American/Black	Voucher
Male	40-49	10831-18310	High School	African American/Black	Voucher
Male	40-49	0-10830	High School	African American/Black	Voucher
Male	50-61	0-10830	High School	African American/Black	Voucher
Male	50-61	0-10830	High School	African American/Black	Voucher
Male	50-61	0-10830	High School	African American/Black	Voucher

Vita

The author, Kelly D. Owens, is a native of Los Angeles, California. She received a bachelor's of arts in Elementary Education from the Baton Rouge campus of Louisiana State University and began her professional career as a middle school teacher in Atlanta, Georgia. After receiving a master's of art in Student Personnel Administration from Columbia University in New York, NY, she moved into several higher education administrative positions, including a post in residence life at Howard University. Being in Washington, DC triggered her interest in public policy matters and her positions with the U.S. House of Representatives and the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation allowed her to help shape the development of students interested in legislative careers. She developed and delivered public policy and leadership development curricula for congressional pages, interns, and fellows and also instituted an emerging leaders program focused on policy education outreach initiatives for audiences of college students and young professionals. Prior to leaving Washington, DC, Kelly was responsible for orchestrating the Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference, attracting 20,000 attendees per year.

Before embarking upon full-time studies as a doctoral student in the Urban Studies program at the University of New Orleans, Kelly served as the director for undergraduate education at Tulane University's School of Business. Recently, Kelly began a grant writing consultancy and utilized her technical writing skills to obtain a 2011 HUD Dissertation grant. Upon receiving the Ph.D. from UNO, Kelly intends to lead a purpose-filled life using her God-given talents to benefit others. She enjoys golf, traveling, spending time with family, friends, and her sisters of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.