

CITIES WITHIN CITIES

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Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will not die, but long after we are gone be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistence. Remember that our sons and our grandsons are going to do things that would stagger us. Let your watchword be order and your beacon beauty.

– Daniel Burnham, Chicago city planner
(1907 quoted in Moore 1921, 147)

The Urban League can only conclude that urban renewal ... is working great and undue hardships on the Negro population, and, on balance, is working more and more harm on the city as a whole. Basically, this conclusion arises from observation of the results of the pattern of racial segregation which Chicago now practices to an extent unmatched by any other large American city, North or South. So long as this pattern persists, urban renewal cannot achieve its great potential for good because residential segregation distorts the fundamental purpose of urban renewal by making it function within artificially restricted limits, and without the necessary utilization of city-wide resources. Thus the principle of 'land clearance' is perverted to 'Negro clearance,' and the great principles

of renewing the city's physical structure, and rebalancing and increasing its housing supply is inevitably defeated. With residential segregation, and the consequent ghetto-ization of the fastest growing segment of the city's population, slum clearance tends to spread blight, rather than to cure it — and urban renewal, despite its good intentions and its great possibilities, becomes a distortion and a false promise.

– Chicago Urban League (1958, 5-6)

The aware black man in the ghetto tends to view urban planning more as an enemy than as an aid.

– Edwin C. Berry and Walter W. Stafford,
Chicago Urban League (1968, 8)

The power to impose and to inculcate a vision of divisions, that is, the power to make visible the explicit social divisions that are implicit, is political power par excellence.

– Pierre Bourdieu (1989, 23)

LAKESIDE

As you walk towards Lake Michigan on E 85th Street in Chicago's South Shore neighborhood, you will pass tens of vacant lots where working-class families once lived in homes in one of the city's safest and most stable neighborhoods. Over the last three decades, deindustrialization has ripped physical and existential holes into this community where most households depended on the steel mills of South Chicago for their livelihoods (Walley 2013). Nearly all of the mills had closed for good by the early 1990s. Since then, as poverty has grown alongside what Chicagoans of the past have labeled "urban blight," demolition of abandoned homes



Charles Cushman, Indiana University Archives, 1958.

deemed havens for criminal activity has contributed to a visual representation of the more total transformation of a once-vibrant neighborhood into a devitalized urban space pockmarked by poverty and abandonment. The bulldozer and the cruising police car regulate the economies that have arisen amidst widespread joblessness and persistent disillusionment; they are today the most significant signs of public "investment" in the South Shore community of 49,767 residents (U.S. Census 2010).

If you continue walking east on 85th until the spotty rows of run-down homes abruptly end, you will face what is heralded by city government and private investors as the future of the South Side: nearly 600 acres of empty brownfield that runs into Lake Michigan. This is the last undeveloped lakefront parcel in the city of Chicago. From 1901 until 1992, it was the site of U.S. Steel South Works—one of the many enormous mills that clustered southward from this spot to form what was the largest corridor of heavy industry in the world. U.S. Steel South Works alone once employed over

20,000 workers. But let's not get caught in the past; keep on due east after the asphalt of 85th ends, move over the several hundred meters of dirt road and onto the narrow sea wall that juts out more than three kilometers into the water. Walk atop this wall with the water lapping on either side of your feet until you reach the break in the wall through which massive barges once passed. Here, turn around. Had you stood in this spot facing the shore on a night 30 years ago, on your eyeballs would now be reflected relentless columns of blood orange flames shooting over 10 meters up through the sooty clouds pouring from the countless smoke stacks of the steel mills. The hot, dry waves of sulfur emanating from the mills would heat the mucous membranes of your nose as you haltingly took in the air of industrial South Chicago. Today, however, daylight reveals an unadorned shoreline and unobstructed views across an empty field into a black American ghetto. This is a community struggling against poverty and joblessness, aggressive incarceration of its young male members, and bleak, static visions of the future. But for the empty space that lies between this neighborhood and Lake Michigan, the future is an altogether separate matter.

The future of this empty lakefront field, these 600 acres backed by a violent and progressively abandoned ghetto but just 20 km south along the idyllic Lake Shore Drive from Chicago's downtown, captures far more attention among city officials and private investors than does that of its neighbors. McCaffery Interests, a firm specializing in "underperforming urban real estate" that has teamed with the US Steel Corporation to develop this property, is commissioning digital visions of what is billed by many as the "future of the South Side" (Smith 2010). "Lakeside," a \$4 billion mega-development requiring an estimated \$450 million in public



Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, LC-D4-10460 L, 1890-1901.

funds, has been planned for this site and aggressively marketed to city and state administrations increasingly defined by public-private partnerships. A state governor and two Chicago mayors have swallowed the plan whole. It is now in its initial phases of construction, already with hundreds of millions in both public and private funding.

Marketing materials for what is to be the largest privately planned urban development in the history of Chicago depict a "city within a city" and "a global initiative for innovative living in Chicago." The utopic urban existence that will arise here alongside Lake Michigan features 13,575 gleaming new homes in glass towers, 1.63 million square meters of upscale retail and commercial space, shopping malls, new schools, a 1,500-slip marina, and 125 acres of lakefront park along with new commuter rail and bus services. A projected 50,000 happy people will live in this urban oasis by its completion in 2040 (McCaffery Interests 2013).

THE NEOLIBERAL FORTRESS IN GLOBAL URBAN FUTURES

While it may represent the cutting edge of planning in Chicago, the Lakeside Development is following what is already a well-established trend in so-called underdeveloped locales across urban Africa (and, although not discussed here, Asia). Public-private partnerships are driving the planning and construction of mega-developments intended to create socially and physically insulated spaces to capture global flows of capital and to house its handlers. In the name of "development" and economic growth, private-public partnerships have launched ambitious urban planning projects like Eko Atlantic in Lagos, Tatu City in Nairobi, and La Cité du Fleuve in Kinshasa, as well new satellite cities like Wescape outside Cape Town and Kilamba near Luanda. It is perhaps not a great leap for the urban development strategies of these postcolonial projects to now be taking form in the South Side of Chicago, the recent history of which evokes the image of an internal colony into which the South-to-North exportation of such development logics is more akin to South-South transfer than latitudes would suggest. In what is effectively an inversion of Achille Mbembe's ideal of "writing the world from Africa" (Oboe 2010), a survey of emerging public-private urbanities suggests that many are now "*planning* the world from Africa."

The concept of a self-contained, self-sufficient new city within a city is at the core of these urban development projects. "New city" developments allow investors and municipal governments to imagine and manufacture futures unencumbered by weighty and persistent legacies of social, political, economic, and material infrastructural inadequacy (Cirolia 2013). Eko Atlantic, for example, is being built on 3.5 square miles reclaimed from the Atlantic Ocean just off Victoria Island

in Lagos. Advertised as “the future in the making,” the new city is expected to soon be home to 250,000 residents in over 3,000 towers. It is to have virtually nothing to do with the existing Lagos infrastructure and urban fabric; it will instead build its own private power plants, sewage system, roads, schools, and light rail (Awofeso 2010). Future residents need never leave the confines of their privately policed and fortified island from which they will be able to look down through the floor-to-ceiling windows of shiny condominiums and follow the glare of the sunlight reflecting off skyscrapers across Eko Atlantic’s modern moat onto the more than 70 percent of Lagosians who continue to live in slum conditions (Johnson 2013). Recent figures suggest that approximately 10 percent of today’s estimated 21 million Lagosians have access to potable water; the vast majority has no access to sanitary mechanisms for disposal of human waste (Vanguard 2013). Diarrheal disease, most often due to contaminated water, is estimated to kill as many as 200,000 children under age 5 in Nigeria every year; many of these children are dying in Lagos (UNICEF 2013). As the city’s population swells from 21 million to what officials project will be 35 million people by 2025 (Al Jazeera 2013), the numbers of Lagosians defecating on shorelines while peering across the water at Eko Atlantic is not likely to decline.

In Eko Atlantic, as at Chicago’s Lakeside and each of the abovementioned utopian mega-developments in Africa, the spatial and infrastructural disconnection from the existing city and its residents represents the circumvention of too-obvious social, institutional, and operational problems that would require redress in more holistic urban planning and engaged responses to community needs. These plans, often drawn up in the far-removed skyscrapers of European or North

American or Chinese firms, have no intention of effecting reform or an integral urban scape; instead, they propose to offer more comfortable, ordered surroundings to those with the means to escape their despoiled and “dangerous” neighbors, leaving the rising number of those in the left-over interstitial urban spaces of the world to fend for themselves (Comaroff and Comaroff 2012; Cirolia 2013).

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The digitally manufactured images of these sparkling urban utopias present some of the most striking and fullest examples of what critical observers have termed “divided cities” (Wacquant 1994), “fortress cities” (Davis 1990; Low 1997), “citadels” or “exclusionary enclaves” (Marcuse 1997), “dominating cities” (Marcuse 1995), or “dual cities” (Harvey 1989; Sassen 2005; Low 1996).¹ I will elaborate on the character of such “cities within cities” through the example of Chicago’s Lakeside; but let me first suggest some of the historical processes through which such urban forms have come to sit so comfortably in the heart of urban planning today.

As I have suggested, these privately planned developments have cut their teeth for the most part in the conveniently development-needy “developing world,” where they are the culmination of decades of neoliberal agenda-making in city planning. Or, rather, city *non*-planning. Following World War II, central control of land, construction, and city planning by the state

was the norm in most industrially advanced countries (Gleeson and Low 2000). But as inflation and joblessness encroached on the Global North in the 1970s, ascendant conservative thought that would soon blossom into Thatcherism and Reagonomics asserted that although central state planning might succeed in creating housing, it could not create necessary economic growth and employment to go with it (Gleeson and Low). Neoliberal champions capitalized on perceived economic crises through political reforms that curtailed the state’s welfare and regulatory functions. Urban planning has since become increasingly defined by the ideological trilogy of competition, deregulation, and privatization (Gleeson and Low 2000)—commitments that have only intensified under globalization and the interurban competition it has fostered. State intervention in planning was criticized as counterproductive interference with the “invisible hand”; increasingly, faith was to be placed in “non-planning” and the unregulated global urban market to produce economic growth and supposedly associated socially optimal urban outcomes (see Alexander 1986). This turn in urban governance was shot through with pure market fetishism, wherein market-driven planning and its mode of construction would in and of themselves ensure employment and economic “growth.”

Postcolonial targets of international development became the most extreme playgrounds for this neoliberal political agenda and its adventurist experiments. Development policy, as suggested by structural adjustment programs, centered on fostering entrepreneurial market actors and diminishing the involvement of the state in urban planning, housing construction, and infrastructural development. The World Bank, for example, published a policy paper in 1993 entitled “Housing: Enabling Markets to Work” in which recommendations

call for urban development policy focused on deregulation, privatization, and minimizing state intrusion on matters of land use, zoning, construction competition, and infrastructural standards. In settings of poverty and “underdevelopment,” there was a perceived need in development discourse to postpone public investment in order to create vibrant private sectors that could sustain growth leading to jobs and stable governance. Development would require carving out spaces for markets to emerge on their own terms, to hold and multiply capital, and to permit the unleashing of economic growth. By these means, the deregulated market would eventually raise the neglected poor out of abject poverty. These logics of development might have been most forcefully (and, for the rights of the poor, destructively) deployed in the postcolonial world’s underdeveloped spaces, but they have since come back to the wealthy nations of their progenitors in full force. The “growth machine” politics (Molotch 1976) embedded in this economic philosophy is now as powerful in contemporary American “global cities” like Chicago as it is in any of the urban centers of poorer countries down whose throats such politics have been funneled over the last four decades in the name of development.

CONCENTRATING (ON) THE GLOBAL CITY

Increasingly, it is the world’s megacities rather than its national states that house the world’s largest economies. The focus of government at all levels, from national to municipal, has moved from the provision of public welfare to the direction of public resources toward private investment in order to transform cities into (or to sustain their status as) “world” or “global cities.” Interurban competition and branding exacerbates the dissolution of the public into the private. Much of the logic of contemporary urban development and

planning is predicated on providing the infrastructure to support massive private investment. Investment in basic infrastructure and in meeting the needs and protecting the rights/security of non-corporate city residents, especially the poor, is too often pushed into the background, if not sacrificed outright on the altars of the fetishized private market. In today’s municipal religion, the rights of the poor are expendable and represent pollution of the tranquility and aesthetic sheen of elite consumerist urban life.

Global cities are today “dual cities” wherein spatially selective divestment and reinvestment maps not onto the interests of existing residents’ welfare or “right to the city” (Lefebvre 1968) but rather onto the corporate visions of the future dictated through spectacular luminous images of glassy towers, spotless streets, and happy rich families (Sassen 1994). As luxury urban mega-developments set against backdrops of ignored poverty such as Lakeside or Eko Atlantic dramatically illustrate, “leapfrog” or “nodal” development is shaping space within cities as well as between them, in the Global North as well as the Global South.

The recently completed, \$64 million publicly funded extension of Lake Shore Drive to the Lakeside Development makes clear the narrowly targeted, nodal character of the Lakeside project and the “investment in the South Side” it represents (Hilkevitch 2013). Lake Shore Drive is an iconic American highway abutting Lake Michigan and insulated along most of its 15.83 miles by grassy parkland on either side. Its extension 2.08 additional miles south from Hyde Park (the enclave neighborhood that is home to the University of Chicago and one of the largest private police forces in the country) provides future Lakeside residents direct access to the Chicago’s Loop without requiring negotiation of poor South Side neighborhoods—an

uncomfortable and avoided activity for many white Chicagoans, even while insulated in their cars.

Reducing commuting time to downtown jobs may be the part of the rationale for the Lake Shore Drive extension that Lakeside promoters emphasize, although statements by the deputy commissioner of the Chicago Department of Transportation suggest it may not be as significant as imagined: “The new section of South Lake Shore Drive will provide an arterial-boulevard hybrid. If you are interested in a 30 mph beautiful drive, it is certainly a route you should consider taking. For ease and quickness of access, we would encourage drivers to remain on the expressway system” (Hilkevitch 2013). The most significant effect of the this new road that runs along Lakeside’s western edge adjacent to dilapidated residential plots lies not in shortened commuting times, but rather in its provision of a psychological connection to downtown and a clear division between Lakeside and the uncomfortably close South Shore neighborhood. It provides a visual and psychological corridor that links the development to downtown wealth and distances it from proximate poverty.

Dan McCaffery has long appreciated the importance of the highway to his project. He has repeatedly hailed the Lake Shore Drive extension as essential to the viability of the Lakeside Development and lobbied city and state governments for its construction (Gallun 2013; Doster 2014). He and his team understand, like the planners and journalists who have written about the extension, that it does “more than provide a bypass of residential areas to the west”; it also gives Lakeside “the edge it needs to attract retailers to its first phase” (Vance 2014). Edge, or the sharp demarcation of bounded urban spaces and the lines between them, is crucial to privatized urbanity. As “cities within cities” come to characterize planning and governance, as the

wealthy insulate themselves from the poor and leave those in the interstices outside the nodes of investment to the disorder that follows from planned public abandonment (disorder that neoliberal moralism attributes to deficient character and “cultures of poverty”), the provision of insulated corridors between the glass fortresses become crucial to the maintenance of the municipal brand.

Approximately 5,300 miles from Chicago, Rio de Janeiro provides an even more visually obvious model of the insulated node-to-node corridor. The Rio cityscape has witnessed a massive surge in public and private investment, the capital-multiplying goals of which are frequently indistinguishable as both typically share a marked disinterest in the poor (Zibechi 2013). Seeking to burnish its global brand, the city has been erecting walls along its major highways that function to block the adjacent *favelas* from view and to minimize the mobility of the troublesome populations therein (Gaffney 2010). These literal and symbolic barriers reflect an urban ideal in which the poor are not only unheard, but their existence is also unseen. Rio city officials protest this negative characterization of their plans and suggest that the walls are meant to augment quality of life in the favelas by blocking highway noise. To illustrate their commitment to community, they point to the invitation that the city has extended to favela residents to contribute—at sanctioned times—to the painting of murals on the highway-facing side of the walls (Gaffney). It is, in other words, an invitation for the poor to beautify their own incarceration and severance from the city. In Chicago, parallel efforts are made to obscure the targeted nature of the public investment in extending Lake Shore Drive. As the project manager for the Illinois Department of Transportation told a reporter, “We are taking traffic out of the neighborhood,

making it a safer and more efficient travel area for the motoring public” (Rossi 2013). Bypassing systematically marginalized neighborhoods desperate for traffic of people and commerce thus becomes about protecting their safety.

In comparison to the highways of Rio, the extension of Chicago’s Lake Shore Drive as a corridor to bypass Lakeside’s impoverished black neighbors may seem subtle and benign, but it reflects a parallel perceived need in the global city to construct clean lines of connection unadulterated by capital-dampening visibility and spatial engagement with the poor. Were Lake Shore Drive not flanked by parks and Lake Michigan on its southern segments, perhaps Lakeside’s artery to the city would require Rio’s walls.

The municipal preoccupations embedded in such nodal investments and the linkage of nodes through insulated corridors reflects the effects of interurban competition of which David Harvey wrote in 1989, “the revival of interurban competition over the last two decades suggests that urban governance has moved more rather than less into line with the naked requirements of capital accumulation” (16). This competition has been driven by the rise of what Harvey has called an “entrepreneurial” approach to urban governance that has replaced “managerial” governance under late capitalism. Instead of focusing on local provision of services, facilities, and benefits to residents, urban governance has been transformed by globalization and resultant interurban competition into an entrepreneurial activity characterized by experimentation with progressively more creative, risky, and sacrificial mechanisms to accumulate capital for the private sector.

The jettisoning of public urban management in favor of competitive catering to corporate interests seems to have grown more dominant over the last



Alex MacLean, UIC Imagebase. US Steel South Works site in 1996 after demolition.

two and a half decades, and this neoliberal ideology has again capitalized on crisis to tighten its grip since the recession that began in the United States in 2007. Confronting shrinking revenue and budgets and compressed further by demands for austerity, cities have turned to public-private partnerships in imagining and realizing the future. In Chicago, this has taken many forms, including the disastrous leasing of the city’s parking meters to a private company for 75 years (Stein 2008), the closure of 50 public schools in poor neighborhoods and reopening of some as privately-run charter schools (Ahmed-Ullah 2013; Lipman and Haines 2007), and the anti-redistributive allocation of “tax increment financing” funds (i.e. residents’ property taxes) to private companies to encourage their growth in the richest neighborhoods (Lester 2013).² Harvey’s (2000) observations regarding the public-private partnership and its use to “feed the downtown monster” are being borne out in Chicago: “every new wave of public investment is needed to make the last wave pay off. The private-public partnership means that the public takes

the risks and the private takes the profits. The citizenry wait for benefits that never materialize” (141).

The public-private urban mega-developments that motivate this essay are yet further signs of this privatization of urban governance, but they provide some of the most stunning visual manifestations of its differential consequences for the rich and poor. The entrepreneurial governance behind such private-public partnerships has reconfigured the triangulation of the state, citizen, and corporation in urban space. As Peter Marcuse (1997) has articulated, “The role of the state in the contemporary process of spatial separation is also new; it reinforces and hardens the effect of market forces rather than, as has sometimes been the case under various pressures, trying to counter them” (229). These crystallized market forces have sharp edges for those at the periphery.

It is in this context that Marcuse claims that the nature of the ghetto in the post-Fordist U.S. city is no longer one of subordination and restriction, as in the classic modernist black U.S. ghetto, but is instead now the spatial concentration of the excluded and the cast-aways. Globalization, concentration of ownership, and privatization of the public sphere have created what Marcuse terms the “outcast ghetto.” The criminalization of poverty, omnipresent policing, and hyperincarceration of black men on the South Side of Chicago suggest that Marcuse’s dismissal of subordination and restriction as past is premature. But his concept of the outcast ghetto does point to an important shift. The political economy of the post-Fordist city is changing such that the residents of the ghetto are increasingly excluded from its future altogether rather than, as in the past, marginalized to facilitate exploitation by industrial capitalists.

When work disappears, as William Julius Wilson (1997) has shown, neighborhoods disappear with it. Low-level service jobs remain, but as the redevelopment of former industrial spaces suggests, labor in its conventional form is made obsolete by the global city. It is no surprise, then, that there is no space for the (formerly) working class in private planning for corporate future cities. Furthermore, the working class is not just obsolete and thus excluded from planning and resource allocation; rather, their very visibility is a threat to the image of the global city seeking to attract capital and its cohort of professionals. Entrepreneurial governance at once both sharpens inequality and must make it invisible so as not to compromise the city’s brand and the marketing of the utopic urban living of its residents.

This brings us to the present moment in a long history of racialized “urban renewal” (Hyra 2008) in Chicago in which hundreds of thousands if not millions of black Chicagoans have been displaced—first as part of efforts to address “urban blight” (Berry and Stafford 1968) and, more recently, to diffuse “concentrated poverty” (Metzger 2000) in favor of “mixed-use” development, otherwise known as gentrification. In deindustrialized Chicago, this is taking new and more complete forms. From a cynical but historically consistent perspective, it seems that the city has deployed policing, incarceration, school closures, systematic infrastructural neglect, and teams of bulldozers to expedite the evacuation of the working class from South Side ghettos. Perhaps urban planning will be the key step in dissolving the too-persistent past. A plan has already begun to be implemented, for example, to convert 13 square miles in and around Englewood, one of the South Side’s most economically depressed and depopulated black neighborhoods, into the largest urban farm in the country (Huffington Post 2012). There

are 11,000 vacant lots (Moore 2012)—many products of homes demolished in the name of urban order—in this proposed black-belt-cum-green-belt in which the population has shrunk to less than one-third of 1960’s nearly 100,000 residents (U.S. Census). It seems that a strategy of “planned abandonment” (Metzger 2000) is at long last bearing fruit—the successful conversion of spaces once filled with poor black people to green spaces housing local produce for the gentrified West Loop and the North Side’s Michelin-starred restaurants.

But I have veered some miles away from the Lakeside development and have begun a foray into the surrounding South Side community that threatens to take us beyond the focus of this article. This momentary widening of the lens, however, lends context to the place of Lakeside in Chicago’s history and unfolding future. Bluntly put, Lakeside is the articulation, yet again, of a vision in which the existing working class of Chicago’s South Side has little part.

REDEFINING COMMUNITY IN PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

“Community” as word and image features prominently in the Lakeside planners’ rhetoric (Besserud et al. 2013) and the development’s promotional website³. The videos on the development website depict a beautiful, resort-like urban existence maintained by happy white families. Set in the future of the South Shore, a neighborhood today where over 95 percent of the residents are black and nearly all others are Latino, one is challenged to find a single non-white figure in the technologically sophisticated video renderings of Lakeside that feature hundreds if not thousands of future residents. In one still image, however, an isolated black man stands out in the upper right corner of the scene. He appears strangely out of place—socially

disconnected from the scene, with no one alongside him and no one acknowledging his presence. He is set apart not just by virtue of the darkness of his skin, but also by his distinctly formal clothing (as if his acceptance in this idealized community requires an unmistakably professional image), his robust physique that contrasts with uniformly slim white figures, and his boisterously upraised arms and shouting mouth suggestive of disturbance in an otherwise homogenously serene urban scene.

One suspects that the general omission of black figures from these complex visual productions is more reflective of the intended actual future of Lakeside than its developers or political backers would concede. Nonetheless, the project is marketed, and endorsed by politicians and a considerable number of South Shore residents, as an “investment in the neighborhood.” Something “sorely needed” by the “community,” according to the local politician who represents the ward (Smith 2010). Dan McCaffery, the head of the developing firm that specializes in gentrifying Chicago’s “underperforming urban real estate,” even alludes to the elusive creation of jobs: “When you think about the scale, and the fact that it’s been 25 years since that community was basically abandoned, with respect to a job-maker this thing [Lakeside] has got enormous potential consequences” (Lydersen 2013). But whose jobs will these be? As Mayor Richard Daley said during his first mayoral campaign in 1989: “This city is changing. You’re not going to bring factories back [...] I think you have to look at the financial markets—banking, service industry, the development of O’Hare field, tourism, trade. This is going to be an international city” (Lipman 2002, 387). Mayor Daley realized this vision over the next two decades of his tenure in which the fading of the South Side ghettos only accelerated



Lou Gerard. Overhead view of U.S.S. South Works at South Chicago IL. Date unknown. http://www.boatnerd.com/news/newsthumbs/html1/newsthumbs_1293.htm

(U.S. Census). Daley has supported Lakeside from its inception and stood next to McCaffery at its spectacular groundbreaking celebration, but he knows as well as McCaffery that aside from a limited number of low-paying service positions, the jobs that Lakeside brings will overwhelmingly not be jobs for the working class residents of the South Shore community.

Here we see what Tsing (2005) calls “friction” in the uses of “community”—a central obfuscating theme of the urban planning movement’s New Urbanism, which derives much of its “rhetorical and political power through a nostalgic appeal to ‘community’ as a panacea for our social and economic as well as our urban ills” (Harvey 1997, 2). What does community mean in this context and who is it for? If it is for the existing South Shore residents, then what kind of community does Lakeside portend when they will be priced out of its condominium homes and its “upscale” retail establishments — and perhaps kept out altogether by policing

and security? What community can exist for them when the existing social, political, economic, and infrastructural realities that have depopulated and scarred the South Side of Chicago persist untouched—or are worsened—by this new “city within a city?”

One of the key selling points of New Urbanism and of Lakeside is the suggestion that a reconfigured spatial order will give rise to a new economic and social order, that it will rebuild and strengthen community (Harvey 1997). But the deflating reality is that this private mega-development, like Eko Atlantic or Tatu City or Cité du Fleuve, is a distracting spectacle amidst poverty underwritten by still-unaddressed problems. Although “community” is marketed as panacea for these problems (often as a rhetorical means of non-engagement), it is perhaps more accurate to say that it is offered as chimera—an always-hoped-for ideal that is never actually realized. Furthermore, the blame for the elusiveness of community in the ghetto is perpetually dropped at the feet of those least responsible—its systematically disempowered occupants.

The South Shore has so long been ignored by all public investment other than policing that its residents are eager for nearly any development. But many recognize the irony of their position. “If it’s nice, shiny, and new, I don’t see why they’d include us,” said a man who grew up across from the Lakeside parcel and still lives there. “They’ve never included us in any particular way before, so, you don’t have enough people with the education to have the jobs to afford to buy the houses out there.” Or, as the young son of his neighbor captured it when speaking to a journalist, “The people that are richer are going to advance more than the ones that are in the middle” (Lydersen 2013). And many residents of the South Shore, where nearly one in three people live below the federal poverty line and more than half make

due with less than two times the federal poverty level, can only dream of being in the middle (U.S. Census). Another resident questions the logic of the development altogether: “Are we going to cater to rich people who don’t even live here? Or are we going to cater to poor people and moderate income people who already live here and are trying to cope? Does it make sense to build a lot of new houses when you have vacant buildings everywhere?” (Lydersen 2013).

It seems that the circumscribed space in which Lakeside is to materialize over the coming years will be revitalized and transformed, but it is only the already wealthy who will move in from elsewhere who will benefit, not its surrounding impoverished community.⁴ Lakeside, like the New Urbanism as understood by David Harvey (1997), builds “an image of community and a rhetoric of place-based civic pride and consciousness for those who do not need it, while abandoning those that do to their “underclass” fate (3).

SPECTACLES OF COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

If you take a walk through the Lakeside parcel from the south, set against open acres of unkempt grass you will see a donut-shaped web of metal rods supporting inclined sheets of Marine-grade plywood sealed on their topside with a shiny laminate. If it’s a dry day and still light out, you might observe spandex-clad track cyclists riding in 166-meter circles at around 45 miles per hour. Many of their bicycles were purchased for prices equal to roughly a quarter of the typical household annual income of the residents living just west of this wooden velodrome. Most if not all of these cyclists have come from the North Side or the wealthy Chicagoland suburbs. There are few track cyclists among the locals (Lydersen 2013).

This is the Chicago Velo Campus—a partnership with McCaffery Interests, intended to promote the Lakeside development and generate interest among potential investors and future residents (McCaffery Interests 2013). It’s an unusual promotional venture, but so was the 2011 bussing of 100,000 middle-class concert goers (Wallaey 2013, 149), the vast majority of whom had never set foot in the South Shore, to the Lakeside parcel for a music festival featuring the Dave Matthews Band—a bluegrass-inspired band with an overwhelmingly white fanbase (Hackney 2012). Rubble was hastily cleared from the site for the event—a spectacle framed by local media as a welcome rejuvenation of the South Side rather than a momentary safari on the part of whiter, wealthier Chicagoans. Busses picked up concertgoers downtown and dropped them off on the site’s open grasses. The stage was set up on the eastern-most edge of the site next to Lake Michigan and as far away as possible from the neighboring South Shore community, and from this promontory, the visitors could look north across the lake at the glimmering downtown cityscape.

The busses left as they had come. Spectacle had been created and sold, but nothing had changed for the South Shore community. To what degree this will foreshadow the effect of Lakeside on the South Side is, of course, not yet fully known, but it hints at a scaled-up neoliberal redux of familiar gentrification processes that Chicago has engineered time and time again to expand its downtown core south and west in the name of global city status and economic growth.

New “cities within cities” like Lakeside, and the urban futures they suggest, will challenge Bourdieu’s (1984) assertion that “each lifestyle can only really be constructed in relation to the other, which is its

objective and subjective negation” (193). We are creating a new kind of exclusive enclave not by conventional gentrification in which gradual removal of poor residents creates increasingly exclusive spaces, but rather by the creation from scratch of a homogenous, utopian urban experience. We are planning cities in which there are no outsiders, no signs of the unincorporated. In our publicly privatized urban futures, the obsolete classes are kept outside. Joint membership of society, economy, and humanity is erased. Total spatial and existential polarization is the goal. We are creating insulated urbanities where there are no poor, no marginalized, no pasts. We are planning for worlds where there are no others. But like “community,” this is an ideal infinitely deferred.

“We are planning for worlds where there are no others.”

FUTURELOGUE

Fortress cities like Lakeside and Eko Atlantic represent the most advanced form of neoliberal urban governance and the most spectacular culmination of the public-private partnership to date. The global spread and increasing privatization of the private-public partnership suggests a future in which the public, and thus any hope of space for the underemployed and economically obsolete poor, may be erased altogether from the partnership. There are many eager harbingers of this future. Economist-cum-development-activist Paul Romer has proposed the establishment of “charter cities” in the Global South whose governance is managed by foreign states with better records of producing economic growth and controlling corruption (Mallaby 2010). Economists Ray Fisman and Eric Werker (2007)

have even advocated for allowing corporations to hold public office, arguing that they would be more effective governors and facilitators of economic growth than private citizens. Perhaps what we are seeing in sites like Lakeside and Eko Atlantic is the unarticulated blend of these adjacent neo-conservative ideologies of charter cities and unfettered corporate governance; perhaps what we are witnessing is the birth of the thinly veiled corporate charter city.

Utopian imaginaries, their aspirations to envision and realize a future that diverges from our dystopic dissatisfactions with the present, are inextricably intertwined with urban futurism and its planning. We are, in Deleuzian terms, seeking for difference amidst a perceived sea of disappointing repetition. But as the state has been slowly disemboweled in many places, metamorphosed into mega-corporation in others, and everywhere fundamentally transformed by neoliberal policy that has reduced it to looping economic crises and the political manufacturing of austerity, the doors have been swung wide to public-private partnerships through which the private sector is manufacturing our dreams for us. And dreams seem in demand now more than ever, both in the cities of the Global South that are increasingly economically relevant centers for global finance and are seeking to display and multiply their newfound global status, and in the post-industrial cities in the Global North that are desperate to retain glossy images amidst threatening urban decay.

“Make no little plans,” the iconic Chicago city planner Daniel Burnham famously preached. It is the big idea that captures, the spectacle that sells. The volume of Burnham’s dictum as it echoes between the skyscrapers of global cities is deafening, amplifying his guiding ideals of “order” and “beauty” above all others in urban

governance. The values of the global city are being etched into the earth, poured into streets and cohering into walls that sever the poor from the official city future. The cities of the South, with cityscapes shaped by enduring histories as incubators for neoliberal experiment, are now supplying models for emergent global urban forms predicated on the primacy of corporate capital. Corporations excel in the production of utopian urban dreams, and they care little about those left out by their intentionally exclusive design. The dream market for future cities is burgeoning, heralding urban nightmares for most.

ENDNOTES

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1 Note that these citations are not intended to mark the first use of each term (although in some cases they do); they are given here simply as examples of their use. For a literature review of the anthropology of cities and many of these terms, see Low (1996).

2 TIF funds can only be awarded back to the neighborhoods from which the taxes were collected, effectively fostering the spatially bounded reproduction of wealth by supporting already wealthy areas and preventing redistribution to poorer areas. See Lester. Poor communities can also be designated as TIF districts, and although the relatively small tax revenue generated by this may have potential to stimulate some growth of private businesses in these areas, TIF designation can become a means of facilitating gentrification. Once taxes are raised as part of TIF district creation, poorer residents may no longer be able to afford to live in these areas. See Ralph (forthcoming), Patillo (2007), and Seligman (2005).

3 Unfortunately, Chicago Lakeside refused to grant the author permission to publish the digital images produced

for the marketing of the development. Images and videos are available, however, on the development website: chicagolakesidedevelopment.com.

4 Fraser and Kick’s (2007) recent study of mixed-income housing developments in US cities meant to promote neighborhood revitalization and poverty amelioration showed that while place-based outcomes benefited investors, government, and non-profit groups, existing community residents are relatively underserved by mixed-income initiatives.

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