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„Go, go, Chocolate City: A Portrait of Gentrification, Culture, and Loss in Washington, DC's U Street Corridor"

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Go, go, Chocolate City:
A Portrait of Gentrification, Culture, and Loss in Washington, DC's U Street Corridor

by: Aisha Turner

University of Vienna
Thesis for the fulfillment of a Master of Arts in Global Studies
Advisor: Univ.-Prof. Dr. Margarete Grandner

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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to develop an understanding of gentrification as a cultural, rather than simply an economic, process. Given the historical racial and class dynamics of Washington, DC, I seek to understand how people with long-standing roots in the community experience and respond to the process of gentrification. Focusing on Washington, DC's Shaw neighborhood, specifically its U Street Corridor, I consider what a changing neighborhood means for African Americans' feelings of community, identity, and belonging. I establish U Street as a place with a strong African American history, which once served as a refuge for blacks in the face of social and political oppression. I then give an overview of how a city once affectionately referred to as "Chocolate City" because of its high concentration of blacks has changed and diversified in recent years. Included in this is an inquiry into how DC's black history is invoked in the modern era. The final step of my case study is to establish an understanding of how African Americans with a personal connection to U Street experience its changes from an emotional perspective. Using a media analysis, I examine how people write about the changing neighborhood and the themes present in articles published in DC's biggest newspaper, *The Washington Post*. This paper closes with reflections on ways the psychology of place can help us understand how U Street's long-standing role as a center for black life might play into current feelings of loss. This process is grounded in a global context to understand one potential challenge of increased urbanization. I am seeking to add to the growing conversation linking human rights and cities in a neoliberal era of development.

Diese Masterarbeit macht den Versuch, Gentrifizierung nicht nur als ökonomischen, sondern auch als kulturellen Prozess zu verstehen. In Anbetracht der historischen, ethnischen und klassenbedingten Dynamiken in Washington, DC ziele ich darauf ab, zu erörtern, wie langjährige Mitglieder einer lokalen Gemeinde den Gentrifizierungsprozess erleben und darauf reagieren. Mit Fokus auf das Washingtoner Stadtviertel Shaw, und insbesondere den darin befindlichen U Street Corridor, untersuche ich, was eine sich verändernde Nachbarschaft für afro-amerikanische Empfindungen von Gemeinschaft, Identität und Zugehörigkeit bedeutet. Ich etabliere U Street als einen Ort mit bedeutender afro-amerikanischer Geschichte, der einst als Zufluchtsort für Schwarze angesichts sozialer und politischer Unterdrückung gedient hat. Danach gebe ich einen Überblick darüber, wie eine Stadt, die seinerzeit aufgrund ihres hohen Anteils an schwarzen Bewohnern liebevoll "Chocolate City" genannt wurde, sich in den letzten Jahren verändert und diversifiziert hat. Darin inbegriffen sind Nachforschungen darüber, wie sich Menschen in der Moderne auf Washingtons afro-amerikanische Vergangenheit berufen. Der letzte Schritt meiner Fallstudie besteht darin, ein Verständnis dafür zu entwickeln, wie Afro-Amerikaner mit persönlichen Verbindungen zum U Street Corridor die Veränderungen dieses Stadtviertels emotional erleben. Durch eine Medienanalyse untersuche ich, wie über die sich ändernde Nachbarschaft geschrieben wird und welche Themen in den Artikeln von Washingtons größter Zeitung, der *Washington Post*, präsent sind. Diese Arbeit schließt mit Reflektionen darüber, wie eine "psychology of place" uns dabei helfen kann, den Einfluss zu verstehen, den U Streets langjährige Rolle als Zentrum afro-amerikanischen Lebens auf gegenwärtige Verlustgefühle hat. Dieser Prozess liegt im globalen Kontext begründet, eine mögliche Herausforderung der zunehmenden Urbanisierung zu verstehen. Mein Ziel ist es, einen Beitrag zum wachsenden Dialog zu leisten, der Menschenrechte und Städte in einer Zeit neoliberaler Entwicklung verbindet.

INTRODUCTION

I grew up an hour and half north of Washington, DC, in the Baltimore suburbs. Just close enough to Washington to regularly visit on school field trips, but far enough in both distance and temperament that it felt like an entirely different part of the country. Compared to my rather generic, quiet, and homogenously white suburb of Bel Air, Maryland, this more southern city felt dynamic, ambitious, and diverse. The patch of land on which Washington, DC and its institutions were built used to belong to the state of Maryland, the Potomac River serving as a natural border with Virginia. But now, for me and assumedly other Maryland residents beyond the Beltway—those that grew up rooting for the Orioles and the Ravens instead of the Nats and the Redskins—Washington, DC is distinctly its own. As kids, every couple years or so we were loaded onto yellow school buses to make the drive down Interstate-95 to learn about our nation's history.

The Lincoln Memorial was an obvious stopping point, as were the monuments to Washington and Jefferson, and the World War II Memorial. Presumably students now also have a chance to visit the Martin Luther King, Jr Memorial, newly completed in 2011. There were also trips to see the White House close-up and attempts to wave at whomever was in office at the time. And of course the Capitol building, whose dome is arguably the greatest symbol of Washington and of American governance.

What we weren't told was that that dome—the great symbol of American freedom and democracy—was built by slaves. Our understanding of Washington was one of a certain narrative and anything outside of that narrative was skipped over. Or, perhaps not even known by our teachers. Washington as a place built and shaped by the presence of black bodies was not part of the narrative.

The first time I stepped outside of "Washington" and into "DC" was in 2005. While often used interchangeably, I make this distinction here to draw a line between the Washington of *House of Cards* fame (political, transient, power-grabbing, awash in self-congratulatory monuments to historical victories) and the DC of the people who live there—full time, year after year, making their way in a city that can be hard to understand from the outside but is in reality grappling with the same opportunities and challenges of any other American metropolis. In this I'm following the lead of other writers and residents who see Washington and then see DC all around it. Moving ahead in this paper

I will revert back to using the terms interchangeably, but I bring this schism up here in order to recall my first known venture into DC: to Howard University.

Howard University was founded in 1867 by Civil War General Oliver O. Howard. It's located in DC's Shaw neighborhood and is considered one the premier HBCUs: Historically Black Colleges and Universities. My trip to Howard University came my senior year of high school, as I was enthralled with all the excitement and possibility of college. I had been looking into schools since my sophomore year, but had never really thought much about Howard. Its proximity to home lessened its romantic appeal and at that point of my life I couldn't make sense of what it would mean to attend a predominately black institution as someone that had always attended overwhelmingly white schools.

I've been thinking a lot lately about how different my life might have been if I had gone to Howard. Trips down the memory lane of a life not lived might seem futile to some, but for me it's an exercise in creativity. Sometimes it's an exercise fraught with anxiety and regret. But given my personality, self-doubt is inevitable. I may as well have some fun with it.

Getting back to my point, in thinking about Howard, I'm left wondering what my relationship to blackness might be had I gone to an historically black college. And not just any HBCU, but one attended by Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, United Nations Ambassador Andrew Young, and acclaimed journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates. What would it have meant, as a black woman, to share an alma mater with Nobel Prize winner Toni Morrison and author Zora Neale Hurston?

Instead I attended Duke University in Durham, North Carolina (the mayor of which, Bill Bell, also attended Howard). From the outside, and from the point of view of my 17-year old self, choosing Duke over Howard was an easy call. Duke is consistently ranked as one of the best schools in the country. It usually makes US News and World Report's list of top-10 schools, sometimes even drifting into the top-5. US News and World Report being the bible for every ambitious high schooler, Duke was a sure bet and seemed like the reward for a high school career well-executed. It had stellar academics, pristine grounds, and a world-class reputation. And with a nationally known (although

sometimes despised) basketball program to incite over-the-top school spirit, it attracted the kinds of students as interested in playing hard as they were working hard.

And as far as diversity was concerned, Duke seemed to be doing pretty well. At the time I entered, Duke's student population was about 11 percent black. Less than the 13 percent black population of America, but more than the other schools that had been on my radar. Diversity was actually one of the biggest draws for me. But thinking back, what if I had not so much cared about the diversity of a school, but about blackness in particular? I'm sure, to many residents, Howard is as much a part of the Washington/DC divide as the bureaucrats that circle in and out of the Rayburn building each day. As the hosts of the podcast "For Colored Nerds" point out, Howard students are transient, elite, and not always fully engaged in the city[1]. There are tough town-gown relations there as with anywhere. Still, there is something about Howard that seems so *of* the city. So *of* what used to be a Chocolate City. Outside of the gaze of casual visitors to Washington, Howard sits off of Georgia Avenue, a product of DC's segregated history. So I've been thinking: what if I had cast aside my concerns over ridiculous ranking systems in favor of culture? What if I had taken the chance to be part of a legacy?

Seeking belonging through space

I've been wrestling with these questions because in a sense, these notions of belonging and identity were what drew me to Washington, DC after I graduated from Duke in 2009. While I was not quite ready for the opportunity fresh out of high school, by the time I finished college I wanted to be a part of the so-called Chocolate City. But when I arrived in DC, much of the city's Northwest quadrant was undergoing the process of gentrification. I'm not even sure I had heard the term "gentrification" before moving to DC but soon enough it would, for me, become synonymous with the city.

As a self-proclaimed progressive I railed against what I saw as the erasure of lower class, mostly minority communities. Gentrification was probably well on its way before I got hip to game, but it struck me that DC's urban grit was far more polished by

[1] Brittany and Eric (no last names given). "Episode 03: Gentrification." *For Colored Nerds*. http://www.forcolorednerds.com/

the time I moved there than it was in my memory. I would quickly realize that this was the fate of many cities, but at the time it seemed unique.

By the time I began frolicking in DC with members of my millennial cohort, it was easy to see two cities existing side by side. New upscale bars where specialty beers went for $9 a bottle sat next to older Chinese take-out restaurants where cashiers stood behind bullet-proof glass to take your order. I always felt a bit strange going to the former instead of the latter; especially when the clientele of the old DC looked more like me.

There was of course a strange irony to my frustration with gentrification: I was a gentrifier. I moved to the city as a highly-educated 20-something, making too little to afford a place in the nicer parts of town, but willing to pay enough that my neighborhood was pushed ever closer to upscale. I love a good specialty coffee shop. And thanks to the fact that my parents still paid my phone bill, I had enough disposable income to attend a weekly yoga class and shop at Whole Foods. Later in this paper I'll note some of the brick and mortar markers of a gentrified U Street; I've been to all of them. As will be discussed later, gentrification is more than a question of individual choices and is instead mostly a market mechanism. But even as I was grappling with gentrification as a social justice issue, I was, in some small part, responsible for perpetuating it.

In an essay published in the Washington City Paper, "Confessions of a Black Gentrifier," Shani O. Hilton reflects on what it is to be a black and middle class in a time and place where gentrification is as much racial as class-based. She writes:

> "The story of the black gentrifier, at least from this black gentrifier's perspective, is often a story about being simultaneously invisible and self-conscious. The conversation about the phenomenon remains a strict narrative of young whites displacing blacks who have lived here for generations. But a black gentrifier gets lumped in with both groups, often depending on what she's wearing and where she's drinking. She is always aware of this fact. … "Gentrifier" can't be equated with "white person." … The gentrifier is a person of privilege, and even if she doesn't have much money, she's got an education and a network of friends who are striving like she is, and she has the resources to at least try to get what she wants." [2]

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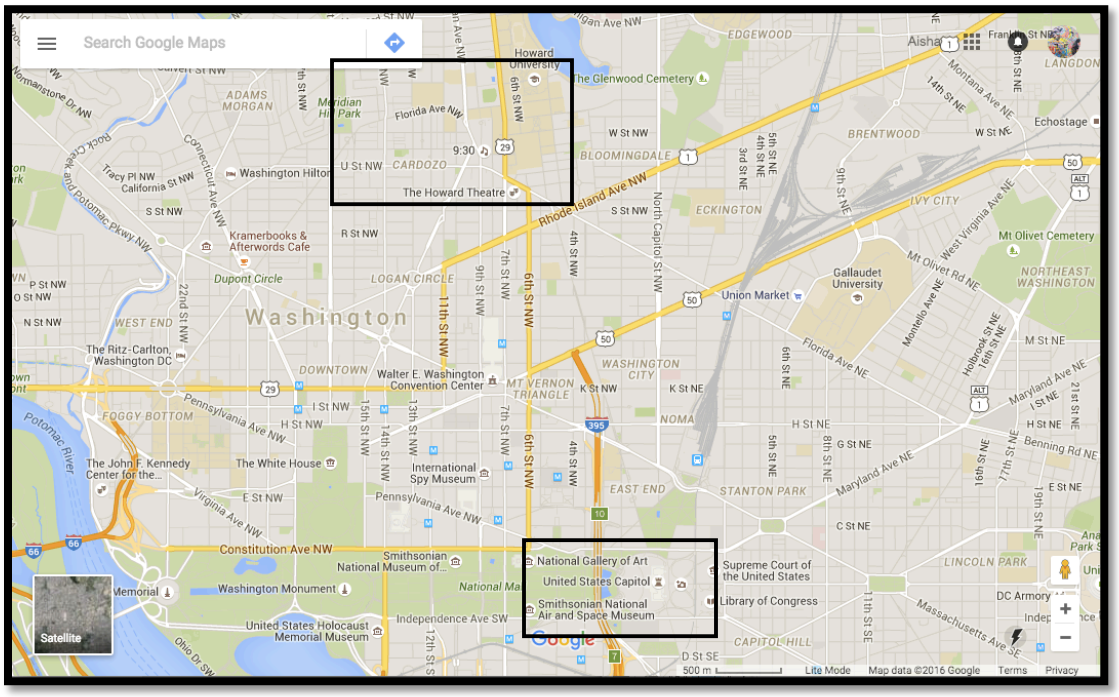
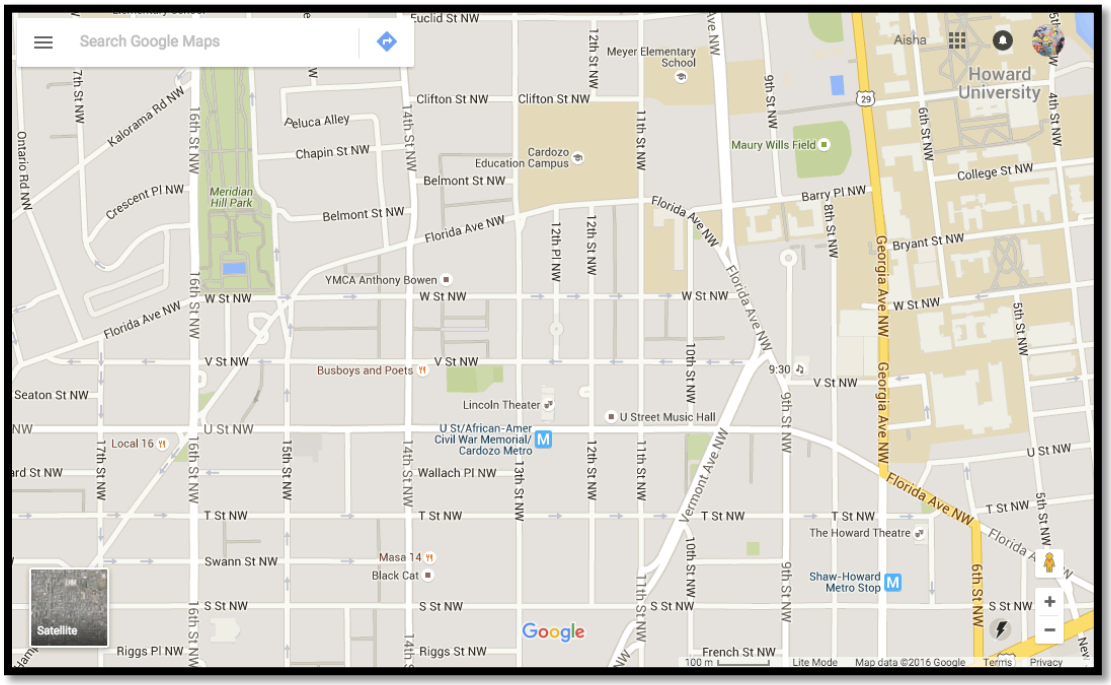
[2] Hilton, Shani O. "Confessions of a Black Gentrifier." *Washington City Paper*. Published: March 18, 2011. Web. Accessed: August 5, 2015. http://www.washingtoncitypaper.com/articles/40564/confessions-of-a-black-dc-gentrifier/full/

But even though I could be considered a culprit of gentrification, I felt personally hurt by it. The DC I moved to be a part of, seemed to only exist in popular imagination. I lived in the U Street Corridor, a portion of the Shaw neighborhood in Northwest Washington. (The geographical axes of the Capitol building divide Washington, DC into Northwest, Southwest, Southeast, and Northeast quadrants. The primary east-west layout follows an alphabetical order and numbered streets run north-south, repeating in each quadrant.)



Above: A map of the U Street Corridor and Shaw neighborhoods relative to the US Capitol building.

Courtesy: Googlemaps (highlights are my own)



Above: A map of U Street NW, nestled in the Shaw neighborhood.

Courtesy: Googlemaps

U Street was once considered the "Black Broadway." A Washington Post story from 1998 describes: "In the beginning, there was the old U. The first U. Black U. Negro, then. The heart of black cultural, economic and social life in segregated Washington."[3] At various times the neighborhood played host to iconic figures such as Langston Hughes, Duke Ellington, and Cab Calloway. With a vibrant music and theater scene, U Street carried its "Black Broadway" nickname from the 1920s through the 1960s. That is, until it was destroyed in the fire and riots that reverberated across urban America after Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in 1968. And in the following decades drug trafficking would dominate the scene. Finally, toward the late 20th century U Street began to experience a revival and an influx of racially diverse residents. That 1998 Washington Post articles calls this U Street—the one that eventually morphed into the place I called home after college—the "New U."

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[3] Battiata, Mary. "Landscape: U Street." *Washington Post*. Published: February 1, 1998. Web. Accessed: January 17, 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/local/longterm/library/dc/dc6898/ustreet.htm

If I was a part of that metamorphosis, why was I so saddened by it?

I don't think I would have articulated it this way at the time, but looking back I must have known enough to understand the link between place, identity, belonging. I came in search of a black experience but only a black history was left. And now what I want to understand is what the changing city must mean for long-time residents? How are other black people—those whose relationship with DC started long before mine—experiencing this New U? That is what I will use this paper to explore: what is lost in the process of gentrification and how are people expressing this?

PURPOSE

What I'm seeking to do is develop a contextual understanding of gentrification, ultimately to understand how long term residents experience and respond to neighborhood change (ie, gentrification) -- what it does to their sense of community, identity, and belonging.

It is important to note that while gentrification is primarily an economic term, I am not purely interested in instances of economic displacement. I am also interested in how race plays into this process. Namely, how is the process of gentrification experienced in urban environments where the people experiencing a sense a displacement are not only of a different economic status than those moving in, but are also of a marginalized ethnic group? How do histories of social exclusion based on race, beat up against the economic forces of gentrification—and how does that feel for the people being displaced?

Although not everyone will necessarily speak of housing displacement in explicitly racial terms, given that race is so tightly linked with class in many parts of the world (certainly in the US), and that gentrification is undeniably an economic process, I think that it is important to ground this conversation in those terms.

The conversation around race is particularly important when we consider that it is often this local "flavor" that makes neighborhoods appealing in the first place. People desire to live in a place with character and a place that has a distinct community feel—but what about those people that created that feel in the first place? What happens to them in

the drive to profit off of their neighborhood's particularities? And what emotional truth can we uncover through an exploration of identity, place, ownership, and agency?

In a five-minute video[4] created by writer Ifanyi Bell and commissioned by *Oregon Humanities* magazine, blacks in Oregon explain what it feels like to lose their community as Portland, the whitest of America's major cities, becomes even more so:

> *Charles McGee, President and CEO of Black Parent Initiative explains the importance of place for black Americans: "Physical location is really critical to people and I think especially to black folk. ... Spaces have always been not only places where we gather but places where we get sort of fulfilled. Where we see each other, where we tell our stories and where we become whole again. Where we become renewed. And when you're in the whitest city in America, those places are even more critical. ... And losing those spaces means you lose a critical element of who you are. It means that you lose your ability to not only share, but to grow."*
> ---
> *And Avel Gordly, an Oregonian since 1947, and a former Oregon State Representative and former Oregon State Senator explains why this matters to the city overall: "If you're looking at how a community will grow, will prosper, and in a way that benefits everyone, if you continue on a trajectory or on a path that continues to exclude people based on race, ethnicity, income—that becomes an Achilles heel."*

This video is based on Bell's essay "The Air I Breathe,"[5] published in the same magazine. In it he explains that he left Portland for Philadelphia in search of what many of us seek: "A sense of belonging, a sense that one's own interests are being looked out for and that the feelings and beliefs of one's fellow citizens mirror those of one's own, a sense that one belongs to a community."

Bell only uses the word "gentrification" once in his essay, and it's not used at all in the video. The message of loss, place, and displacement is nonetheless present. The emotional explorations of these reflections on Portland are what I wish to do on a larger scale here, with Washington, DC and its U Street Corridor as my focus.

And I want to make this local conversation one that exists within a global pattern. I am seeking to place the gentrification of one neighborhood into a larger global

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[4] Oregon Humanities. "Future: Portland." *YouTube*. Published: March 15, 2015. Web video. www.youtube.com/watch?v=ulLLuaDHEls

[5] Bell, Ifanyi. "The Air I Breathe." *Oregon Humanities, Fall-Winter 2014*. Web magazine. Accessed: March 15, 2015. http://oregonhumanities.org/magazine/quandary-fall-winter-2014/the-air-i-breathe/925/

conversation about neoliberal economic values and growing urbanization. Gentrification is an increasing international pattern but because it happens at the local level, is often talked about as a city- or nation-specific trend. So a portion of my writing will be devoted to explaining how neighborhood changes are partially representative of global trends. It is important for me to draw these connections to use the emotional expressions of the residents of U Street as a possible guide to what people are experiencing the world over. Drawing the link between local, personal experiences of gentrification and this trend as a larger process is hopefully a step toward increasing empathy for and connections to people everywhere who are on the losing side of the current socio-economic system. Hopefully this understanding can lead to productive public policies that consider community cohesion as a key factor in development.

METHODOLOGY

After making my case for why the study of cities matters in a 21st century globalized world, there are three steps to the case study of U Street that I present here. The first is to create an historical framework. I start by defining U Street's and Washington, DC's relationships to blackness. Of course U Street and the District have undergone many demographic changes over the years. To claim that the city or a neighborhood belongs only to one group would be futile and inaccurate—multiculturalism is not only a 21st century pattern. (Not to mention the fact that DC, like America, is the built result of colonialism that rests on the backs of destroyed Native communities, so trying to stake an ancestral claim would be futile for most of us.) But I do believe that in order to understand the weight of Washington's demographic changes, it's important to understand the history of DC's relationship to black culture and the evolution of the District as a "Chocolate City."

Secondly, I present recent developments in Shaw to understand what changes the neighborhood is undergoing. I also look at how the black culture of U Street continues to be communicated by the space despite these changes. I will conduct an overview of the businesses, memorials, and other markers of black history that can be found within the neighborhood and the city at-large. This work will draw on my working knowledge of Washington, DC, serving somewhat as a participant-observational spatial analysis.

The third part of the work is to understand how people write about the changing neighborhood. I want to understand how people experience a changing, increasingly diverse space. While on the surface, "diversity" is often referred to as a worthy goal or outcome, I suspect that for some people there is also a sense of loss—a loss that results from a neighborhood that felt more familiar. I am particularly interested in this because it seems to me that even as U Street is honored as a black cultural space, the black people connected to that history might feel a sense of loss or betrayal. To understand this, I refer to the public media sphere, conducting a small phenomenological study. I look at both first-person articles and interviews conducted within larger written articles in *The Washington Post*, between 2009 and 2015.

A note on this method: I approach my inquiry of gentrification with a phenomenological lens because "phenomenology" as a qualitative method of inquiry refers to the study of people's perceptions of an event or phenomenon, rather than the event itself. The goal is to understand how people construct meaning and it is particularly helpful in situations such as mine, where the phenomenon in question is hard to define or quantify. While I do cover some measurable changes in the U Street neighborhood, part of the difficulty in studying gentrification is that researchers have a hard time describing its impact. Using a phenomenological approach I can attempt to identify truths based on people's individual experiences. While this of course makes the results less generalizable, I do like that the approach is person-centered, allows for nuance, and can always be scaled-up over subsequent research projects.

Furthermore, I decided to look at this discussion of community change as it happens within the public, online sphere, asking: how do people freely *relay* their experiences of a changing, diverse space? The advantage of this approach is that it draws from the experiences of people who have a desire to communicate their perspectives rather than from people who might see outside research as a violation of their privacy. It takes the burden off the researched and places it onto me as the researcher. Most importantly, it gives us insight into how the issue is understood on a more colloquial level, rather than trying to rely on a falsely imposed academic framework. By looking at what people say without a researcher-imposed prompt, I can gain insight into how people see the issue with fewer of my biases coming into play in how I might frame my

questions. The drawback is that I'm at risk for privileging certain voices (e.g. the literate, skilled writers, people with access to popular media outlets, etc). And bias is not fully eradicated; I'm still filtering the results through my own lens. However, the practical advantages of this approach still make this a good starting point.

WHY THE URBAN MATTERS IN A GLOBAL STUDIES CONTEXT

As cities take on more global importance, it's useful to understand the dynamics going on within them. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs[6], in 1950, only 30 percent of the world's people lived in cities. But the world reached a tipping point in 2007 when for the first time in history, half the people in the world were residing in cities. In 2014, the most recent year for which we have data, that number was 54 percent. And by 2050, the world's urban centers will contain two-thirds of its population. Seen from another perspective: by 2050 the number of people living in cities is expected to grow by 2.5 billion.

The size of our cities seems to be growing as well. The number of megacities (defined by the UN as urban centers with 10 million or more inhabitants) tripled from 10 in 1990 to 28 in 2014[7]. One-in-eight people currently live in the 28 mega-cites of 10 million or more.

Africa and Asia are currently experiencing the highest rates of urbanization, as their populations are still primarily agricultural. Forty percent of Africa and 48 percent of Asia can currently be considered urban and those numbers are quickly rising to catch up with the rest of the world[8]. The UN projects rates of 56 and 64 percent urbanization by 2050, respectively. Due to a combination of urbanization trends and population growth, 90 percent of the world's future urban increases will come from these regions. For the rest of the world, their urban numbers are already skyscraper-high. In 2014, 73 percent of Europe, 80 percent of Latin America and the Caribbean, and 82 percent of North America were urbanized.

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[6] United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs. "World Urbanization Prospects: 2014 Revision - Highlights." *United Nations*, 2014. Web pdf. http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/Highlights/WUP2014-Highlights.pdf

[7] United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs. "World Urbanization Prospects: 2014 Revision - Highlights." *United Nations*, 2014. Web pdf, p13. http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/Highlights/WUP2014-Highlights.pdf

[8] United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs. "World Urbanization Prospects: 2014 Revision - Highlights." *United Nations*, 2014. Web pdf. http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/Highlights/WUP2014-Highlights.pdf

Just seven countries make up more than half the world's urban population: China (with 758 million urban-dwellers), India (410 million), the US (263 million), Brazil (173 million), Indonesia (134 million), Japan (118 million), and Russia (105 million)[9]. Projections indicate that China, India, and Nigeria will account for 37 percent of the urban growth that the world is expected to see by 2050. Seven countries will make up another 20 percent: the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Pakistan, and the United States.

Urbanization is not just an international trend, it's also a contributor to globalization itself. The concentration of economic and governmental activity made possible by cities provides easy links with other regions, helping to shrink the distance between national borders. As Saskia Sassen asserts, globalization is driven in large part by cities. For Sassen, this is linked in particular to "global cities,"[10] a term she coined to capture the role that a few particular cities play in helping to spur globalization. These cities are in many ways increasingly disconnected from the states in which they're located, and instead play an increasing role in global finance and power. It's in global cities that firms that operate at a worldwide level concentrate their corporate functions. As a result, the business class (often brought in from all over the world) has replaced the industrial worker as the city's primary representative.

Looking to the US capital for insight

While the most rapid urbanization is expected in Africa and Asia, we can use the already established trend of city living in North America to anticipate what impact this trend will have on other parts of the world. It's worth noting that of the seven countries that currently host half the world's population, the US is the only Western country and along with Japan, is one of only two Global North countries. And of the ten countries that will make up the greatest rates of urban growth in the coming years, the US is the only one in the Global North.

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[9] United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs. "World Urbanization Prospects: 2014 Revision - Highlights." *United Nations*, 2014. Web pdf, p12. http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/Highlights/WUP2014-Highlights.pdf

[10] Sassen, Saskia. "The Global City. Introducing a Concept", in: Brown Journal of World Affairs, Vol 9 (2005) No. 2, pp. 27-43.

Washington, DC is just 68-square miles (177 km^2) in area (only 61 mi^2 – or 158 km^2 – of which is land). For anyone from or typically interested in cities such as New York or Chicago, London or Paris, Tokyo or Hong Kong, DC can seem like an odd choice for a Global Studies inquiry. But as cities around the world grow individually in size and spur globalization as a collective, even smaller cities need our attention. While the United States' three primary global cities are New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago, Washington, DC still made the top-10 list of 2014 global cities, according to global management consulting firm A.T.Kearney.[11]

The UN says that about half the world's urban population lives among a relatively small population of 500,000 or less[12]. The US Census Bureau estimates that Washington, DC's population was 658,893[13] in 2014. As a modest city whose population is close to that of about half the world's urban areas, DC is a good place to begin understanding the on-the-ground impact of increasing urbanization and the housing competition it brings. While slightly large, its size still allows it to be fairly representative, while its national and international importance makes it a key place to understand. The number of people in small-to-medium sized cities with 500,000 to 1 million inhabitants like DC is predicted to grow at a pace of about 36 percent between 2014 and 2030[14]. Cities this size are expected to hold at about 10 percent of the global urban population—about what they have now.

Midsized American cities will also drive the US economy in the years to come, therefore influencing global economic growth. This creates a sense of urgency around the study of cities such as Washington, DC. According to the McKinsey Global Institute there are 255 middleweight US cities (as of 2011) and these midsized cities account for more than 70 percent of the US Gross Domestic Product (GDP)[15]. And cities such as

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[11] Hales, Mike et. al.. "Global Cities, Present and Future: 2014 Global Cities and Emerging Cities." *AT Kearney*, 2014. Web pdf. https://www.atkearney.com/documents/10192/4461492/Global+Cities+Present+and+Future-GCI+2014.pdf/3628fd7d-70be-41bf-99d6-4c8eaf984cd5

[12] United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs. "World Urbanization Prospects: 2014 Revision - Highlights." *United Nations*, 2014. Web pdf, p12. http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/Highlights/WUP2014-Highlights.pdf

[13] United States Census Bureau. "QuickFacts: United States, District of Columbia." *US Census Bureau: State and Country QuickFacts*, December 2015. http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/11000.html

[14] United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs. "World Urbanization Prospects: 2014 Revision - Highlights." *United Nations*, 2014, p15. Web pdf. http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/Highlights/WUP2014-Highlights.pdf

[15] Manyika, James, et. al. "Urban America: US cities in the global economy." *McKinsey Global Institute*, April 2012, p3

Boston and Washington, DC (what McKinsey calls "established cities" or "alpha middleweights), outperform their mid-sized peers with above average GDP per capita[16].

Benefits of increased urbanization

The global trend of growing urbanization can in many ways be seen as something to embrace. The UN points out that city life often corresponds to greater educational opportunities, more access to social services, and greater political participation[17]. Providing public transportation, sanitation services, and electricity is easier in a dense population than it is for one that is more dispersed. This is perhaps especially good news for the Global South, which is trying to develop with relatively few resources.

Benjamin Barber, a political theorist at the City University of New York's Graduate Center is a prominent advocate for the positive role cites stand to play in the global future. As of October 2015, his 2013 TED Talk on "Why mayors should rule the world" had received over 671.5 thousand views on the TED website[18]. Barber has spearheaded a project for a Global Parliament of Mayors, set to convene for the first time in 2016. His message is that mayors are increasingly grappling with transnational challenges, often with greater ease and creativity than nations. In his book *If Mayors Ruled the World*, Barber makes the case that cities are better able to work with one another on issues such as climate change (since cities are leading drivers of pollution), migration (since most social services and international transport hubs are located in major cities), and economic growth (since large firms and industries run their major operations out of cities)[19]. And at a local level, he believes cities are better able respond to the needs of their constituents since it's far easier to access city leadership than national leadership.

It's clear that thinkers such as Barber are onto something. I doubt that on a case-by-case basis people move into cities based on these larger concerns, but the influx of people (particularly youth) into urban centers indicates their appeal even on a personal, selfish level. For some around the world, the reasons to move to the city might be

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[16] Manyika, James, et. al. "Urban America: US cities in the global economy." *McKinsey Global Institute*, April 2012, p4

[17] United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs. "World Urbanization Prospects: 2014 Revision - Highlights." *United Nations*, 2014, p19. Web pdf. http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/Highlights/WUP2014-Highlights.pdf

[18] Barber, Benjamin. "Why mayors should rule the world." *TED*. Filmed: June 2013. Web video. Accessed: October 2015. https://www.ted.com/talks/benjamin_barber_why_mayors_should_rule_the_world?language=en

[19] Barber, Benjamin. *If Mayors Ruled the World: Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities*. Yale University Press, 2013.

practical (easier access to jobs in a global economy that is increasingly unfriendly to small-scale agriculture, for example). For others, the reasons are more whimsical: the ability to walk rather than drive to points of interest, to easily access cultural institutions, and to experience diversity just outside one's door. Regardless, the personal gain is such that it makes the social benefits rational to the individual.

Challenges to urbanization

Still, the international trend towards city living will not be without its difficulties. Economies around the world will need to be restructured around industry and finance rather than agriculture. And each of the social benefits could present pitfalls. For instance: congested centers bring noise and air pollution along with other forms of environmental degradation, and cities will need to figure out how allocate funds and time to improve their public transportation systems due to increased usage.

Cities are working to tackle these problems locally, but they are also being held accountable at the international level. As cities continue to find their place in this newer, flatter world the UN's World Urbanization Prospects sheet names the following challenges[20]:

-"Governments must implement policies to ensure that the benefits of urban growth are shared equitably and sustainably.
-"Diversified policies to plan for and manage the spatial distribution of the population and internal migration are needed."
-"Policies aimed at a more balanced distribution of urban growth, avoiding excessive concentration in just one or two very large urban agglomerations within a single country, can also support sustainable development."
-"Accurate, consistent and timely data on global trends in urbanization and city growth are critical for assessing current and future needs with respect to urban growth and for setting policy priorities to promote inclusive and equitable urban and rural development."
-"Successful sustainable urbanization requires competent, responsive and accountable governments charged with the management of cities and urban expansion, as well as appropriate use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for more efficient service delivery."

[20] United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs. "World Urbanization Prospects: 2014 Revision - Highlights." *United Nations*, 2014. Web pdf. http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/Highlights/WUP2014-Highlights.pdf

This list essentially boils down to cities' responsibility to grow in a way that is inclusive, balanced, and respectful of populations. While there are many ways to consider inclusivity, the problem I'm concerned with here is one of space. As cities increase in popularity, so will the demand for housing. The UN was also dealing with many of the above concerns back in 2012 when it held its Rio+20 conference on sustainable development. In the closing document, "The Future We Want: Outcome document adopted at Rio+20," world leaders, along with participants from the private and NGO sectors, affirmed their commitment to poverty reduction, social equity, and environmental protection in the face of a growing world population. Then, however, inclusivity was more clearly stressed:

-*"We commit to promote an integrated approach to planning and building sustainable cities and urban settlements, including through supporting local authorities, increasing public awareness and enhancing participation of urban residents, including the poor, in decision making."*[21]

These are worthy goals, but there is a tension here: the desire for urban development and regeneration versus the commitment to protect and serve the poor. While governments might pay lip service to involving the poor in development decisions, it is often the poor that lose out on economic progress. When it comes to urban development, there is often a disconnect between the ideals of inclusion and the aims of "progress." A more inclusive conversation is the aim for this paper—to understand the impacts of "development" from the people whose neighborhoods changed in order to allow for city development.

Human rights and cities

One approach to alleviate the tension between development and inclusivity might be the incorporation of a human rights framework into urban affairs. Very slowly, this is starting to happen. An Amnesty International report released in 2014 noted that the subjects of cities and human rights are often separate in academia and in the professional

[21] United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. "The Future We Want: Outcome document adopted at Rio+20." *United Nations*, 2012. Web pdf. www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/727The%20Future%20We%20Want%2019%20June%201230pm.pdf

sphere[22]. Several authors that contributed to the report drew on Henri Lefebvre's "right to the city" concept to bring the ideals of human rights into the metropolis. The "right to the city" idea advocates for popular access to public life. Lefebvre's ideas can be used to argue in favor of laws that protect the right to housing for the poor or equal access to public transportation. Several advocacy groups have invoked the right to the city in their campaigns. One of the most noteworthy of these is an organization in Brooklyn, New York, which takes its name directly from Lefebvre's concept: Right to the City, which began in 2007 as a response to gentrification and has called for a "halt to displacement of low-income people, people of color, marginalized LGBTQ communities, and youths of color from their historic urban neighborhoods"[23]. This national alliance has branches along the East Coast (including DC) as far south as Miami, Florida, and as far west as San Francisco, California and Seattle, Washington. What is particularly interesting is not just the language of "rights" as it relates to the city, but a right to an historic neighborhood. This seems to suggest that people have more than a right to housing—they have a right to a culturally-specific space (perhaps even to a non-gentrified space).

There might even be support for such an idea in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Article 22 states that everyone has a "right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality"[24]. While the UDHR does not explicitly frame its goals in the context of a particular type of community, the goals of economic security as well as cultural expression could be seen as linked to the space of the urban neighborhood.

Playing off of this potential link, there is a growing movement among metropolises to brand themselves as "human rights cities." The People's Movement For Human Rights Learning is an international nonprofit started in 1989 to advance human

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[22] van Lindert, Thijs and Doutje Lettinga, eds. "The Future of Human Rights in an Urban World: Exploring Opportunities, Threats and Challenges." *Amnesty International Netherlands*, September 2014.
[23] Right to the City, n.p., n.d. Organizational website. Accessed: September 2015. http://righttothecity.org/
[24] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. "Universal Declaration of Human Rights." *United Nations,* 1948 - English edition. Web pdf.
http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf

rights as a way of life[25]. They work with local citizens to establish Human Rights Cities committed to democracy promotion, economic justice, and human security. Examples can be found all over the world in places as diverse as Graz, Austria, Nagpur, India, and Porto Alegre, Brazil. Another example is the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)--a platform to help local governments protect their interests on a global scale. Within this, the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights helps the cities of the UCLG form a united front in the pursuit of social justice goals[26]. The committee provides a framework for subjects such public services, housing standards, trade unions, and even cultural rights.

Gentrification as a contentious issue

As we've seen with the US Right to the City activist network, one specific urban issue that can be viewed through the human rights lens is that of gentrification. But unlike questions of social services or housing, the classification of gentrification as a human rights concern is a far more complicated question. In some ways, the term is rather straight-forward. The term "gentrification" was coined in 1963 by British sociologist Ruth Glass to describe the process by which wealthy residents (the "gentry") moved into working-class London neighborhoods. It's a potentially dry academic term that has been infused with intense connotations. For some, an "up and coming" or "developing" neighborhood is a sign of progress or less crime or modern technology.

For others, the term "gentrification" can have an immediately sinister ring. Displacement is a top concern for those who see gentrification with a skeptical gaze. As the *Washington Post* points out: "Gentrification and displacement have become so intimately linked in how we talk about certain neighborhoods that they've begun to fuse together"[27]. Picking up on a larger debate he wishes to avoid, Alan Ehrenhart uses the term surprisingly little in this book on America's changing urban demographics -- *The*

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[25] The People's Movement For Human Rights Learning, n.p., n.d. Organizational website. Accessed: January 2015. http://www.pdhre.org/projects/hrcommun.html

[26] UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights. "Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City." *United Cities and Local Governments*, October 2012 – English version.

[27] Badger. Emily. "Here is everything we know about whether gentrification pushes poor people out." *Washington Post.* Published: September 14, 2015. Web. Accessed: September 15, 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/09/14/here-is-everything-we-know-about-whether-gentrification-pushes-people-out/

Great Inversion and the Future of the American City. The term "gentrification," he claims, "long ago became a word at the center of urban ideological debate, with those against it arguing that the return of affluent white residents to city centers was unfairly displacing impoverished minority renters, and those in favor of it insisting that it was gradually restoring the economic and social vitality of cities as a whole"[28].

While Ehrenhalt rejects the language of gentrification, he offers a new framework for understanding changing urban demographics that could be useful for talking about this change without the emotionally loaded terminology. Ehrenhalt's analysis is focused only on the United States but helpful for understanding Washington, DC as part of a national pattern.

While gentrification usually refers to a neighborhood, Ehrenhalt makes the case that what is happening across the US is a much broader rearrangement of metropolitan living patterns and should be termed "demographic inversion." His overall point is that this inversion will largely (and perhaps entirely) reverse the roles of cities and suburbs in America from a demographic perspective. He contends that in the 21st century, cities will remain at the center of economic and political progress. However, wealthier people will occupy the center while poor residents and immigrants will be moved to the outer regions of the suburbs. This is how Paris is comprised: with the suburb occupying the role in the popular imagination that the American "inner city" held in the 20th century.

Ehrenhalt notes that across American metropolises, deindustrialization led to a decrease in noise and pollution, and the physical spaces of the industrial age have now been repurposed. Inversion has also been spurred by a decrease in random violent street crime. Ehrenhalt counts DC as part of this inversion pattern. Of U Street he writes:

> "Walk around the neighborhood of Fourteenth and U streets in Washington, DC, on a Saturday night, and you will find it perhaps the liveliest part of the city, at least for those under twenty-five. This is a neighborhood where the riots of 1968 left physical scars that still have not disappeared, and where outsiders were afraid to venture for more than thirty years"[29].

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[28] Ehrenhalt, Alan. (2012). *The Great Inversion and the Future of the American City.* Alfred A Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc. New York, USA, p232-233.
[29] Ehrenhalt, Alan. (2012). *The Great Inversion and the Future of the American City.* Alfred A Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc. New York, USA, p10.

DC, he might say, is not being gentrified—merely inverted, like much of the US. Still, Ehrenhalt acknowledges that challenges are an inevitable part of demographic inversion and race is one of them[30]. So regardless of the terminology used, it's important to grapple with the impact of cultural shifts on cities and their individual neighborhoods.

But the irony is that even with such vigorous debate, little is known conclusively about the full impact of gentrification on the poor. Although displacement or inversion might seem clear in some scenarios, it's not all-together definitive that gentrification pushes poor people out of cities or specific neighborhoods. The ideas are often linked (perhaps even inadvertently in this paper) but social scientists and government agencies have yet to acquire the replicable data needed to verify this. When people leave, it's difficult to pinpoint what exactly motivated their actions. A literature review published by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco conducted by researchers from University of California-Berkeley and University of California-Los Angeles found:

> "Previous studies have failed to build a cumulative understanding of displacement because they have utilized different definitions, compared different populations, and adopted a relatively short timeframe; there is not even agreement on what constitutes a significant effect."[31]

And some have even suggested that introducing wealthier residents into a neighborhood is actually beneficial to poor families and the poor are therefore *less* likely to move from a gentrifying neighborhood than one at stasis[32].

While the research is rather undetermined as to whether gentrification actually pushes people out to the extent its reputation would suggest, the fact is that such a reputation does exist. My goal here is not to settle the debate over the merits and perils of gentrification. Speaking honestly, it is something that worries me despite the ways in which I benefited from living in a gentrified Washington. But rather than attempt to say

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[30] Ehrenhalt, Alan. (2012). *The Great Inversion and the Future of the American City.* Alfred A Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc. New York, USA, p118.

[31] Zuk, Miriam et. al. "Gentrification, Displacement, and the Role of Public Investment: A Literature Overview." *Community Development Investment Center: Working Paper*. Published: August 2015. Web. Accessed: September 2015. http://www.frbsf.org/community-development/files/wp2015-05.pdf

[32] Sullivan, Laura. "Gentrification May Actually Be Boon To Longtime Residents." *National Public Radio*. Published: January 22, 2014. Web. Accessed: January 2015. http://www.npr.org/2014/01/22/264528139/long-a-dirty-word-gentrification-may-be-losing-its-stigma. [This NPR story draws on the work of Lance Freeman from Columbia University's Urban Planning program.]

one side is right or wrong, I want to simply engage in the debate for the sake of understanding how people feel about gentrification and its impact on their sense of self.

Gentrification is an issue that has been attracting attention and unsettling people in many corners of the world. For geographer Neil Smith, gentrification has morphed from a small-scale, sporadic occurrence to a global strategy that reflects the expansion of neoliberal capitalist values[33]. Understanding the dynamics at play in Washington could give insight to places as diverse as Germany, Brazil, and South Africa. In Berlin, the city's "poor but sexy" motto and its reputation as a hub for the creative class has drawn expats and investors hoping to make the once divided city their playground[34]. And the same down and out people that made the city cool are now finding it harder to manage life in Berlin. (And many have found their way to Leipzig—home of the EMGS consortium and affectionately referred to as "Hypezig"—in search of greener, more affordable creative pastures.) In Rio de Janeiro, favela residents have felt the sting of "development" as the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics have claimed land in an effort to remake parts of the city under the international spotlight[35]. And in Johannesburg, neighborhoods that suffered from neglect in the years after apartheid fell are now seeing a reemergence, but squeezing the pockets of poor residents[36]. In the effort to build a more human rights-centered world, understanding the weight of urban change in one place has the potential for ripple effects.

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[33] Smith, Neil. "New Globalism, New Urbanism: Gentrification as Global Urban Strategy." *Antipode*: Oxford, UK and Malden, USA, 2002, p427-450.
[34] Slobodian, Quinn and Michelle Sterling. "Sacking Berlin: How hipsters, expats, yummies, and smartphones ruined a city." *The Baffler*, No. 23. Published: 2013. Web magazine. Accessed: November 2103. http://thebaffler.com/articles/sacking-berlin
[35] Catalytic Communities. "Introduction to Gentrification." *CatComm.org*, n.d. Organizational website. http://catcomm.org/workshop-gentrification/
[36] Serino, Kenichi. "Gentrification in Johannesburg isn't good news for everyone." *Al Jazeera America*. Published: March 4, 2015. Web. Accessed: November 2015. http://america.aljazeera.com/multimedia/2015/3/Gentrification-in-Johannesburg.html

Chapter 2:
A Case Study of Gentrification

BECOMING CHOCOLATE CITY: DC'S BLACK ROOTS

In 1975, George Clinton's Parliament funk band released the album "Chocolate City." It was a tribute to Washington, DC, where the band had been especially popular[37]. The cover of the album features a chocolate-colored medallion engraved with the Lincoln Memorial, Washington Monument, and Capitol Dome. As the title track saunters along to the subtle but upbeat percussion, the song states: *"You're my piece of the rock and I love you, CC / Can you dig it? / Hey, uh, we didn't get our 40 acres and a mule / But we did get you, CC"*[38]. The line is a reference to the unfulfilled promise made by Union General William Tecumseh Sherman to black slaves—that upon freedom, they would receive 40 acres of land and mule for farming. Instead, George Clinton and his Parliament band claim that DC and other cities like it (*"There's a lot of chocolate cities around / We've got Newark, We've got Gary / Somebody told me we got LA … But you're the capital, CC"*) are the places where black Americans are finally able to exercise a sense of ownership.

Parliament's Chocolate City album cover.

Photo Courtesy: Rolling Stone Magazine [http://www.rollingstone.com/music/albumreviews/chocolate-city-20030408]

[37] Leone, Dominique. "Parliament." *Pitchfork*. Published: April 13, 2003. Web. Accessed: September 2015. http://pitchfork.com/reviews/albums/6175-up-for-the-down-stroke-chocolate-city-and-mothership-connection/
[38] "Chocolate City." *Genius*, n.d. Web information portal. Accessed: September 2015. http://genius.com/Parliament-chocolate-city-lyrics

Writer and DC-native Kenneth Carroll published an essay entitled "The Meanings of Funk" in the Washington Post back in 1998. He wrote: "Even before Clinton put a beat to it, Chocolate City was a metaphorical utopia where black folks' majority status was translated into an assertion of self-consciousness, self-determination and self-confidence."[39] Radio DJs from the city's black AM stations said they started calling DC "Chocolate City" a few years before Clinton. Bobby "The Mighty Burner" Bennett explained to Carroll: "Chocolate City for me was the expression of DC's classy funk and confident blackness"[40]. He said record companies had to bring their music through DC in order to prove themselves to the larger black community and framing DC as the Chocolate City was a way of building pride and "added to the idea of cultural awareness"[41].

To be clear, as Clinton notes, there are many "chocolate cities" in America. Atlanta, New Orleans, Detroit, among others, all share the distinction as black cities (both in terms of population and culture) that also hold national significance. But DC, as both a chocolate city and a seat of (inter-)national power, is deserving of particular examination.

DC in the Middle of a Fractured Union

DC's ascent to Chocolate City status began long before funk touched the souls of black folk. In history classes and on those regular trips to Washington we all learned that in 1863 Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring freedom for slaves in rebel states. The US National Archives considers the Emancipation Proclamation as one of the "great documents of human freedom"[42]. But the Archives admit that much is often overlooked regarding the document. One being that the document was only valid pending a Union victory, which would not come until 1865. And the document was only valid for states in the Confederacy; not slave-holding Union border states such as Maryland.

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[39] Carroll, Kenneth. "The Meanings of Funk." *Washington Post*. Published: February 1, 1998. Web. Accessed: October 2015. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/local/longterm/library/dc/dc6898/funk.htm
[40] Carroll, Kenneth. "The Meanings of Funk." *Washington Post*. Published: February 1, 1998. Web. Accessed: October 2015. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/local/longterm/library/dc/dc6898/funk.htm
[41] Carroll, Kenneth. "The Meanings of Funk." *Washington Post*. Published: February 1, 1998. Web. Accessed: October 2015. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/local/longterm/library/dc/dc6898/funk.htm
[42] National Archives and Records Administration. "The Emancipation Proclamation." *Featured Documents*, n. d. Website. Accessed: August 2015.
http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured_documents/emancipation_proclamation/

For its part, Maryland abolished slavery by referendum in 1864[43]. But about nine months prior to the well-known Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln issued an emancipation order for the District of Columbia[44] on April 16, 1862. In 1865 the 13th Amendment to the Constitution would properly declare that "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude… shall exist within the United States…"[45]. But the lag time between the national ideal to end slavery and actually doing so spurred slaves in the region to seek refuge in DC. Washington, DC's black population expanded more than four times its size during the Civil War[46]. Throughout the war (from 1861-1985) more than 40,000 escaped slaves had poured into the city[47].

The ground for this reception was prepared even as slavery was in its hey-day. Washington, DC is halfway down the East Coast of the United States, bordered by the Atlantic Ocean. Given its central location during the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, (especially in what was then a less geographically dispersed country), the city was a major depot and auction site for the sale of human cargo. In 1800 about a quarter of Washington's population were blacks, about five percent of whom were free. But as part of the Compromise of 1850 slave trading was eventually outlawed in DC. Freeing slaves was relatively easy and free blacks were able to gain residency in the city. By the beginning of the Civil War the population of free blacks outpaced slaves (11,131 to 3,185)—one of only three cities (along with Baltimore and St. Louis) where this was the case[48]. The growing population exercised their autonomy by opening churches, organizing community centers, and chartering a school system for blacks. And they often

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[43] "The Not Quite Free State: Maryland dragged its feet on emancipation during the Civil War." *Washington Post*. Published: September 13, 2013. Web. Accessed: August 2015. http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/md-politics/the-not-quite-free-state-maryland-dragged-its-feet-on-emancipation-during-civil-war/2013/09/13/a34d35de-fec7-11e2-bd97-676ec24f1f3f_story.html

[44] National Archives and Records Administration. "The District of Columbia Empancipation Act." *Featured Documents*, n.d. Website. Accessed: August 2015. http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured_documents/dc_emancipation_act/

[45] Library of Congress. "13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution." *Web Guides*. LOC Website. Accessed: August 2015. http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/13thamendment.html

[46] Ruble, Blair A. (2010). *Washington's U Street: A Biography*. Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Washington, DC, USA. P19.

[47] Ruble, Blair A. (2010). *Washington's U Street: A Biography*. Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Washington, DC, USA. P22.

[48] Ruble, Blair A. (2010). *Washington's U Street: A Biography*. Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Washington, DC, USA. P20.

found work through government employment (a reliable source of financial security for African Americans even today)[49].

In this regard, DC is not just a city like any other. It was one of the first American cities where being black did not mean being enslaved.

DC and the Great Migration

About half a decade after the war ended, the Great Migration began to draw even more black people towards the city of Washington, as well as its more Northern counterparts. Beginning around 1910, rural Southern blacks began making their way North en masse, usually winding up in industrial urban centers. Isabel Wilkerson's Pulitzer Prize-winning book *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*, was the first widely-known chronicle of the story of the six million or so black Americans that moved North and West during the first half of the 20th century. We can think of the Great Migration as an expression of freedom. Wilkerson: "it was the first mass act of independence by a people who were in bondage in this country far longer than they had been free"[50]. And with this freedom, so many chose to make the country's urban centers their home. The reasons for seeking out new lives in cities ranged, but largely included practical aspects such as job opportunities and train stations able to receive them after their journeys North and West. But the impulse to leave the South in the first place was more high-minded. Namely, hopes for a life free of the oppressive Jim Crow-era racism of back home; that is to say, hopes for a more free life.

Wilkerson pinpoints the Great Migration's end to the 1970s when the fights of the Civil Rights Movement finally began to show results—when "the whites-only signs came down, the all-white schools opened up, and everyone could vote," she wrote. When the Migration began, only ten percent of all black Americans lived outside of the South. By its end, that number would stand at 47 percent[51]. And while some historians differentiate between a First Great Migration and a Second Great Migration, separated by a let-up

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[49] Ruble, Blair A. (2010). *Washington's U Street: A Biography*. Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Washington, DC, USA, p20.
[50] Wilkerson, Isabel. (2010). *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. Random House. New York, USA, p10.
[51] Wilkerson, Isabel. (2010). *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. Random House. New York, USA, p10.

during the Great Depression, what's clear is that by the end, African Americans were an urbanized people.

And, according to Wilkerson, cities were deeply shaped by this shift brought on by the Great Migration:

> "Its imprint is everywhere in urban life. The configuration of cities as we know them, the social geography of black and white neighborhoods, the spread of the housing projects as well as the rise of a well-scrubbed black middle class, along with alternating waves of white flight and suburbanization—all of these grew, directly or indirectly, from the response of everyone touched by the Great Migration."[52]

Urbanity, as we know it in today's America, should be understood as having a deeply racial element in its composition. Therefore, when we talk about gentrification and neighborhood change, race is an inevitable part of the conversation.

DC was one of those cities that took in blacks from the former Confederacy and allowed them to experience a more full and fair citizenship. I say "more" because for blacks in America, "fair" has always been relative. Whether it's discriminatory housing policies or police profiling, the United States remains a place where it's quite onerous to be black. This is to say, racism did not disappear once the train cars reached the South's outer borders. But it did quiet. And for people traveling along the Eastern seaboard, this softening began around the nation's capital, which according to Wilkerson "was technically south of the Mason-Dixon Line but was effectively the honorary North."[53]

Describing her own mother's journey out of Georgia, Wilkerson writes:

> "The railcar was filled with the expectant faces of people hoping for all the rights and privileges of citizenship. She stepped off at Union Station, in the border city of Washington, D.C. It was the start of the North, filled as it was with grand squares and circles named after northern heroes of the Civil War—Ulysses S. Grant, William Tecumseh Sherman, George Henry Thomas, David G. Farragut—names, to this day, reviled in the South."[54]

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[52] Wilkerson, Isabel. (2010). *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. Random House. New York, USA, p10.
[53] Wilkerson, Isabel. (2010). *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. Random House. New York, USA, p200.
[54] Wilkerson, Isabel. (2010). *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. Random House. New York, USA, p11.

To give a sense of just what a border city DC is, a 15-minute drive from Farragut North can take you over the Potomac River into the state of Virginia, right onto Jefferson Davis Memorial Highway—named for the president of the Confederacy.

When it comes to its role in African American life, DC gets less attention than places like New York, Chicago, or even Oakland, but since the middle of the 19th century, DC has been a city of a refuge for the country's black population. And perhaps its proximity to the South (i.e. its ease of access) should serve to highlight just what a crucial city it is.

So when we speak of modern-day gentrification, it is not just a matter of neighborhood change. It's also important to see the history and the sense of loss, especially in this case for a population that started out with so little.

U Street as a Center of Black Life

What is now Shaw and its "U Street Corridor" has been at the center of black Washingtonian life since the country was almost split in two. Former slaves who made it to DC were able to stay. The Union army declared escaped slaves that reached their territory "contraband" under Union discretion—unable to be "exported" back to their owners. Various contraband communities formed around Washington, DC, including near what would eventually become U Street at the intersection of Vermont Avenue and 12th Street[55], one block from my old residence in DC.

In 1861 Congress established the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, otherwise known as the Freedman's Bureau, to help refugees and freed slaves begin anew. This meant helping blacks find jobs, get educated, and build a new life. In 1862 the agency set up the Washington Freedman's Hospital to serve blacks at 13th and S. It would stay there for more than a century. Union General Otis Howard served as Commissioner of the Freedman's Bureau. In 1867 Howard University became the "first university south of the Mason-Dixon Line dedicated to a biracial education"[56]. As previously suggested, the University, still a mainstay of the Shaw neighborhood, would

[55] Ruble, Blair A. (2010). *Washington's U Street: A Biography*. Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Washington, DC, USA, p23.
[56] Ruble, Blair A. (2010). *Washington's U Street: A Biography*. Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Washington, DC, USA, p24.

become a training ground for African American teachers, doctors, and professionals. "The Freedman's Hospital, together with Howard University, firmly secured this corner of the nation's capital as one focal point for the city's rapidly growing African American community"[57]. Buoyed by civil institutions and the increasingly popular streetcar line, the U Street area was home to a growing black middle class by the end of the 1860s. As in other parts of the city, former contraband camps had been transformed into an urban community.

At its earliest inception as an urban center in the latter part of the 19th century, U Street was quite diverse—catering to an expanding black population, but also to a sizable white population. The rich and poor shared the streets, and the area's budding nightlife was the scene of a vibrant, if clandestine, gay subculture. But just as Jim Crow began to seize hold of the South, Washington would soon be divided by race. Post-Civil War Reconstruction backfired and began to stoke racial resentment. In the South, this meant a series of laws and policies set on the disenfranchisement of African Americans. In DC, segregation was more a matter of custom than law. But the impact on black residents in general and U Street in particular was felt all the same.

This meant that while many blacks did in fact find solace in Washington as they made their way out from underneath the South's oppression during the Great Migration, they were still in rather familiar territory. Things were better—but far from perfect.

It's important to note here that Washington, DC is something of an odd-ball, politically speaking. Even today, while citizens of the city can vote in presidential elections, they do not have a voting representative in Congress. It's only been a few years—since 1970—that they had a voice in the form of a non-voting representative. And until 1973 when the Home Rule Act was passed, citizens here had little say over their local policies[58]. The national Congress still has to approve all laws passed in the city. This meant that as Reconstruction failed and animosities built, local authorities were more accountable to Congress—and an increasingly segregationist Congress, at that—than their citizens. The city began to loosen its laws prohibiting laws preventing

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[57] Ruble, Blair A. (2010). *Washington's U Street: A Biography*. Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Washington, DC, USA, p25.
[58] Council of the District of Columbia. "DC Home Rule." N.p., n.d. Government website. Accessed: December 2015. http://dccouncil.us/pages/dc-home-rule

discrimination in public places. The stark division between white and black Washington emerged just as the Great Migration was driving more blacks into the city.

In the moral crush of Jim Crow sentiments, U Street stood in opposition to the oppression. As U Street "biographer" Blair Ruble writes: "By 1920, the first signs of a newly assertive African American self-image molded out of the pain and frustration of a Jim Crow world would mark the initial stirring of an era of protest. U Street stood at the epicenter of these developments"[59]. As whites excluded blacks from larger society, U Street became a hub where blacks drew strength from their own ingenuity, creativity, and collaboration.

So the neighborhood was shaped by racial discrimination in two ways: 1- Jim Crow policies in the South brought a greater number of blacks into DC, and 2- DC's own racial attitudes concentrated those newcomers into specific locations, with U Street as a central location.

The number of black businesses in Shaw jumped from 15 in 1886 to over 300 by 1920[60]. Black-operated banks and financial institutions helped to spur economic growth. Civic associations also multiplied over the period, spurred in part by the business community's embrace of the Twelfth Street YMCA. Established in 1853 by a former slave as the first black branch of the Young Men's Christian Association, construction for "a grand new headquarters" began in 1908. The Phyllis Wheatley YWCA for women opened in 1905. The True Reformer Building went up in 1903 at 12th and U to help meet the financial and social needs of the black community. It was the first building in the country to be a wholly African American project—designed, financed, built, and owned by the community[61]. Today it's an historical landmark.

Such civic organizations and businesses, as well as influential religious institutions and strong secondary schools helped cement U Street as the center of a confident African American middle class. But things weren't entirely rosy. While some blacks saw their fortunes increase, others resented what they perceived as privilege run

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[59] Ruble, Blair A. (2010). *Washington's U Street: A Biography*. Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Washington, DC, USA, p49.
[60] Ruble, Blair A. (2010). *Washington's U Street: A Biography*. Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Washington, DC, USA, p60.
[61] Public Welfare Foundation. "True Reformer Building." N.p., n. d. Organization website. Accessed: December 2015. http://www.publicwelfare.org/about-us/true-reformer-building/

amok[62]. The black elite was often defined by money, skin color, education, and family legacy. And all too often black power-players sought to separate themselves from poorer blacks. So much of the early 20th century art for which U Street is renowned came from the clash between the African American elite and regular black folk. Poets Jean Toomer and Langston Hughes, as well as jazz artists Duke Ellington remain famous U Street names[63]. But all drew inspiration from the contrast between high-end U Street and working-class 7th Street, just down the road. Hughes wrote: "From all this pretentiousness Seventh Street was a sweet relief. Seventh Street is the long, old, dirty street, where the ordinary Negroes hang out…. I liked the barrel houses of Seventh Street, the shouting churches. And the songs. They were warm and kind and didn't care whether you had an overcoat or not"[64]. Hughes's frustration with U Street would eventually drive him north to Harlem.

Still, what the egos of the black elite did bring was an awareness of what was missing. In being constantly thwarted by white society, the black middle class became aware of its oppression and focused on achieving justice. Eventually, a common African American identity would form around U Street, cutting across lines of class and skin tone. The year 1919 brought the "Red Summer" in cities across the country as white violence against blacks spiked[65]. As African American soldiers returned home after World War I, many were emboldened by their overseas experiences, angering whites that saw this confidence as askew from the natural order of things. Resentment was in the air. And in DC it was fanned by the racist policies of the Woodrow Wilson administration. Then in July 1919 false reports of black men attacking white women began to spread, sparking a white lynch mob that headed straight for U Street[66]. With little help from the city's racist police force black U Street-ers and 7th Street-ers banded together to fight off their attackers. With help in from nearby Baltimore, about 2,000 armed blacks dispersed

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[62] Ruble, Blair A. (2010). *Washington's U Street: A Biography*. Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Washington, DC, USA, chapter 2.
[63] Ruble, Blair A. (2010). *Washington's U Street: A Biography*. Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Washington, DC, USA, p73-74.
[64] Ruble, Blair A. (2010). *Washington's U Street: A Biography*. Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Washington, DC, USA, p74-75.
[65] Ruble, Blair A. (2010). *Washington's U Street: A Biography*. Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Washington, DC, USA, p83.
[66] Ruble, Blair A. (2010). *Washington's U Street: A Biography*. Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Washington, DC, USA, p84.

across the area. While this experience did not erase all intra-racial tensions, it did create a greater awareness of a shared destiny. U Street became the operating grounds for a more united African America.

U Street would play host to so many cultural talents in its years that singer Pearl Bailey would dub it the "Black Broadway"[67]. Eventually it would succumb to the anger and grief that swallowed many black urban centers after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. This destruction left a weakened U Street susceptible to the infestation of crime and drugs in the second half of the 20th century. But despite it all, U Street and surrounding Shaw remain an urban center—in fact, *became* urban—thanks to the legacy of black America.

THE "NEW U" FOR ALL THE NEW YOU'S: CONTEMPORARY U STREET

In the 21st century U Street is hip again. The Corridor is at the center of a changing, growing District of Columbia. A decade into the new century, as the United States was reeling from the Great Recession, DC experienced surprising growth. This came even as most places in the US were suffering from the slowest growth rates since World War II[68]. Just as blacks had flocked to DC during the turmoil of the Civil War and the Great Migration, young people saw DC as a refuge during the economic crisis. The city's job market is relatively resilient thanks to the fact that so many organizations here revolve around the federal government, which has to keep going regardless of the economic climate. In 2011, three-quarters of recent newcomers were between 18 and 34[69]. Those young people are also no-doubt drawn to the city as a "cool" place to live. Bike lanes, ample cafes, a vibrant mix of night-life and professional opportunities, and the city's openness to gay culture all help to lure a youthful crowd[70].

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[67] Haynesworth, Shelleé M. *Black Broadway on U*, 2015. Website. Accessed: December 2015. http://blackbroadwayonu.com/

[68] Morello, Carol and Timothy Wilson. "District's population and image soar." *Washington Post*. Published: December 21, 2011. Web. Accessed: August 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/local/districts-population-and-image-soar/2011/12/21/gIQAh1cLAP_story.html

[69] Morello, Carol and Timothy Wilson. "District's population and image soar." *Washington Post*. Published: December 21, 2011. Web. Accessed: August 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/local/districts-population-and-image-soar/2011/12/21/gIQAh1cLAP_story.html

[70] Morello, Carol, with Dan Keating and Steve Hendrix. "Census: Young adults are responsible for most of D.C.'s growth in past decade." *Washington Post*. Published: May 5, 2011. Web. Accessed: August 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/local/census-young-adults-are-responsible-for-most-of-dcs-growth-in-past-decade/2011/05/04/AFJz5LtF_story.html

DC's rental housing market has expanded, but only for people able to set aside $1,000 USD each month[71]. In 2005 there was more rental housing for less than $500 a month than for over $1,500. But by 2012, the most expensive housing in the city outnumbered the cheap units by three-to-one. The city's growth seems overtly targeted to the middle and upper class—not a particularly inclusive effort.

And as more people come to DC, Shaw is among the top desired neighborhoods[72]. The area is the densest in the city[73]. In July of 2013, *Washington Post* reporter Annys Shin wrote that in the preceding nine months over 1,200 condominiums and apartments and 25 or more new bars and restaurants were being built or had opened—and this is just on 14th Street. (Intersecting U Street and 14th Street are the dominant commercial stretches of Shaw and the U Street Corridor.) She wrote:

> "The formerly riot-scarred corridor has gone into gentrification overdrive, a boom fueled by investors looking for a safe place to park hundreds of millions of dollars, the relative ease of obtaining a liquor license, and the arrival of thousands of new residents longing to live downtown"[74].

Money is now flowing through each of the neighborhood's cross-sections. In May 2013 The District, a luxury apartment complex at 14th and S, sold for $76 million USD—one of the highest prices per unit in city history[75]. But that good fortune does not reach all people equally. Several weeks later the Central Union Mission, a 140-bed homeless shelter a block south, began its transformation into high-end condominiums and retail shops[76]. In all fairness, the Mission did not die, only moved its operations southward to Union Station—to a part of town where it could be of greater service to DC's homeless

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[71] Badger, Emiliy. "How high-cost housing conquered D.C. in a single decade." *Washington Post*. Published: October 4, 2014. Web. Accessed: October 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2014/10/07/how-high-cost-housing-has-overtaken-dc-in-a-single-decade/

[72] Morello, Carol, with Dan Keating and Steve Hendrix. "Census: Young adults are responsible for most of D.C.'s growth in past decade." *Washington Post*. Published: May 5, 2011. Web. Accessed: August 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/local/census-young-adults-are-responsible-for-most-of-dcs-growth-in-past-decade/2011/05/04/AFJz5LtF_story.html

[73] Shin, Annys. "Gentrification in overdrive on 14th Street." *Washington Post.* Published: July 21, 2013. Web. Accessed: August 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/local/gentrification-in-overdrive-on-14th-street/2013/07/21/d07d344e-ea5b-11e2-a301-ea5a8116d211_story.html

[74] Shin, Annys. "Gentrification in overdrive on 14th Street." *Washington Post.* Published: July 21, 2013. Web. Accessed: August 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/local/gentrification-in-overdrive-on-14th-street/2013/07/21/d07d344e-ea5b-11e2-a301-ea5a8116d211_story.html

[75] Shin, Annys. "Gentrification in overdrive on 14th Street." *Washington Post.* Published: July 21, 2013. Web. Accessed: August 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/local/gentrification-in-overdrive-on-14th-street/2013/07/21/d07d344e-ea5b-11e2-a301-ea5a8116d211_story.html

[76] Shin, Annys. "Gentrification in overdrive on 14th Street." *Washington Post.* Published: July 21, 2013. Web. Accessed: August 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/local/gentrification-in-overdrive-on-14th-street/2013/07/21/d07d344e-ea5b-11e2-a301-ea5a8116d211_story.html

population[77]. But what this suggests is that gentrification's economic surge might simply move problems such as poverty or homelessness, not fix them.

Change through a black and white lens

According to the Urban Institute, a think-tank based in Washington, the area that comprises Shaw and Logan Circle (the bordering neighborhood, often considered an extended part of Shaw) has been steadily increasing in population since 1980 (the first year for which they offered data)[78]. In 1980, this neighborhood cluster had a population of 18,637. That number rose by over 5,000 by 2010, with the largest decade-long percentage increase coming from 2000 to 2010. In that last 10-year period for which there's data the neighborhood grew by 15 percent—almost triple the growth of the previous decades. Yet in that time the percent of blacks in Shaw and Logan Circle dropped dramatically[79]. The shift is even more dramatic if we go back to 1990 (the first year of racialized data): blacks went from 65 percent of the neighborhood population in 1990 to 29 percent in 2010. And while on average this number did drop in the city's other neighborhoods, it was especially stark in Shaw and Logan Circle.

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[77] Yates, Clinton. "Luxury brand to occupy former shelter on 14th Street, but somehow, it works." *Washington Post*. Published: October 23, 2014. Web. Accessed: January 2016. www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/local/wp/2014/10/23/luxury-brand-to-occupy-former-shelter-on-14th-street-but-somehow-it-works/

[78] NeighborhoodInfo DC. "DC Neighborhood Cluster Profile – Population: Cluster 7 – Wards 2 / Shaw, Logan Circle." *Urban Institute*. Last updated: April 1, 2015. Web. Accessed: October 2015. http://www.neighborhoodinfodc.org/nclusters/Nbr_prof_clus7.html

[79] NeighborhoodInfo DC. "DC Neighborhood Cluster Profile – Population: Cluster 7 – Wards 2 / Shaw, Logan Circle." *Urban Institute*. Last updated: April 1, 2015. Web. Accessed: October 2015. http://www.neighborhoodinfodc.org/nclusters/Nbr_prof_clus7.html

A summary of the Urban Institute's neighborhood profile for Shaw/Logan Circle can be found below:

	Shaw/Logan Circle Cluster	DC Neighborhood Average
Population, 1980	**18,637**	**15,958**
Population, 1990	**19,867**	**15,173**
Population, 2000	**20,865**	**14,301**
Population, 2010	**23,895**	**15,043**
% change, 1980 to 1990	**6.6**	**-4.9**
% change, 1990 to 2000	**5.0**	**-5.7**
% change, 2000 to 2010	**15**	**5.2**
% black non-Hispanic, 1990	**65**	**65**
% black non-Hispanic, 2000	**50**	**61**
% black non-Hispanic, 2010	**29**	**51**
		Source: NeighborhoodInfo DC, Urban Institute

Not included in this truncated chart is the decrease in the percentage of children and seniors. Children comprised 20 percent of the area's population in 1980, but only 9.7 percent by 2010[80]. And seniors made up 13 percent of the region in 1980, and 6.7 by 2010[81]. On average these numbers decreased in DC's other neighborhoods in the same period, but were especially sharp in Shaw/Logan Circle. This suggests a demographic shift away from families and towards young singles (presumably with disposable income). (These numbers also raise the question of whether newcomers are settling down here or simply staying for a few years at a time, although intuiting an answer is difficult from this limited data.)

Capitalizing on history: Contemporary Invocations of the Past

Despite changing demographic numbers, U Street as a black space is still evident today. Except now it's less in the faces of the people walking the streets of the Corridor or through surrounding Shaw. It's more in the concrete of the businesses established in recent years.

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[80] NeighborhoodInfo DC. "DC Neighborhood Cluster Profile – Population: Cluster 7 – Wards 2 / Shaw, Logan Circle." *Urban Institute*. Last updated: April 1, 2015. Web. Accessed: October 2015. http://www.neighborhoodinfodc.org/nclusters/Nbr_prof_clus7.html

[81] NeighborhoodInfo DC. "DC Neighborhood Cluster Profile – Population: Cluster 7 – Wards 2 / Shaw, Logan Circle." *Urban Institute*. Last updated: April 1, 2015. Web. Accessed: October 2015. http://www.neighborhoodinfodc.org/nclusters/Nbr_prof_clus7.html

In 1998 Washington Post writer Mary Battiata noticed:

> "It's commonplace, especially, perhaps, among white Washingtonians, that the city has no distinct identity on its own, nothing of the grit and fire of Chicago, say, or New York, or New Orleans. But that is wrong. This city does have an identity, and it is black, and the heart of it is on U Street. … // U Street's boosters and visionaries – historians and architects and artists – see a lot of commercial potential in this history…"[82].

It wouldn't be long before that potential was realized. Several commercial establishments draw on U Street's past as they seek to cement themselves as modern successes. Below is an overview, intended to paint a current picture of this space:

The Ellington[83]

Named for musician Duke Ellington, a neighborhood description on the apartment building's website poetically describes:

> "A WASHINGTON DC APARTMENT COMMUNITY LIKE NO OTHER:
> There's a weight in the rhythm of the living on U. Pulsing beats through open doors of city streets. Jazz. Hip hop. R&B. Blues. Uniting in community. Sharing an affinity for evenings spent savoring food, music, life. Nights alive in the lure of U. When the sun rises, city sidewalks revive once more. Cafés filling. Cups of coffee brimming. Afternoon antiques uncovered on 14th. Modern art rising in parks. Life complete in the open street. In the theatres. In the bars. In the vibe. This is The Ellington Apartments. This is U Street Washington. This is U."

The apartment complex is a nod to the neighborhood's culture in both its name, and how it characterizes its surroundings. The Ellington stands at 13th and U Streets, right by a Metro stop. Due to it's location, height, and neon red signage, it's one of the neighborhood's most distinctive buildings.

Busboys and Poets[84] *– established in 2005*

Founded by Iraqi-American artist and activist Anas "Andy" Shallal, this famous DC restaurant was named to honor poet Langston Hughes, who once worked as a busboy at DC's Wardman Park Hotel (now the Washington Marriott Wardman Park). Although Busboys and Poets now has six locations throughout the DC-metro area, its flagship store

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[82] Battiata, Mary. "Landscape: U Street." *Washington Post*. Published Online: February 1, 1998. Accessed: January 17, 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/local/longterm/library/dc/dc6898/ustreet.htm
[83] The Ellington, n.p., n.d. Company website. Accessed: July 2015. http://www.ellingtonapartments.com/
[84] Busboys and Poets, n.p., 2012. Company website. Accessed: July 2015. http://www.busboysandpoets.com/about/

is a located at the intersection of 14th and V Streets, NW. As a restaurant and bar, bookstore, and performance space, Busboys and Poets is a staple of the modern U Street Corridor and is emblematic of the city's progressive ethos. It thinks of itself as "a community resource for artists, activists, writers, thinkers, and dreamers."

In a so-called "Tribal Statement," Busboys and Poets describes their mission as follows:

> "Busboys and Poets is a community where racial and cultural connections are consciously uplifted…a place to take a deliberate pause and feed your mind, body and soul…a space for art, culture and politics to intentionally collide…we believe that by creating such a space we can inspire social change and begin to transform our community and the world."

Busboys and Poets is clearly trying to position itself as a U Street cultural hub. Still, it's worth questioning whether it invokes a spirit of community for newcomers and long-term residents alike.

Eatonville[85] – opened in the spring of 2009[86]

Eatonville was erected just across the street from Busboys and Poets, on the north-facing side of the 14th and V intersection. The southern-style restaurant acted as a tribute to author Zora Neale Hurston and her hometown of Eatonville, Florida—the site of her *Their Eyes Were Watching God* novel, as well as the first African American incorporated town in the post-Civil War era. Andy Shallal also owns this space and said Eatonville's location across from Busboys and Poets was meant to symbolically bury the hatchet between once-feuding Hurston and Hughes.

Marvin[87] – opened in 2007

Marvin is bar and bistro located on 14th Street, a few storefronts down from Busboys and Poets. Its owner is Eric Hilton; he's the co-owner of the Eighteenth Street Lounge in the Dupont Circle Neighborhood and member of the DJ collective called the Thievery Corporation. So perhaps it was this interest in music that inspired Hilton to name the bar after DC-born soul singer Marvin Gaye. The bar's aesthetic is based on the singer's time in Belgium, where Gaye entered a period of self-imposed exile in 1981. In

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85 Eatonville, n.p., 2010. Company website. Accessed: July 2015. http://www.eatonvillerestaurant.com/

86 Note: Eatonville was reincorporated as Mulebone in February 2016. However, the tributes to Zora Neale Hurston and the southern atmosphere remain.

87 Marvin. Company website, n.d.. Accessed: July 2015. http://www.marvindc.com/

the seaside town of Ostend, Gaye was able to reflect and escape the fanfare that surrounded him in the United States. The bar's website explains: "Many close to [Gaye] attribute the palpable surge of clarity and creativity he experienced upon his return [to the U.S.] to his time spent abroad. Marvin's menu is an ode to both the culinary landscape that defined Gaye's formative years in the Shaw neighborhood of DC, and the regional cuisine he encountered during his travels."

The website describes the bar as a place that "has provided common ground—both literal and figurative—for members of the vibrant and diverse community it serves. Its patrons congregate within its walls to rub elbows, break bread, exchange ideas, and illuminate its dance floors with jubilant expression."

Painting the Town

The walls that hold up DC are adorned with complicated hints of the tension around changing and preserving culture in the process of gentrification. Street art is thriving and it's turning out to be an ironic feature of redevelopment in Washington, DC. It was once considered an act of rebellion to take to city walls with a canister of spray paint. First appearing in Philadelphia in the 1960s and then gaining infamy in New York City[88], graffiti was criminalized and demeaned as the work of miscreants. Now the powers-that-be accept "street art" as a tool to bring character (and presumably dollars) to revitalized city centers. Perhaps street art—now comfortably mainstream—still has enough creative edge to be considered "cool," especially to the young people trickling into downtown areas.

JBG Companies is Washington's top owner of commercial real estate[89]. They've built more luxury condos and apartments than anyone else in the U Street/Shaw neighborhood. Throughout the metro area, they've commissioned over two-dozen murals in the same neighborhoods where they've invested. Some artists are local, while others

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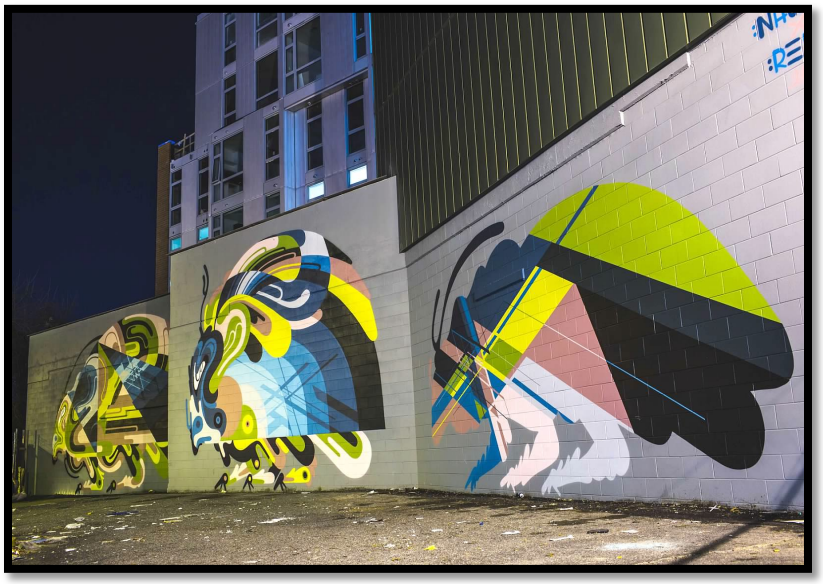
[88] O'Connell, Jonathan. "Washington's top real estate developer is painting murals in your neighborhood. Is it art or marketing? Or both?" *Washington Post*. Published: December 10, 2015. Web. Accessed: January 2016. www.washingtonpost.com/news/digger/wp/2015/12/10/washingtons-top-real-estate-developer-is-painting-murals-in-your-neighborhood-is-it-art-or-marketing-or-both/

[89] O'Connell, Jonathan. "Washington's top real estate developer is painting murals in your neighborhood. Is it art or marketing? Or both?" *Washington Post*. Published: December 10, 2015. Web. Accessed: January 2016. www.washingtonpost.com/news/digger/wp/2015/12/10/washingtons-top-real-estate-developer-is-painting-murals-in-your-neighborhood-is-it-art-or-marketing-or-both/

have been brought in from as far away as Poland and Australia. For its part, the company insists its focus on art in its development projects is about community enrichment: "This isn't just about increasing real estate values; this is about promoting artistic values and the myriad ways they enrich our developments, making them more than just places to work, shop or live. They are each complete communities with unique environments"[90].



Mural of fanciful bugs on the side of a JBG apartment building in the U Street Neighborhood. Painted by Shay Reka.

Photo courtesy: Shutterfly [https://jbgmural project.shutterfly. com/pictures/102]

But many older works of art are disappearing amidst gentrification. The "Black Family Reunion" mural stood at 14th Street and Florida Avenue NW beginning in September of 1994[91]. G. Byron Peck's mural paid tribute to black family traditions and values. The National Black McDonald's Operators Association sponsored the mural. But the popular mural fell victim to development in 2012 when a newly erected six-story apartment building obscured the painting.

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[90] The JBG Companies. "Placemaking." Company Website, n.d. Accessed: January 2015. http://www.jbg.com/#placemaking

[91] Sheir, Rebecca. "The Location: The Story Behind U Street's "Black Family Reunion." *WAMU American University Radio*. Publsihed: January 27, 2012. Web. Accessed: January 2016. http://wamu.org/programs/metro_connection/12/01/27/the_location_the_story_behind_u_streets_black_family_reunion

Black Family Reunion, visible from 1994-2012 at 14th St and Florida Ave NW. By G. Byron Peck.

Photo courtesy: Murallocator.

"Black Family Reunion is one of many DC murals celebrating black culture to be removed or obscured in the process of development. Others have included a portrait of abolitionist Frederick Douglas in Mount Vernon (south of Shaw) that was covered by construction, and a portrait in Petworth (north of Shaw) of go-go artist Chuck Brown that the building's new developers plan to knock down[92]. Peck also painted the mural of Duke Ellington on U Street with the help of nine local students. It was completed in 1997. The mural was originally at the Metro station at 12th and U Streets NW, and was moved to the True Reformer Building in 2010. The mural was removed for repairs in 2012 is supposed to return, but still hasn't reappeared[93].

[92] Kleinman, Avery. "Photos: D.C.'s Lost Murals." *The Kojo Nnamdi Show Blog, WAMU*. Published: September 16, 2015. Web. Accessed: January 2015. http://thekojonnamdishow.org/2015/09/16/d-c-s-lost-public-murals
[93] DC Murals. "Duke Ellington." Project website, n.d. Accessed: January 2015. http://dcmurals.info/stage/revoke_portfolio/project-3/

Duke Ellington memorial on U and 12th Street NW. Removed in 2012 for repairs. By G. Byron Peck.

Photo courtesy: DC Murals [http://dcmurals.info/stage/revoke_portfolio/project-3/]

Many of the removed or obscured paintings were nods to the communities or key cultural figures that lived in the neighborhoods. The newer, JBG-commissioned art seems to be more abstract, with less of a point of view than many of the city's older murals. The street art is still beautiful and creative, but more easily palatable and less rebellious.

WHAT GETS LOST IN THE MOVE: MOURNING A TRANSFORMATION

As all these changes swirl around the city, the question must be asked: is gentrification good? And for whom? In a *Washington Post* poll from 2014, 55 percent of residents said gentrification was "mainly good"[94]. Thirty-six percent said it was "mainly bad." These numbers were consistent with results of a 2002 poll. But when people were asked whether redevelopment was good for specific groups, it was clear that not everyone was benefitting equally. In response to whether redevelopment was mainly good or bad for whites in the District, 82 percent said "mainly good," eight percent said "mainly bad," and the rest had no opinion. The results were more muddied for blacks. Fifty percent of respondents said the impact of redevelopment was "mainly good" for blacks, 41 percent said "mainly bad," and the rest did not offer an opinion.

[94] "Washington Post DC poll, January 9-12, 2014: Washington Post DC poll D.C. Mayor Vincent Gray makes strong rebound with primary looming." *Washington Post.* Published: January 12, 2014. Web. Accessed: December 2015. p11. http://apps.washingtonpost.com/g/page/politics/washington-post-dc-poll-january-9-12-2014/739/

Redevelopment was viewed overwhelmingly as "mainly good" for newer residents and still mainly good for long-time residents, although with less enthusiasm.

And speaking to the question of class, 85 percent of poll respondents said the development was good for rich residents while only 36 percent said it was good for the poor. This latter question seems to be where people had the strongest reactions. When it came to the impact of redevelopment on poor residents the percentage of people without an opinion was the lowest—only four percent left the question unanswered. Sixty percent of people responded that redevelopment was "mainly bad" for the poor.

The questions were asked of a random sample of 1,003 adult DC residents ahead of a mayoral race as part of an overall effort to gauge views on a range of issues. See a condensed version of the relevant results here:

Question 26[95] as written: *As you may know, 'gentrification' is the process in which developers or higher income families buy and fix up homes or apartment buildings in working class city neighborhoods. Some say (this type of redevelopment is good because it may draw new businesses to the area, increase home values and encourage higher income residents to move into the neighborhood)[96]. Others say (this type of redevelopment is bad because it may cause rents and property taxes to increase, and force lower income residents to move out of the neighborhood.) In general, would you say this kind of redevelopment is mainly a good thing or mainly a bad thing?*

	Mainly Good	Mainly Bad	Neither (vol.)[97]	Both (vol.)	No Opinion
1/12/14	**55 percent**	**36**	**1**	**5**	**3**
5/31/11[98]	**54**	**33**	**4**	**5**	**4**
5/19/02	**55**	**34**	**2**	**6**	**3**
					Source: *Washington Post*

[95] "Washington Post DC poll, January 9-12, 2014: Washington Post DC poll D.C. Mayor Vincent Gray makes strong rebound with primary looming." *Washington Post.* Published: January 12, 2014. Web. Accessed: December 2015. p11. http://apps.washingtonpost.com/g/page/politics/washington-post-dc-poll-january-9-12-2014/739/

[96] Parentheses in the text of the question as written indicate that the wording was randomized

[97] vol. = the response was volunteered by the respondent

[98] these results came from a Washington Post-Kaiser Family Foundation poll but were included in the results of this 2014 Washington Post survey report

Question 27[99] as written: *As you may know, the district government is trying to redevelop parts of the city to attract new businesses and residents. Do you think this process of redevelopment is mainly good or mainly bad for (INSERT)?*

	Mainly Good	Mainly Bad	No opinion
a. People like you	**68 percent**	**25**	**7**
b. Long-time city residents	**58**	**35**	**7**
c. Newer city residents	**81**	**12**	**7**
d. Whites in the District	**82**	**8**	**10**
e. Blacks in the District	**50**	**41**	**9**
f. Rich residents	**85**	**8**	**7**
g. Poor residents	**36**	**60**	**4**
			Source: *Washington Post*

Below are the 2014 survey results, coupled below in brackets (ex: […]) with the *Washington Post*'s results from a poll published on February 7, 2000.

	Mainly Good	Mainly Bad	No opinion
a. People like you	**1/12/14: 68 percent [2/7/2000: 79 percent]**	**25 [14]**	**7 [8]**
b. Long-time city residents	**58 [No trend results]**	**35 [No trend results]**	**7 [No trend results]**
c. Newer city residents	**81 [No trend results]**	**12 [No trend results]**	**7 [No trend results]**
d. Whites in the District	**82 [85]**	**8 [7]**	**10 [8]**
e. Blacks in the District	**50 [72]**	**41 [21]**	**9 [7]**
f. Rich residents[100]	**85 [82]**	**8 [7]**	**7 [10]**
g. Poor residents	**36 [64]**	**60 [29]**	**4 [7]**
			Source: *Washington Post*

[99] "Washington Post DC poll, January 9-12, 2014: Washington Post DC poll D.C. Mayor Vincent Gray makes strong rebound with primary looming." *Washington Post.* Published: January 12, 2014. Web. Accessed: December 2015. p11-12. http://apps.washingtonpost.com/g/page/politics/washington-post-dc-poll-january-9-12-2014/739/

[100] "Rich residents" in the 2014 poll was phrased as "The rich" in earlier surveys

What's interesting to draw out here is the way that perceptions of redevelopment changed over time. Redevelopment has been consistently seen as "mainly good" for whites. For black residents, however, the perception has shifted dramatically over time. In 2000, 72 percent of those polled said redevelopment was mostly good for blacks. A decade and a half of change later, only 50 percent of people said the said the same—a 22-point drop. The view of gentrification as primarily bad for blacks grew 20 points from 21 to 41 percent in that time. The downshift in how people saw the impact of redevelopment on poor residents was even sharper. In 2000, 64 percent of people saw redevelopment as mainly good for the poor. That positive perception dropped by 28 points to 36 percent in 2014. Meanwhile, the percentage of residents who saw redevelopment as mostly bad for the poor grew about 30 points from 29 percent to 60 percent over the 14-year period. This tells us that while redevelopment may have been intended or marketed as a boon for the city overall, early optimism may have been misplaced. As the city grew and changed, the nature of how the developments played out caused residents to see the benefits and pitfalls as unequally distributed.

From this dataset, it's not possible to tell the racial breakdown for each question. Meaning, it's not clear whether mostly blacks said that gentrification was bad for blacks or whether people from other racial backgrounds view the impact of redevelopment similarly. But we can see a sense of how the city's changes might be creating different conditions for different socioeconomic groups. We can get the sense here that the new DC, and presumably the "New U" by extension, is not for everyone. Black and poor residents must hold in their consciousness the knowledge that people think redevelopment is hurting their communities but still embrace the trend as "mainly good." People are collateral damage in their own communities.

When we talk about gentrification, we're not just talking about people moving in and out—it's about pride and legacy for a people so often told that they don't deserve either. Even when residents manage to stay put amidst gentrification they must grapple with the reality that their neighbors may not want them there. In an extreme example, in early 2015 Republican Representative Aaron Schock's communications director, Benjamin Cole, was forced to resign after racist comments about his neighbors surfaced.

Cole posted to social media platforms calling his neighbors "black miscreants" and "zoo animals," and calling for gentrification: "So apparently the closing of the National Zoo has forced the animals to conduct their mating ritual on my street. #gentrifytoday Pt. 1"[101]. He lives at the intersection of 14th and W Streets NW in a renovated condo complex. On the same block is a cooperative comprised of long-term residents who didn't take the buyout when developers came calling. When the owners of the low-income apartment complex Capital Manor put the building up for sale, tenants (mostly black and Hispanic, whose annual income averaged $20,000 USD) scrounged up enough money to make down payments and buy the complex themselves in 2005[102]. The success is somewhat bittersweet, as the older building now sticks out on what's become a street full of luxury residences. What should be a structure of victory is now an "eyesore"[103] whose scrappy residents are seen as mere irritants.

While Cole's reactions might be the extreme, it's this atmosphere in which minorities must now operate. When it's possible to feel so unwelcome in a home that you fought for, it's no wonder many would be skeptical of "progress."

Public discussion on what it's like to live in a place of change

When deciding how best to accumulate sources for insight into how black DC residents experience their city's changes, I decided to focus on the web version of *The Washington Post*. The newspaper was founded in 1877 and was incorporated in 1947[104]. Headquartered in Washington, DC, its scope is local, national, and international all at once. And it's well known as a major political force. Perhaps most famously, the *Post*'s coverage of the break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the

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[101] Stein, Perry. "The complicated history of a D.C. block smeared by Rep. Schock's former advisor." *Washington Post.* Published: February 9, 2015. Web. Accessed: December 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/news/local/wp/2015/02/09/the-complicated-history-of-a-d-c-block-smeared-by-rep-shocks-former-adviser/

[102] Stein, Perry. "The complicated history of a D.C. block smeared by Rep. Schock's former advisor." *Washington Post.* Published: February 9, 2015. Web. Accessed: December 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/news/local/wp/2015/02/09/the-complicated-history-of-a-d-c-block-smeared-by-rep-shocks-former-adviser/

[103] Stein, Perry. "The complicated history of a D.C. block smeared by Rep. Schock's former advisor." *Washington Post.* Published: February 9, 2015. Web. Accessed: December 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/news/local/wp/2015/02/09/the-complicated-history-of-a-d-c-block-smeared-by-rep-shocks-former-adviser/

[104] "Washington Post Co. timeline." *Washington Post*, n.d. Web. Accessed: January 2016. www.washingtonpost.com/apps/g/page/national/washington-post-co-timeline/374/

Watergate office complex forced the resignation of Republican President Richard Nixon in 1974. Along with papers such as *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post* is considered a stalwart of American media even at a time when journalism is experiencing major economic challenges.

The Washington Post's coverage often focuses on local neighborhood events and concerns, including coverage and commentary on DC's vast changes. As the most readily accessible branch of the organization, I am using the website as my main pool for articles on gentrification. The paper launched its website "Washingtonpost.com" in 1996 and the print and online operations were merged in 2009[105]. As such, I will focus only on articles posted online in 2009 or after as a representative sample of a merged editorial perspective. The *Post*'s website does not have an advanced search tool so to locate articles I typed the line <<gentrification+"U Street">> into the main search bar as my key terms. The site automatically defaults to showing all results since 2005 and it sorts by "relevance" rather than by date. I left these default search results. It's not possible to search from any other specific year (unless I were to choose results only from the last year) so I just chose to skip anything before 2009 as I looked through the results. And when I attempted to sort by date the results were no more in order than the "relevance" option, and the most useful articles seemed to get buried.

Although *The Washington Post* is my main source for this analysis, there is one article I bring in from *The New York Times*. Having cast a wide net at the beginning of this process, I came across articles from other sources that I believe reinforce the findings from the *Post*. I use Natalie Hopkinson's *Times* article "Farewell to Chocolate City" because it emphasizes the sentiments present in her work for the *Post*.

While reading the articles from the site, I chose which ones to consider based on the title and subtitle, looking for sources where the purpose of the article was to write about neighborhood changes or tensions. And while reading each article chosen, I wrote down instances of people's emotional reactions or opinions on gentrification, focusing on recording the opinions of black and/or working-class writers and/or interviewees. Where possible, I tried to distinguish between those who had a long-term relationship with the U

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[105] "Washington Post Co. timeline." *Washington Post*, n.d. Web. Accessed: January 2016. www.washingtonpost.com/apps/g/page/national/washington-post-co-timeline/374/

Street neighborhood and newer residents. For the most part, I ignored articles clearly (based on their titles and subtitles) about other parts of the city. But articles that appeared to be about the city overall or made direct reference to U Street to make a point about gentrification, I selected. I also ignored articles in the "Going Out Guide," and the "Food" and "Real Estate" sections because the goals in these sections aren't based in reporting for the sake of public debate.

Using my Washingtonpost.com subscription I checked the site regularly for useful articles. My final search was in January 2016, and one-hundred and eight articles appeared in the initial search results for <<gentrification+"U Street>>. Of these, I read approximately one-third to half based on their dates, titles, and subtitles over the course of time. Ultimately, only ten were directly useful for me. This is a smaller sample than I expected, although limiting my interest to coverage of Shaw/U Street took several otherwise interesting articles off the table. I still believe this sample, combined with other research, is enough for some initial insights. In fact, I found evidence of 10 emotive reactions:

1. Disappointment in the lack of community feel
2. Hopes for integration and an embrace of change
3. Feelings of unworthiness
4. A sense of lost history
5. Feeling criminalized
6. Feelings of being used in the process of "culture vulturism"
7. Ambivalence
8. Feelings of no longer belonging
9. Protectiveness
10. Fear of overdevelopment

1. Disappointment in the lack of community feel

Several writers expressed sadness for the lack of community in a gentrified U Street Corridor. In an essay on the 14th Street commercial strip that intersects U, columnist Courtland Milloy wrote: "For years, the struggles of middle- and working-class black people animated life on 14th Street. Now all that's gone. It's been replaced by a stultifying air of aloofness"[106].

[106] Milloy, Courtland. "Yes, 14th Street may be better these days but something vital is missing." *Washington Post*. Published: July 21, 2015. Web column. Accessed: July 22, 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/local/yes-14th-street-may-be-better-these-days-but-something-vital-is-missing/2015/07/21/f144a65c-2fce-11e5-8f36-18d1d501920d_story.html

In his stinging critique of a new U Street bar and the capitalization of black history in the Corridor, Stephen Crockett expressed nostalgia for what was once a close-knit understanding among residents: "as a native of a then Chocolate City, I can remember when a Horace & Dickie's fish sandwich always felt like a warm hug, because they were cheap, and we were broke. It felt like the owner knew we were struggling, so he lowered the prices for us. It felt like home"[107].

The chill of the city is also echoed by Natalie Hopkinson in her *New York Times* essay: "Some days, walking the streets of Washington, a seemingly colder place where people don't always exchange greetings, I feel nostalgic for the days of black privilege that George Clinton crooned about"[108].

As the neighborhood and the city change, people with a sense of what-was seem to lament the sense of familiarity and comfort offered by a predominately black community. There was a sense that neighbors were looking out for each other and playing off of each others' energies.

2. Hopes for integration and an embrace of change

For business owners the boost of new money into the area is a hopeful time. Sala Damali came to DC in 1985 to attend Howard and now runs an art and novelty shop on Florida Avenue. In an interview with the *Post* she reflected: "There are a lot of good people who can't stay [due to gentrification]. […] But we embrace change"[109].

In Hopkinson's *Times* article she was hopeful that Washington's new diversity could be read as a sign of progress. While on the one hand acknowledging DC as a colder place, Hopkinson still sees hope in the newer residents: "given the warmth of my new neighbors of many races, I would like to see the transformation around me as racial

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[107] Crockett Jr., Stephen A. "The Brixton: It's new, happening and another example of African American historical 'swagger-jacking.'" *Washington Post – The Root DC Live*. Published: August 3, 2012. Weblog. Accessed: January 17, 2015. http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/therootdc/post/the-brixton-its-new-happening-and-another-example-of-african-american-historical-swagger-jacking/2012/08/02/gJQATbonSX_blog.html

[108] Hopkinson, Natalie. "Farewell to Chocolate City." *The New York Times – Sunday Review*. Published: June 23, 2015. Web. Accessed: August 11, 2015. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/24/opinion/sunday/farewell-to-chocolate-city.html?_r=0

[109] Flynn, Kate. "Florida Avenue still awaiting its renaissance." *Washington Post*. Published: February 28, 2012. Web. Accessed: July 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/local/florida-avenue-still-awaiting-its-renaissance/2012/02/21/gIQATJmggR_story.html

progress"[110]. But her perspective is at odds with Milloy's who dismissed integration as a failed promise: "As for the hope of black residents that gentrification would create a more racially integrated city – that has proved to be little more than a pipe dream"[111].

So while some African Americans are expressing their optimism, others feel that theirs has already been lost. But it is important to note that there are blacks who are enthusiastic and hopeful about the neighborhood and city evolution.

3. Feelings of unworthiness

There is the recognition in some places that investment is a positive occurrence for the city. But also a sadness that investment seems to either spur or be encouraged by demographic change—as if investing because it would be in the interest of long-term residents isn't enough. Stephen Crockett wrote about this frustration most forcefully in his essay on the changing U Street Cooridor:

> "Their presence [establishments like Busboys and Poets, Marvin, etc] makes me feel the same way I felt when my homeboy's dad, who lived on the corner of 5th and L St. N.E., used to rant about how there needed to be a four way stop sign at the intersection. Oh, how he would wax about how someone was going to get hit by a car and how the city didn't care about the black folks that lived there. The city turned over [gentrified] and the first thing that showed up on the corner of 5th and L was a four way stop sign. // I guess this is to say I am grateful for the stop signs but sad that it took us leaving to have it happen. That it didn't feel important to build until we were gone. That it isn't FUBU (For Us By Us). I know now that I can hit up any of these places and hear the music of my past and walk outside and see a city that I don't know"[112].

Crockett's sentiment is echoed by *Post* columnist Clinton Yates who wrote about the catch-phrase "world-class" used by politicians and developers. Yates is a DC native and although he specifically writes in his article about the Southwest waterfront projects, he

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[110] Hopkinson, Natalie. "Farewell to Chocolate City." *The New York Times – Sunday Review*. Published: June 23, 2015. Web. Accessed: August 11, 2015. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/24/opinion/sunday/farewell-to-chocolate-city.html?_r=0

[111] Milloy, Courtland. "Yes, 14th Street may be better these days but something vital is missing." *Washington Post*. Published: July 21, 2015. Web column. Accessed: July 22, 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/local/yes-14th-street-may-be-better-these-days-but-something-vital-is-missing/2015/07/21/f144a65c-2fce-11e5-8f36-18d1d501920d_story.html

[112] Crockett Jr., Stephen A. "The Brixton: It's new, happening and another example of African American historical 'swagger-jacking.'" *Washington Post – The Root DC Live*. Published: August 3, 2012. Weblog. Accessed: January 17, 2015. http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/therootdc/post/the-brixton-its-new-happening-and-another-example-of-african-american-historical-swagger-jacking/2012/08/02/gJQATbonSX_blog.html

also applies his sentiments to the city as a whole: "Here's the question: what does "world-class" even mean? These days, it feels more like a catch-phrase thrown in to a) draw investor dollars and b) inflate the egos of those involved in courting said money. But more insidiously, it implies that developing things for the folks already here isn't enough of an impetus for change"[113].

4. A sense of lost history

If I were to gauge the intensity of the reactions to gentrification, perhaps the strongest of those would be the sense of a lost history. As new residents come in, the memory of what the neighborhood was and what it meant to the people that lived there disappears. It's perhaps "nostalgia" in its truest sense, harkening back to its Greek roots "nostos" and "algos" meaning "return home" and "pain" respectively.

Milloy wrote: "The millennial newcomers – most of them white – jog, bike and walk about the city as if in a trance, oblivious to the lives that helped form the place they now call home. […] What is particularly grating is a disregard for the history of 14th Street as a black commercial center, with the intersecting U Street as an entertainment hub"[114].

In an essay for the *Washington Post* on the difficulty of now finding the once ubiquitous go-go music concerts on today's U Street, Hopkinson defended the importance of the music: "Go-go is Washington. The music never made a real national splash, but it has come to reflect this city, its artistic pulse and the often painful reality of life for many of its black residents. // Now the place that created go-go is shoving it aside"[115].

In his critique of the "world-class" label, Yates defended the city's long-standing structures as already deserving of praise without the false attempts to glamorize:

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[113] Yates, Clinton. "Enough with this 'world class' nonsense." *Washington Post*. Published: May 23, 2014. Web column. Accessed: July 22, 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/local/wp/2014/05/23/enough-with-this-world-class-nonsense/

[114] Milloy, Courtland. "Yes, 14th Street may be better these days but something vital is missing." *Washington Post*. Published: July 21, 2015. Web column. Accessed: July 22, 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/local/yes-14th-street-may-be-better-these-days-but-something-vital-is-missing/2015/07/21/f144a65c-2fce-11e5-8f36-18d1d501920d_story.html

[115] Hopkinson, Natalie. "Go-go music is the soul of Washington, but it's slipping away." *Washington Post*. Published: April 11, 2010. Web. Accessed: August 27, 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/09/AR2010040903257_pf.html

> "But if city brass want to model themselves after something world class, they should take a look at the Fish Market. The familiar stench of the river is a constant, and you never wear anything there that you wouldn't mind getting dirty. Yet everyday, people show up, ready to fork over their money for good food. It's the oldest still running fish market in the United States of America. // Meaning that by the definition of "world class," it already is"[116].

In a separate Yates story about local hip-hop artist Uptown XO, born at Howard University Hospital as Jamaal Walton, a similar theme emerged. XO told Yates: "The tension behind the gentrification things [is about] the demographic changing and the stories, the legacy that we had on certain streets, things that we considered landmarks that weren't publicized landmarks to the masses, but we grew up here" [sic.][117]. Talking about a popular clothing store XO said that desire to claim the city's history is part of why he makes music: "The Madness shop is a landmark to me. I used to live above the Madness shop. Now that's gone. Now that part of history is not around, and who's going to talk about it? How is that part of history going to be preserved? It's preserved in my music"[118].

So while there are some attempts to identify and own that history, we have to wonder how much has already been buried.

5. Feeling criminalized

As demographics shift around the U Street Corridor, so do tastes. What appealed to a working-class black crowd as a source of entertainment will not necessarily resonate with others. And of course what is considered acceptable nightlife is also influenced by the business owners and developers that decide who gets to enter their doors. In Hopkinson's article on go-go music, she recounted the story of the band Subtle Thoughts that was asked by the club manager to leave once it became clear that the band was planning to play go-go (the conga drums were the tell-tale sign). Although go-go would

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[116] Yates, Clinton. "Enough with this 'world class' nonsense." *Washington Post*. Published: May 23, 2014. Web column. Accessed: July 22, 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/local/wp/2014/05/23/enough-with-this-world-class-nonsense/

[117] Yates, Clinton. "Uptown XO, on the rise and shining." *Washington Post*. Published: January 31, 2013. Web. Accessed: July 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/therootdc/post/uptown-xo-on-the-rise-and-shining/2013/01/31/86480ca0-6aef-11e2-ada3-d86a4806d5ee_blog.html

[118] Yates, Clinton. "Uptown XO, on the rise and shining." *Washington Post*. Published: January 31, 2013. Web. Accessed: July 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/therootdc/post/uptown-xo-on-the-rise-and-shining/2013/01/31/86480ca0-6aef-11e2-ada3-d86a4806d5ee_blog.html

bring in lots of money for the club, the music had gained a reputation during the crack hey-day as associated with crime. Really, go-go clubs (like any other clubs) simply attracted a wide swath of community members, which at that point in time in the 80s and 90s, meant rival gangs. Many go-go players actually discouraged violence at their shows, but the association still stuck.

In 2010 DC Police Chief Cathy Lanier credited a list of all the concerts in the city with helping police cut down on crime. That ongoing list is called that "go-go report." Hopkinson wrote: "Of course a police presence is needed at any activity that draws big crowds. But how else to interpret Lanier's comments to reporters, other than that the city is safer because it is reining in the music?"[119] For Hopkinson, part of the experience of living in a changing Washington is to see its original art form denigrated as criminal.

6. Feelings of being used in the process of "culture vulturism"

I've mentioned Stephen Crockett in other parts of this section, but his August 2012 article on a changing U Street really made a splash because of his seething critique of what he called "swagger-jacking." Earlier in this paper I've referred to it as capitalizing on history. Bemoaning the opening of a new bar on U Street called The Brixton, Crockett described the bar as "the new happening restaurant and bar on the former Black Broadway, appropriately named after a multicultural section of London that lost the gentrification battle in the '90s."[120]

He wrote: "[T]here is a certain cultural vulturalism, an African American historical "swagger-jacking," going on on U Street. It's an inappropriate tradition of sorts that has rent increasing, black folks moving further out – sometimes by choice, sometimes not – while a faux black ethos remains." By "vulturalism," Crockett refers to what he feels is *vulture culturalism*—a sense of culture, in this case African American culture, as prey. He describes a sort of picking and choosing of blackness that has

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[119] Hopkinson, Natalie. "Go-go music is the soul of Washington, but it's slipping away." *Washington Post*. Published: April 11, 2010. Web. Accessed: August 27, 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/09/AR2010040903257_pf.html

[120] Crockett Jr., Stephen A. "The Brixton: It's new, happening and another example of African American historical 'swagger-jacking.'" *Washington Post – The Root DC Live*. Published: August 3, 2012. Weblog. Accessed: January 17, 2015. http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/therootdc/post/the-brixton-its-new-happening-and-another-example-of-african-american-historical-swagger-jacking/2012/08/02/gJQATbonSX_blog.html

occurred on U Street over the years, perhaps coldly interpreted as: 'yes' to black history, 'no' to black people.

Crockett details:

> "In a six-block stretch, we have Brixton, Bus Boys and Poets, Eatonville, Patty Boom Boom, Blackbyrd and Marvin. All based on some facet of black history, some memory of blackness that feels artificially done and palatable. Does it matter that the owners aren't black? Maybe. Does it matter that these places slid in around the time that black folks slid out? Maybe. Indeed, some might argue that these hip spots are actually preserving black culture, not stealing it."

And indeed, as the article made waves on the internet, Garance Franke-Ruta argued just that point in her response essay published on *The Atlantic*'s website a week after Crockett made his claims. In "The Politics of the Urban Comeback,"[121] Franke-Ruta praised the new diverse U Street where history can be shared together. She writes: "The big question is whether we as a society are ready to accept that black writers like Hughes and Hurston belong to the world the same way writers like Hemingway do – or whether the difficult facts of American history and continued racial inequalities will always make such claims somehow discomfiting, no matter how canonical the writers have become. (To be clear: I don't know the answer)." Franke-Ruta suggests that if anything, the "swagger-jacking," Crockett deplores is actually a way to honor the legacy of Black Broadway—by teaching its history to a generation of millennials that might otherwise remain ignorant to the contributions of black DC artists.

7. Ambivalence

For many blacks, particularly those that might be considered middle class, gentrification can be a mixed blessing. John Murph, a black journalist who moved to the neighborhood in 2002 recounted the tension of looking like a gentrifier, while not actually having the salary of one. He recalled that "I had lofty ideals of all the cultural richness a multi-income, multiracial neighborhood could bring. […] I wanted to be down with the people who had already lived there, live in a place that was affordable, *and*

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[121] Franke-Ruta, Garance. "The Politics of the Urban Comeback: Gentrification and Culture in D.C." *The Atlantic*. Published: August 10, 2012. Web. Accessed: January 17, 2015. http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2012/08/the-politics-of-the-urban-comeback-gentrification-and-culture-in-dc/260741/

support urban renewal"[122]. In some ways, he welcomed urban renewal and given his educational background and taste preferences, very much fit in with the new scene. But he was neither able to stand in solidarity with residents who saw him as a gentrifier and harassed him, nor did he benefit from gentrification in the way a white or wealthier person might in terms of how politicians and police officers reacted to his reported concerns.

8. Feelings of no longer belonging

As U Street changes, the long-standing establishments must meet the demands of new clientele if they wish to survive. Ben's Chili Bowl is perhaps the most known example of success, expanding the menu beyond half-smoke sausages and burgers to include things such as turkey burgers and veggie burgers. The eatery famously survived the 1968 riots that destroyed so much of the Corridor, feeding police officers and firemen as well as activists during the upheaval that followed the King assassination. The diner's famous customers (including President Barack Obama) have helped make it a tourist attraction. And it recently opened a second location in Northeast DC. But a Yates story on the expansion of the franchise questioned whether older residents would still feel served as the landmark restaurant expands. Indeed, long-time customers had already begun to feel squeezed. Yates explained the conflicting feelings over the growing popularity of Ben's:

> "Because this is today's D.C., not everyone is rolling out the welcome mat. For several patrons at a local business across the street, Ben's hasn't been affordable for years. // Whether one patron will come back "depends on the prices," said a man who went by the name Roy. "For my age, day to day, month to month, it's kind of rough for me dealing with prices like that. I used to go down to Ben's Chili Bowl and get three half- smokes, three sodas and three fries. It was $18 and something. I ended up going in there eight or 10 years ago. I ain't been back there since." These days, that meal would cost closer to $50."[123]

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[122] Murph, John. "The perceived gentrifier: How I was driven from my neighborhood." *Washington Post*. Published: November 2, 2012. Web. Accessed: July 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/therootdc/post/the-perceived-gentrifier-how-i-was-driven-from-the-u-street-neighborhood/2012/11/01/eaa3d162-239f-11e2-ba29-238a6ac36a08_blog.html

[123] Yates, Clinton. "For Ben's Chili Bowl, expansion comes with responsibility." *Washington Post*. Published: August 21, 2013. Web. Accessed: July 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/local/wp/2013/08/21/for-bens-chili-bowl-expansion-comes-with-responsibility/

The famous Ben's Chili Bowl has managed to survive many versions U Street.

Photo courtesy: Ben's Chili Bowl [http://benschilibowl.com/photos/]

Even as Ben's is an example of a business that successfully stood the test of time on a more expensive U Street, the feeling of community solidarity and belonging that it used to inspire is lost for those who can no longer afford it.

9. Protectiveness

All of the sudden change to hit the Corridor and surrounding DC has created a sense of protectiveness. One of the common debates in DC is over bike lanes. Many of the city's churches now have parishes that live in the suburbs but commute by car into the city on Sundays. The proposed expansion of bike lanes, including through Shaw, have stoked tensions with parishioners that see bike lanes as taking up already-limited parking space. Robert Price III, the pastor at the United House of Prayer church in the Mount Vernon neighborhood told the *Washington Post*, "We just think we have to protect what's ours"[124]. As stated in the article, Shaw is a prime target for bike lane expansion, and presumably grappling with similar sentiments.

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[124] Stein, Perry. "Why are bike lanes such heated symbols of gentrification?" *Washington Post.* Published: November 12, 2015. Web. Accessed: November 14, 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/news/local/wp/2015/11/12/why-are-bike-lanes-such-heated-symbols-of-gentrification/

10. Fear of overdevelopment

Marc Fisher, a writer for the *Washington Post* interviewed several DC residents about who redevelopment benefits and mostly summarizes people's sentiments instead of quoting directly. The focus of his article is the Bloomingdale neighborhood, east of U Street. But in it we learn that U Street is viewed by many residents as what *not* to become. Paul Vivari, a 30 year old who lived in Boomingdale for five years before opening his own business (a bar in the basement of the house he lives in), told Fisher in 2014, "Once you see joggers and baby strollers, the neighborhood's changed. […] Now the question is, where does it stop? If everyone flees because it's getting too expensive, it becomes another U Street"[125]. There is a fear of overdevelopment to the point of displacement in Bloomingdale, and U Street is sort of the epitome of that.

As Washington, DC shifts from a predominately African American city to a more multicultural one, many residents are mourning the days of yore. While the U Street Corridor has had some indisputable gains over the years, many residents and onlookers have been left feeling uneasy, if not downright angry. There is a palpable sense of frustration, and even of loss, as DC takes on a new identity.

[125] Fisher, Marc. "Most in D.C. say neighborhoods are better, but many say redevelopment helps the rich more." *Washington Post*. Published: January 18, 2014. Web. Accessed: December 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/local/most-in-dc-say-neighborhoods-are-better-but-many-say-redevelopment-helps-the-rich-more/2014/01/18/00d8cbdc-7d8a-11e3-93c1-0e888170b723_story.html

Chapter 3:
Insights and Conclusions

UNDERSTANDING THE PSYCHOLOGY OF (DIS)PLACE(MENT)

The findings found here are consistent with previous work on the psychology of place—a field of research that investigates the relationship between people and their environment. People are linked to their environment through the processes of attachment (caretaking of one's environment), familiarity (detailed knowledge of the space), and identity (extracting a sense of self from one's relationship to a space)[126].

"Place" here has a variety of meanings that are relevant to health. First, a place is the site or location of events. Survival depends on having a decent, safe place to live and carry out the normal functions of life. These functions include the facilitation of connections with other people and locations. "Great" settings encourage creativity and self-fulfillment, while "toxic" places threaten survival[127]. In the differing results in the *Washington Post* survey on whom gentrification benefits[128], we might say that U Street is now a "great" setting for white or rich residents and perhaps a "toxic" setting for black or poor residents. Second, we can see place as the interactions that occur within a milieu. It's important to note that "people interacting in a milieu are sensitive to spoken and unspoken dynamics of power"[129] and therefore subtle messages can influence feelings of acceptance or isolation. We see this when Ben's Chili Bowl ups its prices for its own survival but winds up excluding older patrons[130], or when the city erects a stop sign only after the racial composition of a neighborhood changes[131]. Third, place can be understood from the perspective of geographer Anssi Paasi, who says place represents a unique web

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[126] Fullilove, Mindy Thompson. "Psychiatric Implications of Displacement: Contributions From the Psychology of Place." *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 153, No. 12, December 1996, p1517.
[127] Fullilove, Mindy Thompson. "Psychiatric Implications of Displacement: Contributions From the Psychology of Place." *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 153, No. 12, December 1996, p1517.
[128] "Washington Post DC poll, January 9-12, 2014: Washington Post DC poll D.C. Mayor Vincent Gray makes strong rebound with primary looming." *Washington Post.* Published: January 12, 2014. Web. Accessed: December 2015. p11-12. http://apps.washingtonpost.com/g/page/politics/washington-post-dc-poll-january-9-12-2014/739/
[129] Fullilove, Mindy Thompson. "Psychiatric Implications of Displacement: Contributions From the Psychology of Place." *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 153, No. 12, December 1996, p1517.
[130] Yates, Clinton. For Ben's Chili Bowl, expansion comes with responsibility." *Washington Post*. Published: August 21, 2013. Web. Accessed: July 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/local/wp/2013/08/21/for-bens-chili-bowl-expansion-comes-with-responsibility/
[131] Crockett Jr., Stephen A. "The Brixton: It's new, happening and another example of African American historical 'swagger-jacking.'" *Washington Post – The Root DC Live*. Published: August 3, 2012. Weblog. Accessed: January 17, 2015. http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/therootdc/post/the-brixton-its-new-happening-and-another-example-of-african-american-historical-swagger-jacking/2012/08/02/gJQATbonSX_blog.html

of a person's past experiences,[132] such as Uptown XO's commemoration of DC's past in his music[133]. This is a very personal perspective on place as defined by one's life story. Place is both physical location and the human interactions within. It is "on the one hand, the external realities within which people shape their existence and, on the other hand, the object of human thought and action"[134].

A healthy relationship to one's environment is an important factor in mental well-being. Displacement (regardless of war, decolonization, natural disasters, etc) can cause emotional and mental unrest. Although the jury is still out on whether gentrification directly causes forced displacement, it does, for many people lead to a change of environment that can be categorized as a loss of place. Dr. Mindy Fullilove, a professor of clinical psychology at Columbia University, wrote that "…the sense of belonging, which is necessary for psychological well-being, depends on strong, well-developed relationships with nurturing places. A major corollary of this proposition is that disturbance in these essential place relationships leads to psychological disorder"[135]. Losing a sense of place can put people at risk of nostalgia (understood here as the significant pain of losing home), disorientation, and alienation. A threat to one's environment can feel like bodily danger. And the stress of such experiences can even trigger physical pain. Fullilove outlines the following criteria for successful habitat:

1. *People live in a "good enough" place.*
2. *People feel settled in home, neighborhood, and region.*
3. *People contribute to caretaking of the personal and shared portions of the environment.*
4. *People know their neighbors and interact with them to solve communal problems*[136].

Any displacement or major shifts, especially without input from those impacts or without assistance in resettlement, is a threat to social cohesion and personal well-being.

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[132] Fullilove, Mindy Thompson. "Psychiatric Implications of Displacement: Contributions From the Psychology of Place." *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 153, No. 12, December 1996, p1517-1518.

[133] Yates, Clinton. "Uptown XO, on the rise and shining." *Washington Post*. Published: January 31, 2013. Web. Accessed: July 2015. www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/therootdc/post/uptown-xo-on-the-rise-and-shining/2013/01/31/86480ca0-6aef-11e2-ada3-d86a4806d5ee_blog.html

[134] Fullilove, Mindy Thompson. "Psychiatric Implications of Displacement: Contributions From the Psychology of Place." *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 153, No. 12, December 1996, p1518.

[135] Fullilove, Mindy Thompson. "Psychiatric Implications of Displacement: Contributions From the Psychology of Place." *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 153, No. 12, December 1996, p1517.

[136] Fullilove, Mindy Thompson. "Psychiatric Implications of Displacement: Contributions From the Psychology of Place." *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 153, No. 12, December 1996, p1521.

"Root Shock"

More specific to the conversation on urbanity, Dr. Mindy Fullilove has coined the term "root shock" to describe the experience of people who have been displaced. Although it can refer to a variety of conditions, the term is grounded in her research with residents of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Roanoke, Virginia, and Newark, New Jersey. Each of these cities had neighborhoods whose residents were displaced during the 1950s and 60s—in the process of urban renewal. "Root shock" is defined as "the traumatic stress reaction to the loss of some or all of one's emotional ecosystem"[137] and can be applied to experiences as abrupt displacement from war or natural disaster, or to changes as slow as gentrification.

In the context of Fullilove's development of the term, urban renewal was a federal attempt to rebuild inner cities to clear the blighted communities. The Urban Renewal Act of 1949 set out to clear slum housing in order to build modern developments such as Lincoln Center in New York. About one-million people were displaced in 993 cities—clearing the way for about 2,500 projects[138]. So advancement came, but programs disproportionately targeted predominately African American communities and led to the popular notion that "urban renewal is Negro removal." And Fullilove notes that the consequences were more than a change of physical location: in the short-term, there was loss of money and social organization as well as psychological trauma and feelings of helplessness; and long term, political paralysis caused by the breakdown of social cohesion[139]. Upheaval makes it difficult to feel settled and difficult to rely on relationships with other people or trust in the government. Impacts included: the physical and mental aggravation of stress, being forced to live in substandard housing as a result of having to move, and fewer financial resources to spend on health advantages because money was spent on moving[140].

Modern-day gentrification is distinct from mid-century urban renewal while very much echoing it. Today's neighborhood change is (arguably) less planned and seemingly

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[137] Root Shock. "What is root shock?" *Rootshock.org*, n.d. Webpage. http://www.rootshock.org/Home
[138] Fullilove, Mindy Thompson and Rodrick Wallace. "Serial Forced Displacement in American Cities, 1916-2010." *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, Vol. 88, No. 3, 2011, p383.
[139] Fullilove, Mindy Thompson. "Root Shock: The Consequences of African American Dispossession." *Journal I Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, Vol. 78, No. 1, March 2001.
[140] Fullilove, Mindy Thompson. "Root Shock: The Consequences of African American Dispossession." *Journal I Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, Vol. 78, No. 1, March 2001, p74.

more organic. It's characterized more by a series of new establishments rather than a single defining project. And those projects are driven by the private market, rather than big-government puppeteering. (Of course, local governments still create favorable conditions for development.) But many of the changes are still coming from people other than long-term community members, just as in the '50s and '60s, with decision-making agency resting in the hands of the powerful. In DC (and presumably other cities), most of the negatively impacted are African Americans, even if some well-off blacks are benefitting in this modern era. Therefore, people living through gentrification may very well be coping with root shock.

Fullilove's work is grounded in part by the urban studies contributions of Marc Fried. In the 1960s psychologist Marc Fried led a key study on urban renewal in Boston, Massachusetts. Field research conducted in Boston's West End revealed exactly what for now I only suspect is going on in 21st century gentrifying neighborhoods: that for many of the displaced "it seems quite precise to speak of their reactions as expressions of *grief*"[141] [emphasis his]. He charted feelings of painful loss, longing, depressive tones, distress, exhaustion from the work to sustain a new life, a sense of helplessness, anger, and tendencies to idealize the past.

Among 250 women who lost their homes due to urban renewal in Boston's West End, 46 percent gave evidence of a "fairly severe grief reaction or worse" and 38 percent of the 316 men surveyed had a long-term grief reaction[142]. And 54 percent of women and 46 percent of men reported being severely depressed or disturbed[143]. Of course this means that many people had only mild reactions, or were neutral or even happy about the changes. Also these numbers depend on many factors including how attached the person was to the West End before leaving it, whether they were biologically prone to depression, what life was like *post*-relocation, etc. Still, the findings again show us that forced displacement is not merely an inconvenience or a nuisance—it is a public heath concern.

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[141] Fried, Marc. "Grieving for a Lost Home: Psychological Costs of Relocation." *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy*, ed. James Q. Wilson. Massachusetts Institute of Technology: Cambridge, USA, 1966, p339. [Reprinted from *The Urban Condition,* Leonard Duhl (ed.), Basic Books, Inc: New York, 1963, Chapter 12.]
[142] Fried, Marc. "Grieving for a Lost Home: Psychological Costs of Relocation." *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy*, ed. James Q. Wilson. Massachusetts Institute of Technology: Cambridge, USA, 1966, p360.
[143] Fried, Marc. "Grieving for a Lost Home: Psychological Costs of Relocation." *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy*, ed. James Q. Wilson. Massachusetts Institute of Technology: Cambridge, USA, 1966, p361.

This, I believe, is why gentrification feels so urgent. As neighborhoods change, people no longer recognize it as their own. This is psychologically significant regardless of whether someone stays or moves. And if someone *is* forced to move—whether through evictions, rent increases, or just because they feel out of place—a sense of security is particularly hard to achieve.

Differing class reactions

Regardless of whether someone welcomes change or not, when neighborhoods transition there is a loss of continuity, fragmentation of routine, and change of what is available for consumption. And for many, the physical space is an extension of one's home. So the shift can feel as intimate as a home remodel. A 1961 paper by Fried and Peggy Gleicher suggests that this orientation—the view of the space surrounding one's dwelling as an extension of the home—is more intense in working class neighborhoods than it is among the middle class[144]. This is perhaps why Crockett described a fish sandwich from a local watering hole as a "hug"[145]. This makes it difficult for people of different socioeconomic backgrounds to view the built environment through the same lens. Neighborhoods that might be characterized as "run-down" or "slums" can seem like they are in need of repair if you're looking at them from an economically advantaged position. Presumably, this includes the policymakers and business owners entering an "up and coming" neighborhood. If the people implementing change aren't understanding the significance of the environment they're impacting, they risk negatively impacting former residents.

Fried also makes clear that "a *sense of spatial identity* is fundamental to human functioning"[146] because it contributes to feelings of belonging. And again, more so than in the middle class, among working class individuals, feelings belonging are closely linked to a particular place. For the most part, "an integrated sense of spatial identity in

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[144] Fried, Marc and Peggy Gleicher. "Some Sources of Residential Satisfaction in an Urban Slum." *Journal of American Institutional Planners*, Vol. 27, 1961, p305-315. [As printed in Fried's article "Grieving for a Lost Home: Psychological Costs of Relocation."]

[145] Crockett Jr., Stephen A. "The Brixton: It's new, happening and another example of African American historical 'swagger-jacking.'" *Washington Post – The Root DC Live*. Published: August 3, 2012. Weblog. Accessed: January 17, 2015. http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/therootdc/post/the-brixton-its-new-happening-and-another-example-of-african-american-historical-swagger-jacking/2012/08/02/gJQATbonSX_blog.html

[146] Fried, Marc. "Grieving for a Lost Home: Psychological Costs of Relocation." *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy*, ed. James Q. Wilson. Massachusetts Institute of Technology: Cambridge, USA, 1966, p365.

the middle class is not as contingent on the external stability of place or as dependent on the localization of social patterns, interpersonal relationships, and daily routines"[147]. Fried found that the higher the economic bracket, the less grief a person experienced over displacement.

Attempting to understand place from a class perspective is crucial here. It really contributes to differing perspectives on gentrification. Not only is it that the middle class sees a gentrifying neighborhood as a positive because their tastes are being catered to or because they are new and haven't developed an emotional connection to the old space—but because our relationship to space is distinctly different depending on our class perspective.

For the articles used in the case study in this paper, it's difficult to tell the class of the writers. My guess would be that they might identify more with the middle or upper class, based on their access to widespread publications. But I'd like to suggest that for now it doesn't much matter, because as we saw on U Street during the Red Summer, when in the context of larger society, African Americans will often identify more by race than by class. So the extent to which the reaction of a middle class African American might resemble that of someone from the working class may not be too wide a gap. That said, this (presumed) economic advantage of the writers found here might explain some of the hand-wringing around the issue. Further research (likely to be done in the field) would be helpful for understanding the specific impact of U Street gentrification on specifically economically disadvantaged blacks.

Gentrification versus urban renewal

It is important to make clear that while Fried's and Fullilove's findings on 1960s urban renewal are certainly relevant to contemporary issues of gentrification there would probably be differences in the data if a similar psychological study were to be performed today. The issue of *forced* displacement was far more clear in the case of urban renewal, as governments exercised eminent domain to evict people from their homes. In the case of gentrification, the process is more complex—some people might experience eviction,

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[147] Fried, Marc. "Grieving for a Lost Home: Psychological Costs of Relocation." *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy*, ed. James Q. Wilson. Massachusetts Institute of Technology: Cambridge, USA, 1966, p366.

while some might be coerced out by landlords who refuse to make repairs or choose to raise rents. Other people might just be priced out when they realize they can no longer afford the goods and services the neighborhood has to offer. And some might move because they no longer see people who look like them walking around their streets. Still, others will stay to enjoy the new feel of the streets and some will stay put in quiet resentment.

The point is that as stated earlier in this paper, the impact of gentrification is difficult to quantify. Unlike in Fried's study of Boston or in Fullilove's research, displacement here is not guaranteed, and what's more—it's not so clean a cut. But what is consistent is the change and the loss of what was. An in-depth psychological study of the impact of change (for those who stayed and those who left) might allow us to bring this research on urban renewal into the modern age.

For now, this phenomenological study of gentrification on U Street is a start to the effort to make emotional sense of the seemingly breakneck changes brought by gentrification—it's an attempt to pause and say "wait, how are we all feeling about this?" It may not change anything, but it's my sincere hope that it can at least help a few more people be seen as the world races on around them.

REFLECTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The loss of continuity characteristic of urban change is particularly important for a population of people that have found so little security in the United States. Fullilove and research scientist Rodrick Wallace went on to define as "serial forced displacement" the repetitive forced movement of people in American cities. They proposed that public policies that lead to such displacements increase interpersonal and structural violence, and create a cycle of fragmentation that makes it hard to react[148]. Policies such as segregation, urban renewal, disinvestment, and gentrification (among others) have wrought havoc. Fullilove and Wallace drew on psychiatrist and sociologist Alexander Leighton's work on the integration and disintegration of communities. Integration is defined as the interconnectedness of a supportive community, while disintegration is

[148] Fullilove, Mindy Thompson and Rodrick Wallace. "Serial Forced Displacement in American Cities, 1916-2010." *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, Vol. 88, No. 3, 2011.

characterized by individualism. With each negative event suffered, a community gets closer to disintegration[149]. Fullilove and Wallace wrote that the "persistent policy of serial forced displacement of African Americans has created a persistent de facto internal refugee population," leading to problems of violence, substance abuse, and family dissolution[150]. Acknowledging, understanding, and treating the stress caused by gentrification and the historical context that makes it so painful will be an important step towards justice and community healing.

In providing recommendations that would eventually shape the way Boston handled its urban planning[151] Fried offered the following summary of his work:

> "For the present, we can only stress the importance of local areas as *spatial and social* arrangements which are central to the lives of working-class people. And, in view of the enormous importance of such local areas, we are led to consider the convergence of familiar people and familiar places as a focal consideration in formulating planning decisions"[152].

He suggested: minimizing drastic redevelopment; providing more assistance for people to relocate within their familiar areas so they can maintain close ties to people and places; when relocation is unavoidable, planning it so that new areas can mimic the old; and allocating resources for counseling to help those carrying the mental and emotional weight of social change[153]. I'm not yet sure how to do this in a space like U Street where the changes are already so stark. But given what we know about the emotional toll of U Street's changes, perhaps these are policy approaches to keep in mind for future gentrifying neighborhoods.

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[149] Fullilove, Mindy Thompson and Rodrick Wallace. "Serial Forced Displacement in American Cities, 1916-2010." *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, Vol. 88, No. 3, 2011, p384.
[150] Fullilove, Mindy Thompson and Rodrick Wallace. "Serial Forced Displacement in American Cities, 1916-2010." *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, Vol. 88, No. 3, 2011, p383-384.
[151] Marquard, Bryan. "Marc Fried, 85; led key study on urban renewal." *The Boston Globe*. Published: May 18, 2008. Web. Accessed: January 2016. http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/obituaries/articles/2008/05/18/marc_fried_85_led_key_study_on_urban_renewal/?page=full
[152] Fried, Marc. "Grieving for a Lost Home: Psychological Costs of Relocation." *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy*, ed. James Q. Wilson. Massachusetts Institute of Technology: Cambridge, USA, 1966, p378.
[153] Fried, Marc. "Grieving for a Lost Home: Psychological Costs of Relocation." *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy*, ed. James Q. Wilson. Massachusetts Institute of Technology: Cambridge, USA, 1966, p378.

Gaining further insight

Given the phenomenological approach to my material, my original intention was to perform community-based research. I think that this would have led to a more diverse cast of voices represented. Ideally, I would have imagined interviewing long-term residents, in an attempt to understand what change is like for them—how they experience changing neighborhood dynamics. I also wanted to interview a swath of residents from diverse backgrounds to understand how they experience the neighborhood, whether they experience a sense of community, and who is in their social spheres. It would have been particularly interesting to compare these experiences to how older residents describe their a sense of community. However, given the time and space constraints of the writing process, I needed to develop another approach. Community-based research would have required several months of DC-based work, and because of the nature of the Erasmus Mundus Global Studies Master's program (such as the final semester coursework and living primarily in Vienna) I was unable to devote so much time to location-based work. Thus I arrived at the media analysis perspective I took on here. Any follow-up work would be strengthened by a more traditional ethnographic approach.

With more space and time I would have also incorporated more culturally and racially diverse voices into this discussion. I chose to center contemporary black voices here because of the cultural history of DC and Shaw and because those voices are often not the ones at the center of development discussions. I thought it was important to focus on seeing the issue from a uniquely African American lens. It's easy to portray African Americans as a monolith. But I made an effort to show diverse intra-cultural perspectives and I hope that comes through. What I would have done as a next-step, however, is to bring in more perspectives from more whites, Hispanics, Asians, etc—voices that would have reflected U Street's increasing diversity.

The results found here would also be enhanced by a comparative approach. I focused on gentrification as it impacts African Americans on or around DC and U Street. I would be interested to know how people respond in other urban neighborhoods with strong cultural roots. For example, how does what I found here compare to the experience of people in Brooklyn, New York? Or the Turkish neighborhood of Kreuzberg in Berlin? Or Rio de Janiero's favela residents? Further phenomenological studies of gentrification

might help to foster a sense of global solidarity around what is so often framed as a local issue. And it could contribute to the work of global institutions, including the United Nations as it develops guidelines around best housing and development practices in the face of intense urbanization.

This approach would contribute to the work of international human rights research. For Saskia Sassen, modern injustices are in need of a new framework. She has developed the concept of "expulsions" to describe the systemic pattern of people living outside of society's edge—from the unemployment of the urban poor in the United States to the refugee crises brought about by war. She writes: "Experts on long-term unemployment in the Global North do not really study the displaced in the Global South, and vice-versa. And yet, at ground level, these displacements share a simple, common element: There are people being (usually permanently) cast out of what had been their lives"[154]. A global approach to gentrification might help to enhance this idea of expulsions and draw clearer links among seemingly disparate social justice concerns.

Media and community healing

Leaving aside the desire for a subsequent comparative approach or field study, what I was able to do here was to contextualize and synthesize the community conversation. Most people can intuitively understand the role of community in a person's wellbeing. It is a widely studied field of social science, but an exact definition is difficult to pinpoint. Robert Redfield's popular definition identified four key qualities of a community: small scale, homogeneity of activities and perspectives, awareness of its distinct features, and self-sufficiency through time[155]. Multiple attempts across time in the field of anthropology have yielded three key themes as to what defines the relationships in a community of people: common interests, a shared ecology or location, or a shared social structure. Of course many of the traditional notions of community have been disrupted by technology and globalization. Facebook, as an obvious example, allows people to maintain connections and cultivate common interests with people oceans

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[154] Sassen, Saskia. "The Language of Expulsion." *Truthout*. Published: July 30, 2014. Web op-ed. Accessed: August 2015. http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/25235-the-language-of-expulsion

[155] Barnard, Alan and Jonathan Spencer, eds. (2002). *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology.* Routledge: London and New York, p173.

away. But a common set of interests and needs remain. And the building blocks for a strong community are fairly consistent.

One of those blocks is communication. The benefit of analyzing media in this paper was that we could understand the discussion of gentrification and neighborhood change as an intra-community conversation. In his book on how belonging is shaped within a community Peter Block writes: "What is most important, and the power that is most defining, is the power of media to decide what is worth talking about"[156]. In making the decision to devote space to the topic of gentrification, *The Washington Post* and other publications have made the decision that this topic, no matter how murky, is worth wading into. It is worth sifting through to see what we can find.

We can see the first-person accounts of gentrification as a changing community's way of making sense of what is happening—and doing so in front of an audience. This work makes it clear what is at stake in the process of "development" (which might otherwise remain as a strictly a desirable rather than problematic process). There is power in the narrative and "[c]itizens have the capacity to change the community story, to reclaim the power to name what is worth talking about, to bring a new context into being"[157]. This expression is particularly important during a process that might otherwise feel overwhelming or silencing to an already marginalized community.

This, in a way, is a step towards a "restorative community" approach because we are embracing the framework of belonging and connection without fear or irony[158]. Block writes that "the aspect of a community that gives it a new possibility is simply the conversation it chooses to have with itself"[159]. So perhaps there is hope here—that although much of what is communicated around the issue of gentrification is mourning, at least the lines are open.

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[156] Block, Peter. (2008). *Community: The Structure of Belonging*. Berrett-Koehler Publisher, Inc. San Francisco, USA, p46.
[157] Block, Peter. (2008). *Community: The Structure of Belonging*. Berrett-Koehler Publisher, Inc. San Francisco, USA, p46.
[158] Block, Peter. (2008). *Community: The Structure of Belonging*. Berrett-Koehler Publisher, Inc. San Francisco, USA, p48.
[159] Block, Peter. (2008). *Community: The Structure of Belonging*. Berrett-Koehler Publisher, Inc. San Francisco, USA, p52.

Internal Migration in 21st Century America

Looking forward on the issue of urbanity more broadly, Robert Fishman, a leading urban historian, believes that America is in the midst of its fifth mass movement of people[160]. He calls these patterns "great migrations"; not to be confused with Wilkerson's usage. Fishman's use of the term "great migration" is different and broader than Isabel Wilkerson's "Great Migration" of African Americans out of the South. Fishman seems to use the term "great migration" to point to cultural shifts that cut across demographics. Fishman builds on Luis Mumford's identification in the 1920s of three previous ones: the 19th century move west across the frontier, the move from farms to factory towns decades later, and the move to metropolitan centers at the start of the 20th century. Mumford also correctly predicted a fourth move away from centralized locations and into empty suburban space. In response, Fishman's fifth great migration predicts that city centers, rather than suburbs, "will dominate urban demographics in the generation to come"[161]. For Fishman, this shift will bring back middle class blacks and welcome immigrants into city centers.

In his work on demographic inversion, Ehrenhart is skeptical of such a diverse mass-migration back to cities and thinks upper middle class whites will heavily dominate any shifts back to the urban center. While I agree with Fishman that the trend for the next several decades will be for city populations to grow, I join Ehrenhart in his skepticism over the inclusiveness of this trend.

Part of my doubts are based on the fact that as this "fifth great migration" is occurring, it seems to be spurring the reversal of Wilkerson's Great Migration. Recent African American college graduates and retirees have begun returning to the South in search of cultural ties and more economic opportunity[162]. Now that the South has softened, African Americans feel freer to migrate back. And while this trend needs more qualitative research to understand the patterns, I would hypothesize that gentrification might be one of many factors encouraging this reversal. As urban centers become more

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[160] Ehrenhalt, Alan. (2012). *The Great Inversion and the Future of the American City.* Alfred A Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc. New York, USA, p230.
[161] Ehrenhalt, Alan. (2012). *The Great Inversion and the Future of the American City.* Alfred A Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc. New York, USA, p230.
[162] Toppo, Greg and Paul Overberg. "After nearly 100 years, Great Migration begins reversal." *USA Today*. Published: February 2, 2015. Web. Accessed: February 5, 2015. http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2015/02/02/census-great-migration-reversal/21818127/

expensive—and quite frankly, less black—it makes sense that people would seek opportunity and belonging elsewhere. The cities that were once shaped by blacks are no longer the same cultural safe havens they once were.

Like most cultural shifts, I suspect that this one will sort itself out and eventually become matter-of-fact. But as these cultural changes continue to take hold in DC and other urban centers, it will be important to consider the emotional weight we're asking people carry. Change is constant, but asking one group to bear the personal costs of it shouldn't be. In going through the materials for this paper what struck me was the constant lack of security associated with the black lived experience. To think in broad strokes, we're talking about a group of people who fled the violence of slavery, then the oppression of Jim Crow, and managed to find a home and a sense of security in Washington, DC. And now the plates are shifting.

Of course many things contributed to the destruction of the old version of U Street, not the least of which were problems of drugs and violence that I didn't fully grapple with in this paper. But when considering the cultural history of the Shaw neighborhood and the city that encapsulates it, DC's new "renaissance" is certainly bittersweet. The neighborhood might be stronger as a result of new development, but what about the community that built it and suffered with it and relied on its well of black culture to fulfill them? The original title of this thesis was going to ask "what gets lost in the move?" Meaning, what do we lose when the winds of change touch down and feel more like a hurricane? Often gentrification is framed as an inevitable or natural process. Even if we were to leave that characterization unchallenged, we wouldn't tell people who lost their homes in a storm to simply "get over it." We would empathize, grieve with them, and as a society we'd work together to build new homes that are stronger, more able to resist the elements. So then why don't we do that in the face of gentrification—when the destruction simply comes in the form of upscale bars and specialty coffee shops instead of wind, which we can't even see?

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