

East Nashville skyline

Richard Lloyd

Vanderbilt University, USA

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Abstract

This article examines a familiar urban dynamic – gentrification – in the less familiar setting of Nashville, Tennessee. In recent years, gentrification processes are accompanied by legitimating appeals to civic design trends and new cultural dynamics, particularly those associated with the New Urbanism and the promotion of “creative” city environments nurturing educated and culturally savvy residents. These discourses have increasingly come to define contemporary “progressive” urban policy, promoting values of diversity and cosmopolitanism while eliding standard concerns over displacement and the retrenchment of state services. Beginning with a dramatic street-level encounter between old and new styles of urban development, this account addresses the juxtaposition of a low density district targeted for redevelopment on Nashville’s East Side with the obdurate presence of neighboring public housing projects, inscribing competing political and cultural imaginaries in the built environment. It contributes a detailed examination of the encounter between “one-size-fits-all” policy agendas with the spatial and historical specificity of a mid-South city, using thick description to unpack the sedimentary processes of transformation, and the contributions of state and non-state actors to new identity formation. This on-the-ground exploration further allows for a critical assessment of the progressive virtues of diversity and cosmopolitanism as they are manifest in the context of neoliberal state action and spatial restructuring.

Keywords

amenities, cosmopolitanism, creative cities, diversity, Nashville, neoliberalism, New Urbanism, public housing, tax increment financing

Cities in the American Southeast are typically characterized by sprawling suburban expansion and weak urban cores, corresponding to transportation in the automobile age, cultural and economic interests in privacy and privatization, and the re-establishment of racial segregation through spatial dispersion (Applebome, 1996; Beauregard, 2006; Fulton et al., 2001; Lassiter, 2007). Southern suburban development has been severely criticized on the grounds of environmental impact, civic disengagement, racism and alienation – even while many appear to

Corresponding author:

Richard Lloyd, Department of Sociology, Vanderbilt University, PMB 351811, Nashville, TN 37235-1811, USA

Email: r.d.lloyd@vanderbilt.edu

view it as an inexorable process.¹ However, recent years have seen a nationwide surge in downtown residence and the gentrification of inner ring neighborhoods alongside continued suburban expansion, even in Southern cities where prior traditions of 'in-town living' are weak (Breen and Rigby, 2004). These processes change inner-city demographics and cultural associations. They are accompanied by new amenity profiles for older downtowns and neighborhoods, shifting ideologies of neighborhood spatial design, and an elevated role of the arts in urban economies (Clark et al., 2002; Lloyd and Clark, 2001; Zukin and Kosta, 2004; Zukin et al., 2009).

In cities like Nashville, Tennessee, perched on the northern edge of the dynamic Sunbelt region, such developments pose special conceptual challenges, as new cultural and design principles are implemented piecemeal in an often uncongenial urban environment. The case of Nashville's Five Points Redevelopment District illustrates the juxtaposition of neighborhood redesign to 'obsolete' – but still materially obdurate – built forms of a superseded design era, encoding in the built environment social and political shifts of the contemporary city, and the sedimentary contradictions of urban change. The Five Points designates the commercial hub in a culturally notorious and rapidly gentrifying agglomeration of block groups separated by Shelby Avenue from Nashville's largest public housing projects, James A. Cayce Homes. The gentrification of this near ring neighborhood, an erstwhile streetcar suburb profoundly impacted by the postwar urban renewal, intersects with key trends of urban design and demographic transformation: the ascendance of 'New Urbanist' planning principles, as well as the rise of a putative 'creative class', making distinct lifestyle demands on the city while fueling economic growth with their ingenious contributions to high tech, media and cultural industries.

The New Urbanism pitches itself against suburban sprawl, as well as against attempts to lure capital back into downtown through prefabricated entertainment destinations, which critics claim reproduce the bland logic of the suburbs in (heavily fortified) urban bubbles (Duany et al., 2000; Hammett and Hammett, 2007; Hannigan, 1998; Judd, 1999; Kunstler, 1993; Sorkin, 1992). Against deracinated suburbs and Disneyfied downtowns, the diversity of the city street – once routinely condemned as a scene of danger, disorder and alienation – is now re-imagined as an urban amenity for a new class of 'cosmopolitan' consumers (Florida, 2002; Lloyd, 2006; Mele, 2000; Zukin and Kosta, 2004). Following the principles of Jane Jacobs's (1961) iconoclastic mid-century paean to Greenwich Village's sidewalk life, the sidewalk 'symphony' of strangers provides essential stimuli for an innovative workforce, nurturing 'creativity in all of its forms' (Florida, 2002) and stoking cosmopolitan dispositions for a globalized economy. The 'breadth and depth' of local urban culture arguably attracts educated residents, repulsed by the dully predictable suburban landscape (Lloyd and Clark, 2001).²

The unexpected return of the sidewalk in the Southern city discussion – as a site of privilege no less! – extends a welcome invitation to urban ethnographers who have long initiated their projects via a place on the corner. In that tradition, this article begins on a corner as well, though not, as is often the case, to demonstrate

the unexpected reservoirs of community sentiment present among economically marginalized men (Anderson, 1978; Duneier, 1999; Liebow, 1967). Rather, it uses an extraordinary moment in East Nashville's recent history as a springboard to explore key themes in contemporary neighborhood transformation – the implementation of new cultural and design principles, and the conflicts and contradictions engendered by the process.

East Nashville skyline

On Nashville's gentrifying East Side, a sprawling and heterogeneous district that contains the city's largest public housing project, but also some of its trendiest entertainment destinations, the Tomato Art Festival has recently become a signature event, held every August since 2004. It was initiated by the Art and Invention Gallery on Woodland, near the bustling center of East Nashville redevelopment, in order to celebrate 'the one good thing'³ about middle Tennessee's stifflingly humid summer months – the bountiful regional tomato crop. It is also a celebration of the neighborhood's increasingly consolidated identity as a hip and progressive cultural center in the New South, home to the Plowhaus Artists' Cooperative, and to alternative country, rock and folk music scenes that explicitly repudiate the banal commercialism and political conservatism of the country music packaged across the river by Music Row's major labels (Patchett, 2007). Appropriately quirky, the Tomato Festival strikes a pleasing balance between down-home regional identification and arty pretensions. It was one of the first neighborhood events to successfully draw large numbers of participants from other sections of the city, and to receive national news coverage.

The festival animates the local commercial constellation known as the Five Points, on the edge of the 'historic' East End district, where the signature enterprises of neighborhood gentrification cohere: a coffee shop specializing in organic and fair trade brews (with the beatnik-evoking moniker Bongo Java), a natural foods market, a specialty deli, a chef-owned bistro, numerous thrift stores and boutique shops, two yoga studios, and many, many bars (including the lesbian bar Lipstick Lounge). From modest origins as a quirkily themed art exhibit, in which 65 artists showed tomato-inspired pieces, the Tomato Art Fest quickly evolved to include a range of events drawing the participation of local businesses, including contests for best costume, best tomato-based recipe and best Bloody Mary (Figure 1). It also features the annual tomato toss, begun in 2005, in which crates of spoiled tomatoes donated from the Farmer's Market are made available to revelers to pelt a designated condemned structure on nearby blocks.

The initial target of the toss, the erstwhile East End Market – located on the corner of Fatherland and 11th Street a short walk from the Five Points commercial hub – is especially symbolic of the neighborhood transformation both reflected and abetted by events like the Tomato Art Fest. While the art galleries, boutiques, cafés and hipster bars are relatively new to the district, this recently shuttered and condemned concrete bunker represented a style of commerce that was all too familiar,

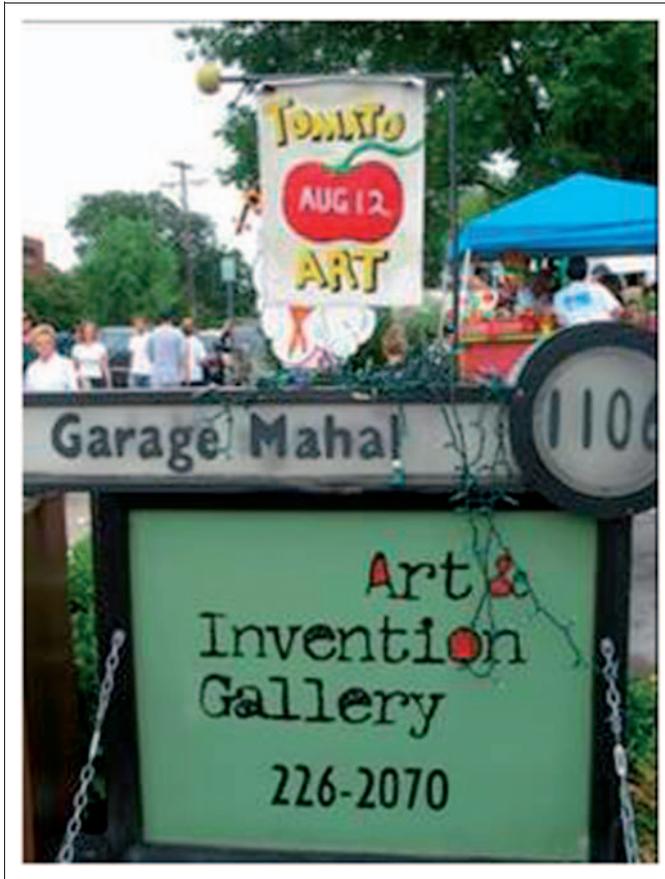


Figure 1. The Tomato Art Festival at Art and Invention Gallery.

one of the many small markets advertising ‘Discount Tobacco and Beer’ on its marquee, class-and-race-coded commercial enterprises disparagingly nicknamed ‘ghetto marts’ or ‘murder marts’.⁴ In fact, all of the enterprises at Fatherland and 11th – commonly referred to as Martin’s Corner after the major landowner – stood in stark contrast to the trendy stops at the Five Points: the Bill Martin Supermarket, a sub-chain outlet with the longest lines typically at the Lotto cage, and Kendall’s Consignment Shop.

When open, the East End Market was especially seedy, a whitewashed stump of a structure, surrounded by cracked pavement in a large lot that was typically ‘live’ (filled with loiterers) into the late night hours (Figure 2). The East End Market’s Yemeni proprietor, Ali, worked daily in a Tennessee Titans football jersey (27 – the number of former star running back Eddie George), backed by partnership with a former Nashville Police vice officer who financed a variety of low-end markets like this one. Ali and his partners objected to the displacement of the market.



Figure 2. The East End Market.

The Metro Development and Housing Authority (MDHA) invoked eminent domain to seize the property, handing it over to private developers – for Ali a clear case of discriminatory harassment.

White neighborhood residents tell a different story. A young civil attorney who moved in up the block in the late 1990s took a special interest in the market, documenting various illicit practices ranging from public drinking and urinating in the back lot to grim acts of quick-and-dirty fellatio performed by street prostitutes. The market was periodically cited for violations including the sale of drug paraphernalia in the form of glass tubes containing readily discarded plastic flowers and steel wool, readily combinable into crack pipes.⁵ Another local neighborhood activist insists that the market also fronted a numbers running operation into the 2000s, though this enterprise was obviated in 2004 by the institution of the state lottery. Still, a review of the half-dozen police reports citing activity in the lot since 2000 indicates only quality-of-life infractions, not violent crime, despite claims of violent activity made by residents.

If the level of mayhem imputed to the corner market may have been overstated, what was beyond question was that it was a beacon for residents from the other side of Shelby Avenue, including from the James A. Cayce Homes. Interestingly, so was the neighborhood Head Start facility, wedged at the back door of the East End Market and across the street from a similar market, Little Rick's, on Tenth and Fatherland. Cayce Homes houses over 1800 official residents, 84 percent of whom

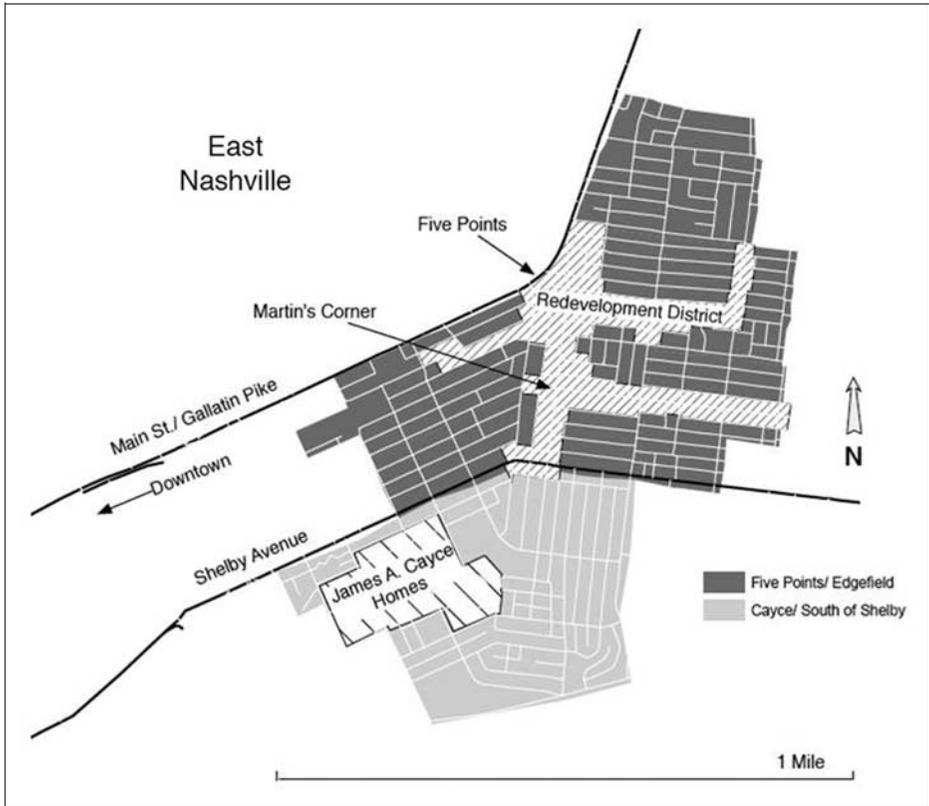


Figure 3. East Nashville map.

are African American, mostly in female-headed households and living well under the poverty line. Other neighboring blocks, while not concentrating poverty as efficiently as the Cayce projects, similarly house low-income, non-white populations. Shelby in fact does act as something of a 'natural' barrier, in the terms of Chicago School human ecology, more or less suturing the gentrifying territory surrounding the Five Points. But Eleventh Avenue provides a direct path traversing Shelby into Five Points, terminating at the seedy commercial strip of Galatin Pike (Figure 3). On this trail, the market served as an outpost for the wrong side of the Avenue, a beachhead for poorer residents.

Now the building was to be destroyed, though not before suffering one final indignity. The tomato toss commenced roughly around 10 a.m., the new face of East Nashville taking it out on the old in a barrage of rotten tomatoes. Some festival-goers protested, noting that this gleeful assault on a ghetto icon might be perceived as racist. Neighbors countered that it was not race but bad behavior that drew their ire, particularly Ali's negligence when it came to policing his lot. Others



Figure 4. The Market demolished.

claimed innocently that this was simply the most likely target available, due after all to be razed that very day. In fact, bulldozers sat poised, indulgently waiting for the tomato payload to be spent. Many tomato-tossers stuck around to watch the building go down (Figure 4).

A mixed-use condominium building – named 37206 after the local zip code – now rests on the corner, with upscale residences atop storefront businesses that include a hair salon, yoga studio, fine art and framing outlet, an upscale pet supply store, and a boutique gift shop (Figure 5). This new building conformed both to the guidelines of MDHA’s ‘design overlay’ and to the vision of producing Martin’s Corner as a consumption hub consistent with neighborhood aspirations and the Five Points example. In fact, Martin’s Corner lies within the officially designated ‘Five Points Redevelopment District’, an oddly shaped territory within East End designed to contain the major commercial hubs, within which MDHA is granted special powers, including design review and the right of eminent domain. The whole of East End is further subject to a historic overlay.

Incidentally, the tomato toss the next year targeted the temporary structure erected across the corner from the new building to serve as its sales center. Perhaps this was another case of convenience, though for some it no doubt corresponded to a shifting locus of frustration, now directed at the advance of gentrification that might eventually rob the neighborhood of its ‘quirky’ charms.



Figure 5. The 37206 Building.

Working both sides of the Avenue

The inaugural tomato toss, adding last insult to injury in the Market's violent demise, is legible at the intersection of a variety of key urban themes. The Tomato Festival illustrates the role of the arts in abetting neighborhood change – like the Around the Coyote Arts Festival in Chicago's Wicker Park, it showcases the pacification of the neighborhood, attracting outsiders who formerly avoided the 'marginal' territory (see Lloyd, 2006). Such events contribute to the breadth of local culture increasingly understood to attract young, educated and cosmopolitan residents. Indeed, the Art and Invention Gallery and the Tomato Festival are components in a general shifting of local amenities. These distinctive 'scenes' (platforms for the enactment of lifestyle dispositions and competences) are abetted by the presence of young artists (in Nashville, not surprisingly, mostly musicians) and the efforts of small entrepreneurs, lending them an apparently 'organic' quality vis-a-vis the efforts of large-scale developers, corporate capital, or state planners (Clark et al., 2007). Ideally such amenities are embedded in distinct patterns of 'New Urbanist' design – densely populated public spaces ('activated sidewalks') that engender lively and serendipitous encounters. This of course poses a challenge for most American cities, including Nashville, in which inherited built forms and cultural traditions bear little resemblance to those of Greenwich Village.

The charms of neighborhood streets increasingly filled with strollers, dog-walkers and art patrons obscures the divisions that characterize contemporary urban restructuring, accompanied by the enactment of real and symbolic violence, as prior claimants on neighborhood space and identity are rebuffed. Thrown tomatoes merely cap processes in which state actors and private capital figure prominently, along with a small but vocal and well-positioned residential contingent. The market in specialized doggy treats and hand-churned ice cream ferried by small and often ingenious entrepreneurs emerge in tandem with the construction of high-end condos in a formerly stagnant and devalued local real estate market.

Moreover, new strategies of design are implemented – albeit in a highly piecemeal fashion – via distinct contemporary interventions by the state. This includes MDHA's aggressive seizure of a viable business establishment on 11th and Fatherland, engineering a rare case of transfer from one private interest to another via eminent domain, rather than private to public use. MDHA further subsidized the new project (along with the second phase MC3 condominiums across the street) through the use of Tax Increment Financing, an increasingly popular form of public-private partnership in an era of substantially curtailed state resources. Here then we see the intersection of new cultural amenities enlivening (for some) the gentrifying district, and extensions of 'entrepreneurial' urban governance in the remaking of the local landscape. Meanwhile, many of those most instrumental in the closing of the market, from MDHA officials to neighborhood activists, expressed private embarrassment about the crass display of the tomato toss.

In an exceptionally mechanical account, Neil Smith (1996) ascribes the structural foundations of gentrification to the existence of the 'rent gap' – the space between actual and potential values contained in urban space. At some unspecified – and unspecifiable – point, the gap grows large enough for capital to flow back into the undervalued districts (having abandoned them in an earlier era). As the 'reclamation' of the lot on 11th and Fatherland illustrates, this process encounters significant social and material frictions that must be actively overcome.⁶ The turnover replaces an amenity geared to a stigmatized and powerless urban population (the market) with one oriented towards yuppie consumption (the mixed-use condominium building), simultaneously shifting land uses from wasteful and unsightly to more 'enlightened' civic design. Unlocking the mordant profit potential in – some but not other – urban districts requires coordinated action between state and private interests. It also creates ongoing problems of managing the surplus populations previously confined in now gentrifying areas, increasingly inconvenient in the face of redevelopment (Pattillo, 2007; Western, 2007).

While TIF interventions, which anchor state interests to market forces by borrowing against future property tax increases,⁷ are implemented aggressively in Nashville, the tactical employ of eminent domain by MDHA is comparatively unusual, particularly in contrast to the far more aggressive spatial imperialism of the postwar era. In those years, MDHA was HUD's instrument of urban renewal, implementing the new spatial order of superblock public housing and highway

exchanges, devastating existing neighborhoods via ‘slum clearance’, anchoring the minority poor in the inner-city, and opening the spigot through which a middle-class populace and center city enterprise would drain outward to the suburbs. Given this history, there is considerable irony in the contemporary operations of MDHA, which serves the eccentric but not unique double duty of administering public housing *and* overseeing the neighborhood redesign accompanying gentrification – working both sides of Shelby Avenue. Dramatically defunded in the intervening decades, the authority has limited tactics at its disposal as it works to dismantle the spatial logic that it had previously created. Against designs of social service provision – superblock public housing – the new trend is towards partnership with private developers, as on the Fatherland corner.

Given the national and local shift in attention from public housing towards private development, it is a further layer of historical irony that MDHA has been headquartered within the substantial grounds of the James A. Cayce Homes (formerly Boscobel Heights) since the 1950s, undoubtedly a gesture of good faith when its primary mandate was still housing for the poor. A mosaic in the foyer of MDHA’s 1950s-era main building depicts the layout of the project in which it is embedded. As a result of the low density of Nashville, the project is characterized by two-storey, multiple unit structures, in contrast to the famous Northern high rises like Chicago’s Cabrini Green that commonly stand in for postwar public housing. Its horizontal layout notwithstanding, Cayce shares many of the perceived sins of its era: ‘large housing blocks and the obliteration of the street grid in the site plan’ (Kreyling, 2005: 24) as well as open ‘green’ spaces destroying the continuity among the apartment structures, and, like the big parking lot surrounding the East End Market, apparently prone to disrepair and illicit activity (Figure 6). Against the public housing structures, inset with their backs turned towards the streets, MDHA’s front steps empty onto the sidewalk, where it welcomes (undoubtedly uneasy) private developers and city officials to conduct the business of urban change. Its relatively looming height and imposing girth has earned the building the nickname ‘the Big House’ among the neighboring project residents (Figure 7).

The low density typical of Southern cities means that public housing projects both conform to (via superblock agglomeration) and diverge from (as low rise structures) the model of the Northeastern and Midwestern metropolis. In fact, the contemporary patterns of gentrification on Shelby’s other side similarly evince both continuity and distinction with regards to the Northern examples, also owing to different densities and historic built environments. While the South has modernized and urbanized in the past half-century, it has done so after the suburban turn in metropolitan regional growth. The national redistribution of industry southwards, powerfully abetted by the region’s ‘pro-business’ aversion to corporate taxes and organized labor, essentially skipped the urban cores (Applebome, 1996; Carlton and Coclanis, 2003), and Southern cities generally have very little resembling the building stock of postindustrial cities like Chicago, Philadelphia, or Detroit.



Figure 6. The James A. Cayce Homes ignore the sidewalk.

Though East Nashville's high proportion of African Americans and relative poverty has caused it to be considered Nashville's 'inner city' – colloquially among new residents in the Five Points, the 'hood' – the older homes in the gentrifying areas are single family, typically with front and back yards, emblematic of its origins as a streetcar suburb. As gentrification advanced in East End, new residents were beset by an eccentric inner-city crime wave, at least from the point of view of Northern neighborhood morphology – a rash of thefts of gardening tools from outdoor sheds. Thus, partisans of the new neighborhood identity have adopted a local slogan that would make little sense to counterparts in more densely built Northern neighborhoods: '37206:⁸ We'll steal your heart, and your lawnmower.'

Social capital and neighborhood activism

Though the trendy commercial amenities surrounding the Five Points, as well as splashy events like the Tomato Art Festival, were largely introduced after 2003, data from the 2000 census signals that sharp contrasts already existed between Five Points–East End and neighboring Cayce–South of Shelby, with especially striking income and educational disparities. Thus, the median household income in East



Figure 7. The Big House: MDHA Headquarters.

End of \$40,000 was nearly four times that south of Shelby; south of Shelby residents meanwhile were seven times as likely as their East End neighbors to receive public aid (29.3% v. 4.25%). In East End, 16.6 percent of the 2000 population had a postgraduate degree, compared to only 1.1 percent south of Shelby.⁹ Moreover, in the 1990s, the East End district had already earned a strong reputation as a ‘progressive’ neighborhood, with a visible gay and lesbian population and a penchant for community organization. These qualities endowed local residents with the social and cultural capital, as well as community dispositions, to organize and agitate in particular directions, and with relative success.

The presence of academics, writers, musicians, and other cultural producers, as well as a gay and lesbian population unprotected in Tennessee from overt employment discrimination, contributes to a population high in cultural capital and low in economic capital – for Bourdieu ‘the dominated faction of the dominant class’. Beyond the community of artists and music industry workers, other East Nashville gentrifiers are often marked by the discordance between high levels of educational and cultural capital and relatively low economic compensation, from early stage academics to social workers. As with artists, compensation is likely to come in the form of status, animated in the context of distinct social fields, and lifestyle

(Bourdieu, 1985, 1993), with particular urban milieus oriented to the satisfaction of specific political and cultural dispositions.

Moreover, these individuals are inclined to relatively progressive dispositions, including imagined affinities with socially and economically marginalized neighbors. Notes Pierre Bourdieu:

The cultural producers, who occupy the economically dominated and symbolically dominant positions within the field of cultural production, tend to feel solidarity with the occupants of the economically and culturally dominated within the field of class relations. Such alliances, based on homologies of position combined with profound differences in condition, are not exempt from misunderstanding and even bad faith. (Bourdieu, 1993: 44)

Similar dispositions may be imputed to workers in the non-profit sector whose professional identities are premised on the servicing and control of marginalized groups, or to the boutique entrepreneurs whose own economic position in the field of amenity provisions is premised on their individual excellence in the arena of taste, while their economic viability remains highly contingent and vulnerable. These residents enjoy local privileges of social status – ‘profound differences in condition’ – alongside precarious claims to economic position. To the extent that their residential, entrepreneurial and consumption patterns contribute to gentrification and displacement, they may find themselves victims of the very patterns that they helped ignite

This population was attracted to the inexpensive terrain of 1990s East Nashville, but was also keen to bring it in line with a particular image of ‘cosmopolitan’ urban living. This need not be read as a desire to ‘whitewash’ the neighborhood – the demographic colonizing the neighborhood corresponds to those most likely to advocate social preservationism, according to Japonica Brown-Saracino, that is the preservation of the distinct social mix in a changing neighborhood (2009). Nevertheless, such sentiments co-exist in a mix of provisional and contradictory priorities among East Nashville residents, many of whom evince nostalgia for the ‘grittier’ hood they first entered. Insofar as their presence has contributed to the dramatic changes of the neighborhood (including agitation for new principles of MDHA ‘design review’), these progressive residents are undoubtedly engaged in what the anthropologist Renato Rosaldo (referring to another context of colonialism) calls *imperialist nostalgia*, ‘where people mourn the passing of what they themselves have transformed’ (1993: 69).

The attorney who spearheaded the campaign against the East End Market is clear about the advantages in affecting state action that owed to relatively high levels of cultural and social capital:

It was a combination of unique people being in the neighborhood at the right time. Myself and Whitney were both self-employed lawyers, which meant we didn’t have a law firm telling us what we could or couldn’t do. Whitney is a very successful, much

older lawyer, and he had loads of time. I had loads of government experience and contacts, because that's where I came from . . . The one thing that we did more effectively than anybody else was go to the media. We took all of our collective talents as lawyers or media people, whatever it was, and put together complicated media packages. What you usually see when you're dealing with neighborhoods is a fairly disorganized approach to it, but this was an absolutely calculated assault on the whole organization.

Conversely, she notes that the poorer residents in the neighborhood evinced a lamentable lack of organizing capacity:

The real problem with truly lower-income neighborhoods is that they're not organized. At the time, if I had gone to the other side of Shelby towards the projects and asked for their involvement, I would have gotten maybe two people. They just weren't organized, and it's very difficult to organize a non-owner occupied area.

The perceived apathy of the propertyless, a profoundly disenfranchised population in a social system in which the market is taken as the key institutional arbiter of desirable social outcomes, means that their interests can be brokered by others and co-opted in the pursuit of particular agendas. Thus, as Jean reasonably points out, the former location of East Nashville's Head Start facilities abutted the backlot of the East End Market. Zoning laws would ordinarily prevent this, however since the market (as well as a similar establishment called Little Rick's across the street from Head Start) preceded the location of the federally funded educational/day care program, the beer licenses were grandfathered in. 'We were working with the Head Start kids and we kept finding syringes in their playground, broken beer bottles in their play yard. The little kids couldn't even hang out, because there was so much crap that came with [the Market].' She added that 'it's insulting to think that lower income people enjoy having drunks in their front yard, too'.

Today, Little Rick's and the East End Market are both gone – but the Head Start has closed down also, its brick structure a sooty wart on the face of the Redevelopment Area's southwest edge, with faded Disney characters decorating the façade. Despite its current disrepair, with a torn plastic Head Start banner fluttering over the doorway two years after the building was evacuated of its pre-K tenants, the structure itself (circa 1938) has been identified as historically significant and is protected by the historic overlay despite MDHA's initial impulse to turn over the lot for new condo development (Figure 8). This development speaks to the nature of new civic design strategies, in which buildings enjoy protections that populations do not. For years, low-income parents deposited their children into the heart of a seedy vice district, one which was already well-established when the Head Start was sited in the first place. But low-income users of the district, whose interests were depicted by gentrifying activists but who themselves



Figure 8. Former location of the East Nashville Head Start Program.

were comparatively voiceless and certainly disadvantaged in terms of available social capital, end up deprived of enjoying the corner's drastically more upscale neighbors.

Meanwhile, a yoga studio, Vietnamese restaurant and tanning salon operate on the corners once dominated by beer markets and street vice, a transformation celebrated by the press and local residents as diversifying the neighborhood consumption profile. Jean laments:

The problem with that in a progressive neighborhood sense is that in order to get that sort of mix and to maintain it, that requires money, and money comes from professions that aren't particularly what I would call liberal bastions... like doctors, dentists, accountants, lawyers. We've been criticized heavily about gentrifying the neighborhood and excluding people of color. It's not about color in this neighborhood. It's about money. The more we gentrify... it's inevitable. As people are returning to inner cities because it's close to downtown for work and things like that, the land values go up and the people that make the neighborhood diverse go away 'cause they can't afford it. It's an inevitability. There is no easy way out of that question.

Nashville retrofit: Implementing the New Urban Design

‘We follow trends’, explained a senior staff member in MDHA’s development wing when I met with him in the Cayce offices. ‘The new trend is adaptive reuse. Density. Bricks. You know, everyone wants a warehouse district.’ He explained how densely packed warehouses in Northern cities were redeveloped as residential lofts, offices and entertainment venues, creating lively mixed-use districts out of the physical detritus of the industrial age. He continued that Nashville planners and developers aspired to similar outcomes. ‘But we don’t have the building stock.’ He shrugged. ‘They want to do it anyway.’ This informant was only peripherally involved in this particular trend of new urban design, generally overseeing ‘big-ticket’ city projects, including the football stadium on the riverfront (home to the NFL’s Titans, currently named LP field) and the downtown convention center – another form of state abetted redevelopment at odds with ‘organic’ sidewalk oriented aspirations of New Urbanists.

The ‘new’ trend draws inspiration from an imagined urban past, and more particularly from an eloquent spokesperson from the postwar era, Jane Jacobs. As the ‘superblock’ model of public housing was established, part of the grand plans of New York ‘power broker’ Robert Moses that also included the implementation of expressways hacking through existing neighborhoods (Berman, 1982; Caro, 1974), Jacobs emerged as the most prominent critic of such large-scale urban renewal. In subsequent decades, Jacobs’s reputation and influence has surged, ferried under the New Urbanist banner by a host of proselytizers (Duany et al., 2000; Katz, 1994; Kunstler, 1993). Like Jacobs, the New Urbanists are repulsed by major trends of postwar urban development, both urban renewal projects and suburban sprawl. New Urbanists stress the human-scale and experiential aspects of spatial design as an antidote for the alienating effects of superblock development, privatized subdivisions, and automobile transport. Nevertheless, critics suggest that the rhetorical gesture towards Jacobs obscures the exclusionary and conservative nature of actual New Urbanist developments, manifested in retrofitted suburban projects or inner-city gentrification (Harvey, 1997; Ross, 1999; Smith, 2002).

While the principles of in-town living, including adherence to this distinctive design ideology, are now a national phenomenon, this should not lead us to assume MDHA’s move to embrace this ‘trend’ can be explained only by centralized, top-down pressures, from, for example, HUD. In fact, HUD’s contribution may be primarily in the negative terms of devolution (rescaling state process), as withdrawal of funds at the national level led MDHA to seek out new avenues for impacting urban development, including design review, locally based measures like TIF, and a decided tilt towards public–private collaboration. Moreover, East End residents and local developers were active in the implementation of new design guidelines; indeed the Five Points Redevelopment District would become a test case for the implementation of design (and not just zoning) guidelines that are now generalized throughout districts targeted for gentrification and new

condominium construction. The push 'from below' is an artifact of the neighborhood's nascent gentrification, which was already distinguishing Five Points–East End from its surrounding territory.

Particularly instrumental in fostering new design directions was East Nashville resident, and *Nashville Scene* architectural critic Christine Kreyling who, along with Vanderbilt English Professor Michael Kreyling, moved into the neighborhood in the 1980s. She recalls of community efforts to explicitly incorporate design principles into the Redevelopment overlay:

[MDHA] always said they had design guidelines, and they sort of did, but they really didn't. They had development guidelines in terms of land use... you could and could not do this. But in terms of urban design, they didn't. We complained bitterly about some of the stuff that they did. You know that Fluffo Mattress thing that's right on Woodland Street? It's got a little driveway in front, and it's just a mean, nasty little building. We realized that based on our long-range plans – *we were hoping to encourage new investment* – we didn't want that kind of crap anymore... They had a professional team [of planners], and we had public meetings, and we went to all the bloody meetings.

Kreyling's authority in pushing this agenda was enhanced by the ability to show the success of such designs in provoking new commercial and residential investment in other cities, even if the examples offered came from urban milieus with substantially different cultural legacies and inherited built environments than Nashville. Of particular import were arguments about the contribution of redesign to property values through shifts in the demographic and amenity profile of local communities (see Song and Knaap, 2003; Weber et al., 2007). The correspondence between new strategies in local development – to which Nashville arguably came late – and national trends thus reflects a case of institutional isomorphism rather than coordinated design, even when ferried by the local arm of the federal bureaucracy.

In fact, the earliest pressures towards the adoption of new planning principles came largely from the non-governmental Urban Design Forum, a platform for community activists sharing a New Urbanist agenda. 'There was a bunch of suspicion of us at first... by the power structure of the city – the big developers, MDHA', Kreyling recalls. 'We were a bunch of radicals.' Indeed, the Design Forum's New Urbanist program was at odds with the city's strategies to inject convention centers and sports arenas or lure big chain venues like Planet Hollywood to juice downtown development – all goals accomplished in the 1990s in part through public sector giveaways, including bond issues and TIF incentives. But this mode of urban redevelopment, modeled on 'successes' like Baltimore's Inner Harbor and Camden Yards or New York's Disneyfied Times Square, was falling out of favor by the late 1990s. The stagnant market in office space downtown, the failure of Planet Hollywood and Rainforest Café, locally and at a national level, and successful gentrification on Nashville's West Side near ring

(principally Hillsboro Village), led to a reconsideration of approaches to spurring residential development, which have the further advantage of being cheaper and less controversial than stadium construction.

When the Design Forum spawned the Civic Design Center in 2003, the CDC received substantial support from both the state and private developers – MDHA is the largest single donor to the non-profit (about 40% of its operating budget), the Nashville property magnate and philanthropist Steve Turner donates the Center's downtown offices (in a temporary arrangement), and the Design Director is on loan from the University of Tennessee Department of Architecture. In short order, the 'radical and subversive' agenda pushed by the Forum has become institutionalized in local politics, with the CDC frequently contributing design review services to MDHA (Christens, 2004; Christens et al., 2009).

In 2005, the CDC published *The Plan of Nashville* with Vanderbilt University Press. This remarkable document, modeled on Burnham's *Plan of Chicago*, is both a historical review of the city's development and a vision of future growth in line with 'ten principles' of enlightened urban design, including: '3. Reestablish the streets as the principle public space of community and connectivity. . . 6. Develop an economically viable downtown district as the heart of the region . . . 8. Integrate public art into the design of the city . . . 9. Strengthen the unique identity of neighborhoods' (Kreyling, 2005: 44–45).

The 'consensus-driven and not top down' image of the Center belies its disproportionate ties to state agencies and private developers, while lending legitimacy to the MDHA design guidelines, including those for the Five Points: 'Primary structures should be built up to the sidewalk with no setback to encourage street walls and pedestrian activity . . . Ground floors should incorporate uses – such as office, retail or residential space – that *activate the sidewalk* [emphasis added] and encourage pedestrian traffic.' These guidelines are quite evident in the mixed-use condos on Martin's Corner, and of course were entirely violated by the East End Market, swimming in a sea of cracked asphalt. But the shift from bad to good design was further accompanied by an escalation of property values and a transformation of consumer demographics, as well as a refiguring of formal and informal policing strategies. Thus, redesign aimed at creating 'community and connectivity' (Kreyling, 2005: 44) cannot be said, in this case, to be innocent of racial and class exclusions.

Diversity and the creative class

If the American tradition of urban studies was birthed in the Midwest, and has typically examined the super-sized triumvirate of New York/Chicago/LA, the 'creative city' scholarly discourse distinguishes itself by shining a light on mid-sized American cities, as well as on the neglected Sunbelt. Thus, Florida's *Rise of the Creative Class* (2002) virtually ignores the big three, in favor of cities like Seattle, Portland, and (especially) Austin. A year after the book's publication, the city of Memphis convened a summit – starring Florida, 'CEO for Cities' founder Carol

Coletta, and 100-plus 'young creatives' – the outcome of which was the 'Memphis manifesto', a blueprint for generating desirable 'creative milieus'. Meaningfully, cities were charged by these avatars of the creative economy to 'embrace diversity', though just what diversity is supposed to mean remains underspecified. Meanwhile, civic leaders in the latest version of the 'New South', now defined as urban and cosmopolitan, appear particularly receptive to the mantras of new amenity gurus, eager to leave behind the old and ostensibly growth-depressing baggage of cultural yokelism and bigotry.

If escalating property values are indeed to be taken as a measure of creative city success, the 'embrace of diversity' that 'young creatives' demand of cities encounters significant problems of social class exclusions. In fact, a closer examination of what gets to count as diversity, brought down to the neighborhood level, reveals much about the complications and exclusions inherent in the 'creative city', with its neoliberal faith in market mechanisms and consumer choice. Moreover, it illuminates the contradictory class location that many gentrifying residents and small entrepreneurs occupy with regards to urban change, suspended between the gross marginalization of the racialized urban sub-proletariat and the homogenizing advance of gentrification.

In *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Florida elaborates on the diversity concept, citing a focus group respondent:

[A desirable place] has to be open. It has to be diverse. It has to have a visible gay community; it has to have lots of different races and ethnic groups. It has to have people of all ages and be open to young people. It has to have people who look different. (Florida, 2002: 227)

In fact, when Florida shifts from anecdotal to statistically based evidence, his proxies for regional diversity are found in the gay index (derived from the concentration of same-sex partners) and the bohemian index (derived from the concentration of artists, writers and performers). The bohemians in particular contribute people that 'look different', for, as Florida claims throughout the book, the more flamboyant (creative) personal styles of artists now trump old-school 'gray flannel suit' conformity, even in the workplace.

On the other hand, Florida concedes that African Americans are not well-represented in his most favored creative cities – bad news for majority black Memphis, host of the Manifesto party. In perhaps his most revealing articulation of just what is meant by creative city 'cosmopolitanism', he paraphrases Bonnie Menes Kahn's *Cosmopolitan Culture* (1987) as claiming: 'A great city has two hallmarks: tolerance for strangers and intolerance of mediocrity' (2002: 227). To the extent that Florida also argues for the meritocratic qualities of the market-driven creative economy, social class exclusion may represent the permissible practice of cosmopolitan intolerance.

Meanwhile, Carol Coletta, the co-organizer of the Memphis Manifesto event, was invited to keynote the Civic Design Center's annual 'Living the Plan of

Nashville' luncheon in 2006, at which I was a member of the Vanderbilt delegation. Among the interesting arguments that she made in her speech was the claim that rising per capita income, rather than population growth, was the best measure of urban dynamism – a measure that neglects consideration of income distribution and can easily be at odds with at least some conceptions of diversity in the urban context. This was during the height of the housing bubble that has since collapsed in dramatic fashion, and Coletta asserted that rising home prices in urban cores were the inevitable and not particularly regrettable reflection of their success in stimulating creative enterprise, a claim echoed by Florida that same month in *The Atlantic Monthly* (2006).

Florida's statistical work is pitched at the regional rather than the neighborhood level, and in terms of its implications for lifestyle preferences is grossly insensitive to the differentiation within his designated creative class, which in the most expansive definition includes all educated professionals, some 30 percent of the US workforce. Still, East Nashville in recent years has become more visibly diverse in precisely the terms that Florida celebrates: gayer and more arty. Moreover, despite the standard associations between country music and cultural conservatism, residents of East Nashville deny Americana's incompatibility with progressive political leanings. Thus this characterization by one local artist:

Historically, in any really progressive community through history, the gay community was always there with the avant-garde with the arts community. They've always kind of gone hand-in-hand. To me, the gay community, the music community [in East Nashville] – it all makes sense.

Indeed this interpretation is consistent with a wider neighborhood agenda, to be both proudly Southern and, against regional stereotypes, culturally cosmopolitan. As a neighborhood writer and music critic – with degrees from Duke and Northwestern – defiantly insists: 'Well, I never got the signal that being a through-and-through Southerner was mutually exclusive with being worldly. I would bristle at that assumption, and that assumption is widespread. There are provincial, parochial people in every part of the world.'

Still, as Ann Markusen notes in a critique of Florida's reliance on homosexuals and artists as proxies for diversity: 'For most Americans, the term diversity encompasses race, ethnicity, immigrant presence and social-class mix' (2006: 1923). In fact, the wider East Nashville district is diverse on these latter dimensions as well (least so in terms of immigrant presence, with the city's new immigrants mainly clustering in Nashville's Southeast quadrant). Still, poor and non-white residents experience increasing territory in the neighborhood as uncongenial to their presence.

The ravanchist impulses arguably expressed by the tomato toss notwithstanding, new residents express markedly ambivalent dispositions with regards to poor black neighbors. Though concerns about safety are rampant, many East Nashville

residents express commitment to the neighborhood's 'edgier' qualities (a popular bumper sticker declares '37206: Putting the 'Hood Back in Neighborhood'). Note this remark from Christie, neighborhood entrepreneur (and unapologetic tomato thrower):

There's a grittiness to it over here. I call it chewy... pretty chewy over here. There's a lot of texture. You know, I'm good with it. I don't want anybody to take the projects down. I don't care. I wouldn't wanna be here if it weren't like that. I wanna be in an urban area. I didn't get it growing up in the suburbs. Where were the black people? They brought them in on buses for school. I mean, come on. That's just not right. That's not normal. That's not how it's supposed to be to me. I wanna live with everybody. I'm good with everybody. I don't mind if yuppies are over here, but I also wanna have everybody else. I don't wanna kick out the homeless people. I like them. There's neighborhood characters here everywhere.

The explicit distinction between East Nashville's 'chewiness' and the lily-white suburbs where she, and, undoubtedly, many other educated residents, grew up is particularly instructive. After all, in the suburban expansion that has been the dominant trend of urban growth since the Second World War, homogeneity, not diversity, has been understood as a key amenity (Lassiter, 2007). The term 'white flight' signifies the way that suburbanization has re-established segregation in the post-civil rights era via geographic separation, and proponents of the suburban lifestyle celebrate its homogenized 'middle-class' values explicitly in contrast to the messy heterogeneity, liberal permissiveness and rampant criminality of the urban core. Christie conversely repudiates the sterility and blandness implied by this model.

As the former owner of a thrift store that served as an informal neighborhood clubhouse for artists, musicians and varied other scene makers, one of the first such meeting grounds for what was a nascent community in the early part of the 2000s, Christie has been active in the promotion of neighborhood change. Still, she now seems to want to freeze the neighborhood, fearing that the changes associated with gentrification will destroy the vibe over which she feels a special sort of proprietorship.

The discursive commitment to 'all kinds' of residents, including the homeless and the minority poor, suggests a category of urban resident Japonica Brown-Saracino calls 'social preservationists': 'Certain people, who tend to be highly educated and residentially mobile, [who choose] to live in the central city... in order to live in an authentic social space, embodied by sustained presence of original residents' (2004: 135). Endowed with both high education and high levels of mobility – in the trendy Five Points establishments no one is presumed to be *from* Nashville, and regulars are drawn from as far as Ireland, Sweden, and Australia – many would at least provisionally identify with the preservationist disposition, though few extend this to actively working to prevent the displacement of 'old-timers' however that might be done.

Moreover, if the gay and lesbian community amiably shares commercial space (markets, bars, cafes and restaurants) with musicians as well as assorted educated professionals,¹⁰ little actual mingling occurs between the sizable African American population and white newcomers. Similar to Richard Sennett's observations concerning Greenwich Village, some 30 plus years out from Jane Jacobs's rhapsodic celebrations of the sidewalk symphony: 'Difference and indifference co-exist in the life of the Village; the sheer fact of diversity does not prompt people to interact' (1994: 357). Commitment to old-timers in this case emerges as a narcissistic impulse, saying more about residents' images of themselves than about any real connection to their neighbors.

The failures of local interaction reflect both economic barriers and barriers of cultural capital. Other than ejecting, or in some cases feeding, panhandlers who occasionally wander into eating and drinking establishments, proprietors in the Five Points rarely interact with poor and non-white neighborhood residents. It is common for there to be no black faces in the newly minted Five Points establishments (as opposed to, say, the Family Dollar Store across the street from Turnip Truck), despite the large local population of African Americans. Speculates Bongo Java's proprietor:

I think part of it is social custom, because you go to coffee conventions and you'll see three black people. Maybe I'm exaggerating small, but black people aren't somehow attracted to coffee, I guess, or maybe just specialty coffee. That's an over-generalization. I've been to a black coffeehouse in Atlanta, so that's cool . . .

Establishment operators in East Nashville's freshly minted amenity complex are unlikely to denigrate neighborhood residents or pre-existing establishments on ascriptive grounds, but it is more acceptable to deplore behaviors that are perceived to disrupt civic space. Thus, one new entrepreneur noted of the demolition of the East End Market:

Here's this little market that is populated by people coming in to get their single cigarettes and their single cans of beer, and that's their main business, it seems. That's what they sell and that's how they make money. You're like – in one sense I'm glad people can do that, and they've been doing it for years, but now I'm moving in and [myself and] others are saying: 'Look, that's bringing in this element to the neighborhood that we don't want, even though we're the new kid on the block.' But it does bring property values down [or prevents them from going up]. My car was broken into four times and blah, blah, blah. It's a tough struggle. They're talking about getting rid of this public housing over by the exit of 65 and Shelby. Where are these people gonna go, and what's fair? I don't know. There's nothing wrong with getting a single beer, but then you get the drunks and everybody else . . .

This informant's highly caveated account reflects the ambivalence generated by commitment to standard liberal values of social justice ('Is that fair?') and the

neoliberal deploring of the friction that ‘bad behaviors’ create for market processes (‘It does bring property values down’).

Kreyling, who declined the opportunity to pelt the East End Market with tomatoes (‘It didn’t seem right, she says), expresses similar ambivalence about the neighborhood transformation:

As a piece of architecture in urban design, obviously the East End Market was not my favorite structure. I never went in there. It’s not the kind of place I would have walked my dog by at ten o’clock at night by myself. But I never perceived it as dangerous . . . It occupied a big territory as a little bitty business, so clearly it was efficient to have a more developed site. On the other hand, it seemed to me that there were people who thought that all change was progress, and there’s a bumpiness about East Nashville that we could be losing to people who just . . . don’t have a feel for the older character, not that I think we need to have more redneck bars. Although I also remember when the guys would come out of Shirley’s [a now defunct white working-class bar on the Five Points Corner] totally shit-faced and they’d be standing out in the middle of the intersection screaming at two o’clock in the morning. It’s not necessarily a period in my life I wanna relive . . . it’s just a pain in the butt to have all these drunks wandering around in the street.

On the other hand, as the Five Points continues to be a center of drunken revelry, with a liquid market in illegal drugs – just for a hipper crowd.

The Tomato Art Festival revisited

In August 2008, the imminent Tomato Art Festival was featured on the front page of Nashville’s free daily *City Paper*, with a rendering of a tomato emblazoned by a banner declaring: ‘A Uniter, Not a Divider.’ Beneath this, the headline noted ‘Tomato Fest brings out best’ adding, in a last burst of triteness, “‘Seedy” East Nashville festival celebrates art, fruit and community’ (Figure 9). The pun, while lame, is resonant with a neighborhood ethos in which new residents boast on bumper stickers that 37206 puts the ‘hood back in neighborhood’, and neighborhood folk singer Todd Snider celebrates an ‘East Nashville Skyline’ characterized by ‘discount cigarettes, liquor and wine’. Consistent with bohemian traditions, the neighborhood’s ‘seediness’ – or in Christie’s terms, ‘chewiness’ – provokes mixed reactions from new residents (see Lloyd, 2006). Nevertheless, little of this sort of seediness was on display in the fifth iteration of the Tomato Art Festival, the Five Points festooned with reddish balloons and host to a range of fun attractions and cool concessions.

This included the popcorn-scented kiddie play land in the small park on Holly and 12th, two blocks from Martin’s Corner, where Councilman Jameson gamely volunteered in the dunk tank and a line of parked strollers extended around the block (Figure 10). On the Friday night of the two-day event the Tomato King and



Figure 9. The *City Paper* announces the Tomato Art Festival in 2008.

Queen were anointed at Lipstick Lounge and a VIP reception was held at the Art and Invention Gallery. Saturday, 3-Crow bar hosted the Bloody Mary contest, and Bongo Java the Tomato recipe contest. The Hip Zipper, a local second-hand store, sponsored and outfitted the fashion show, in which hip neighborhood kids, many adorned by tattoos and proudly owning other than waiflike figures, took the roles of fashion models, having campy fun on the runway. Here one of the few African American participants in the festivities worked the stage, a handsome young man in a slick vintage suit, short pants and white-rimmed sunglasses (Figure 11). Along the sidewalk, a young Democratic Party volunteer enthusiastically canvassed for presidential nominee Barack Obama, the neighborhood's clear choice even if a lost cause in the state of Tennessee (Figure 12).

In 2006, the Tomato Toss was the controversial centerpiece for which the festival is largely remembered. In 2008, there was considerably less drama, and less enthusiasm, attached to the 'event'. I noted on my program a location, but not a time, for the Tomato Toss – it was tucked away in the backlot of Wags and Whiskers, a pet-grooming business. Recalling the event in earlier years, I wondered what was being torn down there. It turned out nothing. There was no condemned structure, nor were there any spoiled tomatoes. There was a plywood target, decorated by a smiling doggy cartoon, waiting for tomato bean bags to be tossed into the gaping hole cut out for his mouth. A successful toss earned an opportunity to be entered into a drawing for a 'tomato pet bed' (Figure 13). Despite the record breaking attendance of the Tomato Art Festival as a whole, this attraction was deserted when I arrived.



Figure 10. The kiddie play land.

Conclusion: Hip urbanism in the (newest) new South

Since mid-century, the erstwhile backwards South has become an economic and demographic dynamo, drawing residents and industry from the rest of the nation in a dramatic reversal of the population drain of the early 20th century. Nashville, trumpeted by the business press for its ‘favorable business climate’, has become a major center for corporate relocation, as well as one of the three major hubs for the recording industry (the so-called ‘third coast’ along with New York and Los Angeles). Moreover, it has increasingly become a ‘second destination’ city for new immigrant groups, with a polyglot population drawn from the global South concentrating in the city’s Southeast quadrant (Cornfield et al., 2003).

In part, the economic dynamism of Nashville and the South is owed to neoliberalism in its crudest forms: low levels of state regulation, regressive taxation, and a historic antipathy to organized labor that has made the region ‘the bad jobs capital of the United States’ (Applebome, 1996). Moreover, Nashville headquarters both the largest private operator of health care facilities in the nation (Hospital Corporation of America, the source of the Frist family fortune) and the largest private operator of prisons (Corrections Corporation of America). One of many claimants to the title ‘Buckle of the Bible Belt’, Nashville also



Figure 11. The fashion show.

headquarters the Southern Baptist Convention and contains the largest concentration of both the Christian publishing and recording industries, promoting the religious conservatism that has formed a backbone of the right turn in American politics.

Conversely, the transformation of East Nashville provides a more subtle case of neoliberal restructuring. Against the extreme social conservatism of much of the American South, the general ethos is cosmopolitan and progressive. Moreover, this openness is increasingly taken as not only a political ideal but also an economic imperative in the globalized, 'creative' economy. As we have seen, arguments about the creative city dovetail with the New Urbanist emphasis on the lively sidewalk; the imagination of 'spontaneous' order on the sidewalk mirrors the neoliberal ideology of the unencumbered market. In either case, the putative liberty of organic processes masks relations of exclusion and social violence.



Figure 12. Canvassing for Barack Obama.

As Ulrich Beck (2006) notes, there are many ways to conceive of ‘actually existing’ cosmopolitanism, and this particular version is marked by relations of privilege and exclusion, with the cosmopolitan subject defined by high levels of educational and cultural capital, as well as mobility and malleability within the flexibilized global economy.

East Nashville, in its contemporary transformation, remakes the city in line with new dynamics of governance. The juxtaposition of the East Side territories of Five Points–East End and Cayce–South of Shelby highlights the tensions and contradictions of the neoliberal city. On the one hand, the surplus population generated by postindustrial urbanism is cordoned into the retrograde space of the housing projects and their tertiary blocks; on the other side of Shelby Avenue, the gentrifying territory, still relatively affordable, organizes a culturally savvy and highly flexible labor force, servicing culture industries, educational institutions, and an expansive non-profit sector increasingly filling the spaces left vacant by welfare state retrenchment. MDHA straddles the divide, managing at a low level the maintenance of old-style social service provision and the redesign of new neighborhood space.

The cultural and material remaking of East Nashville, while partial, exemplifies the principles of both Florida’s creative city arguments – attracting educated and



Figure 13. The Tomato Toss: 2008 version.

culturally savvy contributors to the creative industries – and the New Urbanism, with its ideals of neighborhood design emphasizing mixed primary uses and activated sidewalks. These complementary discourses, which have come to dominate the urban planning world, appeal explicitly to the consecrated work of the mid-20th-century urbanist Jane Jacobs, both her *Death and Life of Great American Cities* and the subsequent *Economy of Cities* (1969). Florida, who has repeatedly expressed his fidelity to Jacobs's views in interviews has gone so far as to follow in her footsteps by expatriating to the Canadian city of Toronto.

But for all of its influence, Jacobs's *Death and Life* belongs to a different era and urban identity, even if it is invoked prominently in the promotion of new styles of urban development. She was writing in the twilight years of the Northern urban industrial order, railing against urban renewal and the bleeding of urban residents by new suburban developments. Hers was in fact a profoundly idiosyncratic and personal account, derived from firsthand observations from her 1950s Greenwich Village stoop. Jacobs's Greenwich Village, in stark contrast to the elite enclave of affluent and educated cosmopolites that it is today, still mixed a white working-class population along with its more celebrated bohemian fringe. In fact, Jacobs noted with concern the presence of a few new, more affluent residents of the sort that today would be called yuppies, since they could not be trusted to take requisite

interest in the life of the neighborhood streets (1961). Moreover, Jacobs imagined the dense pedestrian block as facilitating tolerance and security in a world of strangers (though, as Marshal Berman (1982) points out, this tolerance did not clearly extend to incorporate black urban residents, not in Greenwich Village anyway).

If Jacobs's Greenwich Village was the property of a stolid urban working-class, the redesign of East Nashville's Five Points on her model responds to the dispositions of a quite different residential demographic, some of whom are recent arrivals in the 'new' Nashville, nostalgic for the built forms of the Northern metropolis. But the demolition of the East End Market on 11th and Fatherland and its replacement by high end condos and boutique street level shopping belie the organicism implicit in New Urbanist oppositions between lively sidewalks and sterile subdivisions. If the tomato toss was an especially overt demonstration, the new building itself serves as a more passive emblem of the symbolic violence wrought by neighborhood change. In this case, density and the pedestrian sidewalk becomes a class-coded amenity (like bicycle paths, juice bars, or yoga studios) – all rewarding specific sorts of cultural capital and relative economic privilege. Such principles of urban design goose gentrification – neighbors of the East End Market could celebrate significant surges in their home equity when it was reduced to rubble. The clear advantaging of particular residents undermines the undoubtedly sincere commitment to democratic space espoused in principle by *The Plan of Nashville*, and by Jacobs's claims for the integration of strangers into the 'symphony' of city life.

Notes

1. In 1991, Joel Garreau famously asserted that 'every city that is growing is growing in the manner of Los Angeles', a claim echoed by Micheal Dear in 2002 in one of his many treatises asserting the conceptual primacy of LA for new urban studies. Other major theorists of sprawl as the signature form of 'postmodern' urbanism include Gottdeiner (1985) and Soja (1989). In fact, suburban expansion continues to be a central feature in metropolitan growth patterns; what is new is its erstwhile 'parasitic' quality, drawing residents away from the urban core, and away from dense cities in the Midwest and Northeast towards sprawling ones in the sunbelt, to a more 'distributive' pattern, at least at the regional level, with both core cities and suburbs showing population gains (Beauregard, 2006).
2. For Jacobs, suburban tracts, superblock housing projects, and networks of expressways combined in the production of a 'great blight of dullness' threatening to extend over the whole of the American landscape.
3. According to Art and Invention gallerist Meg MacFeyden.
4. In his song 'East Nashville Skyline' the local folk singer Todd Snider identifies these structures as emblematic of the neighborhood, not necessarily with regret.
5. These products can be found prominently displayed near the checkout of similar markets in Nashville's social service hub/skid row in the south of Broadway (SoBro) district adjacent to the downtown (Williams, 2009).

6. Smith knows this, but the cover of his *New Urban Frontier* (1996), featuring police in riot gear, gives a good idea of the lack of subtlety in his arguments, in which the misfirings of state strategy resulting in violent confrontation are taken as being the strategy itself (hyperpunitiveness), missing the far stealthier work done behind neighborhood change, and the degree to which strollers and walked dogs rather than riot cops signify the progressive disenfranchisement of the poor in neighborhood space. See Candice Rai (this issue).
7. In the face of the economic downturn since 2008, the city has engendered controversy by pegging property tax increases to increasingly dubious assessments.
8. This is the zip code primarily serving East End, and frequent shorthand for the neighborhood among newer residents.
9. Figures for Nashville's Davidson County are as follows: Household Income \$39,797; Received Public Assistance Income 3.58%; Holds Post-Graduate Degree 10.4%.
10. And of course, these are not mutually exclusive categories.

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Richard Lloyd is Associate Professor of Sociology at Vanderbilt University. He is author of *Neo-Bohemia: Art and Commerce in the Postindustrial City* (2006). He is currently researching cultural production in Nashville TN, as well as the impact of globalization on Southern Cities.