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## Discursive Fault Lines: Reproducing White Habitus in a Racially Diverse Community

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# Discursive Fault Lines: Reproducing White Habitus in a Racially Diverse Community

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## Abstract

This is a qualitative study detailing the links between racial discourse and social action. Specifically, this article provides evidence for the ways in which a white habitus is reproduced in a racially diverse community, despite the best intentions of its community members. This is chiefly due to the influence of national color-blind ideologies and the diversity discourse that follows. Because this ideology and discourse are individual in nature and centered on a white norm, it chiefly produces consumption-driven actions for individuals and collective action that protects those with racial privilege. While prior studies have detailed the influence of this ideology on racial attitudes and examined the contours of diversity discourse generally, this study utilizes the racial formations approach to make concrete links to social outcomes in a diverse community. These findings are particularly significant given the hope vested in racially diverse communities as the nation itself becomes more diverse.

## Keywords

color-blind ideology, discourse, diversity, integrated neighborhoods, racial project, racism, sociology, white habitus

## Introduction

This study explores the unintentional re-creation of a white habitus in a racially diverse urban community. This community consists of three adjoining stably diverse neighborhoods in Chicago, whose identities as diverse are locally and in some circles nationally known. That diversity is readily claimed and embraced by its residents, but given both the disproportionate numbers of white homeowners active in shaping community politics, and the force of color-blind ideologies, both individual actions and collective efforts produce a white habitus inside these diverse neighborhoods.

In particular, it details the strength of color-blind ideologies even in communities that pride themselves on their racial diversity and their liberal or progressive politics. These ideologies are congruent with the 'happy talk' structuring diversity discourse in the nation, and demonstrate how even pro-diversity residents taking concrete action in these communities cannot articulate a racial consciousness beyond the happy talk. This ideology and discourse shapes social action at the individual level by subsuming diversity to matters of individual choice and consumption, and in the deep ambivalence surrounding collective action in the communities. The racial project connecting color-blind ideology, diversity discourse, individual choice, and collective action re-creates a white habitus even in a racially diverse community, inhibiting both the likelihood of sustained diversity and any efforts for democratic social and racial justice.

## Racial Discourse and Racial Projects

This qualitative study of a racially diverse community allows a unique view into the link between racial discourse and social action, a process Omi and Winant call a racial project: 'A racial project is simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines' (1994: 56). These reorganizations and redistributions do not always take place on a national or global scale, nor are those resources necessarily economic in nature. They are also part of our negotiation process in everyday interactions. 'Racial projects connect what race means in a particular discursive practice and the ways in which both social structures and everyday experiences are racially *organized*, based upon that meaning' (1994: 56). In short, ideas about race produce real social outcomes. Closely examining this process in a racially diverse urban community makes this connection visible in ways that help us

better understand the link between discourse and social action more generally. Fundamentally, in this study, they expose a gap between desired and achieved outcomes.

That discourse is structured by the larger narrative around race in the United States, which at least since the 1960s has been the ideology of color-blindness. There has been much academic interest in the ideologies and justifications surrounding racism after the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, when it is widely accepted that a shift took place from overt to covert forms of racism. In response, sociologists in the 1990s began to shift away from an attitudes-based emphasis on prejudice toward one that better understood the link between ideological and institutional systems of privilege and oppression. Robert Smith's (1995) *Racism in the Post-Civil Rights Era: Now You See It, Now You Don't* and Bobo et al's (1997) concept of 'laissez faire racism' each situated ideologies in a broader socio-political structure which, in part, has maintained institutionalized racism and white privilege (see Bonilla-Silva, 1996).

This is mirrored in the more generalized racial formations theory, which appreciates the central role of ideology in producing and reproducing the contemporary racial and social structure (Omi and Winant, 1994). Some scholars have criticized Omi and Winant for being too abstract in their understanding of the link between macro- and micro-structures. Wellman argues that they provide 'no serious analysis of the contemporary structure of racial advantage and how it might be connected to the ways in which people talk about race' (1997: 9) and as such cannot fully account for the existence of racial privileges and disadvantages. Bonilla-Silva grants the racial formations theory more utility but argues that they grant too much significance to racial projects in the political sphere, 'thus obscuring the social and general character of racialized societies' (1996: 466). However, I argue that the strength of racial formations is in its universality. Wellman argues that 'racial formation is a theory of racial meaning, not racial privilege' (1997: 10), but it is specifically through racial meanings, as I demonstrate in this piece, that racial privilege is produced and reproduced. As Wellman himself notes, 'racist beliefs are culturally sanctioned, rational responses to struggles over scarce resources; ... they are sentiments which, regardless of intentions, defend the advantages that whites gain from the presence of blacks in America' (1997: 29).

Bonilla-Silva moves in this same direction in his book *White Supremacy and Racism in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (2001), which lays out in clear terms the significance of ideology in maintaining racism as well as the core themes of this paradigm. As Bonilla-Silva writes: 'Although ideologies do not provide individuals, as group members, with an explicit road map of how to act, what to believe, and what to say, they furnish the basic principles individuals use to sift through contested and often contradictory information in order to make sense of social reality' (p. 63). This is a central point for the study of ideologies - for while they are certainly flourishing in ways that are multiple (Hartigan, 1999) and in some contexts benign, they are also always happening within very real contexts of power. These produce the redistribution of resources and outcomes that Omi and Winant (1994) conceptualize broadly as racial projects. This study illustrates how color-blind ideologies and a superficial diversity discourse impact the individual and collective actions of community members in ways that, even in racially diverse communities, reproduce a white habitus.

Understanding this dynamic in an often-celebrated diverse community is of critical importance. As Bonilla-Silva et al. note: 'Racial outcomes ... are not the product of individual "racists" but of the crystallization of racial domination into a racial structure' (2004: 558). Several authors have linked this to the perpetuation of what Bonilla-Silva calls a white habitus. Borrowing on Bourdieu, Bonilla-Silva defines white habitus as 'a racialized, uninterrupted socialization process that conditions and creates whites' racial taste, perceptions, feelings, and emotions and their views on racial matters' (Bonilla-Silva, 2003: 104). Bonilla-Silva and Embrick's (2007) work specifically considered the link between a white habitus and the perpetuation of prejudice toward blacks and privileges for whites. However, where they focused on the impact of extreme racial segregation. I look at the creation and recreation of a white habitus in a racially integrated environment. Closely examining the white habitus that can operate in a racially diverse community is of critical importance, for it exposes the faulty link between color-blind ideals and social realities, namely the influence of market forces and struggles over social problems like crime in the community.

These color-blind ideologies are often articulated in the form of race talk, 'specific linguistic ways of articulating racial views' (Bonilla-Silva, 2001: 61). This race talk varies by topic and locale, but as scholars of discourse have long noted, is 'intimately involved in the construction and maintenance of inequality' (Foster, 2009: 13). The race talk around diversity, as Bell and Hartmann (2007) have shown, manifests in 'happy talk' around the idea of diversity. These well-rehearsed repertoires, or conceptual frameworks (Frankenburg, 1999),

celebrate diversity as universally positive. But as Bell and Hartmann demonstrate, this idea is exactly that - universalized and often disconnected from our daily lives. As the talk moves from the abstract to the concrete, happiness disappears and discussions of challenges and frustrations emerge. In particular, these frustrations stem from the contradictions between a consumption-based approach to diversity embraced by many whites, and the very real problems they encounter in everyday life. Perhaps for this reason, rather than commit to diversity via racial or social justice efforts, residents in this study reproduce a white habitus in a racially diverse space. By maintaining what Bell and Hartmann call this white normative center, the assumption that diversity is an add-on to an otherwise normative white experience, residents also reproduce white habitus. Their ideal of living in a diverse community is subverted by the realities that they produce in their actions - a color-blind, power-neutral approach to individual and collective community action. This allows these residents to retain diversity as a positive in the abstract while treating it with caution and ambivalence in their communities. This caution and ambivalence is the core of a white habitus, as it structures or inhibits social action.

This process is in some ways similar to what Picca and Feagin (2007) call 'Two-Faced Racism'. Their concept borrows heavily on Goffman and his analysis of front and back stages. For Picca and Feagin it provides a key insight into the ways in which whites may participate in socially acceptable discourse around race in public, but maintain overt racism or discrimination when out of the public view. My study differs from theirs in that I find ambivalence and contradictions in the back stage, or what I call the individualized and community forms of social action. This is may be due to the fact that I am interviewing active residents of diverse communities, many of whom are liberal and/or quite genuinely eager to accept and nurture diversity. This makes their ambivalence and contradictions when discourse is filtered down into individual and community action all the more important to critically analyze. As Foster has noted, 'built into habitus is the ability to shift gears in one's status with the superstructure of society' (2009: 696). Attention to these contradictions, the ways in which well-intentioned individuals stumble over the cracks produced by this ideological and discursive system, are likely to be all the more pertinent as the nation itself becomes more diverse.

As one author has noted, 'To understand race relations in urban areas - how race shapes urban space - diverse ... communities deserve close attention as unique and varied urban spaces. They are harbingers of the future of race relations in cities and the nation' (Maly, 2006: 47). At present, given the unintentional re-creation of a white habitus, pro-diversity efforts are failing or missing in these communities. Because the current ideology so strongly insists on racial neutrality, and discourse is happily supportive of an implicit white normative center, residents cannot cohesively link their ideals to reality. They want and appreciate a diverse community to live in, but their actions, both individual and collective, are unlikely to sustain it.

## **Approach**

For this project, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 42 active residents in three adjoining stably racially diverse neighborhoods on Chicago's northeast side. I chose to interview active residents because they are the key individuals shaping these communities, and as such hold a special control over collective and political action in the communities. Thus, exploring their discourse and actions provides a unique glimpse into the process of racial formations in these already unique communities. While interviewing non-active residents may be interesting for its comparative analysis of racial discourse and color-blind ideology, the particular link to social outcomes in these communities filters precisely through those individuals most active in shaping its policies and activities. These are the residents who are in frequent contact with elected officials, steering community organizations, working with local police, and active in other entities that shape outcomes in these communities. I began my sampling by asking to interview block club presidents or members or directors of active community organizations, all of whom in some capacity work with others to affect or prevent change in these communities. This initial sample came from my own familiarity living in the neighborhood for several years prior, and being connected through social networks to those who are active in the community.

Once I made my initial contacts with these active residents, I invited them to identify other residents who were also active in the neighborhood. In this process, I implicitly allowed residents to define what 'active' meant. Not one resident questioned this term or asked for its definition - there is a core group of active members of these communities who are relatively well-networked with one another through block clubs, neighborhood councils, and various types of grass-roots organizations. They knew who was active much

better than I could have by adhering to some definition or parameter in abstract design. This process allowed me to tap into the extensive networks of active residents in these communities. Once I began hearing the same suggested names, I knew I had reached most of the active residents, almost all of whom were happy to participate in this study. However, in some cases, I did contact residents outside of this snowball sampling method, often through organizational affiliations, when I noticed a geographical or topical gap in my sample. These 3-4 individuals then referred me back to the same people I had already met or whose names had already been suggested, suggesting a relatively thorough representation of active residents in my sample.

This social network is especially critical in a diverse community; all three of these communities have had a racial demographic that mirrors that of the city of Chicago for at least three decades, and are nationally and locally recognized for their racial diversity (Nyden et al., 1998). They are also diverse economically, ethnically, and relative to visible expressions of sexual identity (see tables, Appendix A). While racially diverse, the communities are still majority white, as were the residents I interviewed for this study (see tables, Appendix B). Both white and nonwhite residents lamented this reality and wanted to see more active and visible participation in their communities among racial minorities and renters. As such, excerpts from both white and nonwhite residents are captured in this study. I did not perceive any discomfort among nonwhites speaking to a white researcher about their community engagement; among whites I also felt that this created a layer of comfort and protection. Residents from all backgrounds were eager to share their community work with me.

I did not interview participants about their definition of diversity, nor did I ask them to call up past experiences with 'diversity' as has been the case in some national studies. While those studies have been informative, my approach here reveals concrete thinking as it relates to real social action in the face of real issues of community concern. As such, I asked them concrete open-ended questions about their housing history, their choice to move into these neighborhoods, what impression they had of the community before making the choice to move there, and how they first became involved with their community. My approach was to allow discussions about diversity to arise organically rather than following an artificially generated survey 'about diversity'. By filtering this discussion through their actual experiences, we were able to discuss their community involvement in detail, which allowed them to raise issues of importance to them in the community along the way. It was in this context that issues of diversity, either as a value or as a site of negotiation, emerged. These discussions were rich for the way they revealed complexity and ambivalence around concrete social issues, which detail the reproduction of a white habitus. During the course of the discussions, I asked as many follow-up questions as necessary to get the richness and detail I desired out of their responses.

The interviews were all conducted in person, at the time and location of the participants' choosing. I asked each interviewee to choose a location where they felt comfortable speaking frankly about diversity and their work in their communities, and most selected their home. However, some interviews were conducted in my office, a neutral space at my university, or at their place of employment. Only a very small number were conducted in public spaces like cafes, and in those few cases, I did not sense that the participant's responses were in any way constrained by anyone who might overhear our conversation. Interviews lasted anywhere from 40 minutes to over two hours, with the average interview length being approximately one hour. Participants were assured that their name and any identifying information would be protected in this study. Accordingly, names and any identifiable information have been changed in this article. Residents are identified only by a gendered pseudonym and race in this article. Residents' gender and race were inferred from our face-to-face interaction and especially by their own self-referencing. Their race and gender was also consistent with the phrasing and descriptions gained by my snowball sampling method, when my own perception of a participant's race or gender was affirmed by others in the community.

All interviews, once completed, were transcribed verbatim and coded with respect to topic of discussion, viewpoint, forms of racial talk, and also for disruptions or breaks from the framework of those national ideologies and discourses. Codes like 'happy talk', 'diversity', 'crime', 'blight', 'ambivalence', and others allowed me to see patterns in the responses that allowed me to trace these steps in the recreation process of white habitus in ways previous literature has not. I was able to map out meanings by comparing these discussions and come to an understanding of both community action and community thinking around diversity in that process. This process also allowed me, over time, to ask more concrete follow-up questions relative to common community issues or concerns and gain the richest possible data.

The bulk of the interviews, and therefore the bulk of the data that I coded and analyzed, was about the

concrete history and details of active residents' community involvement. Given the context of a stably diverse community, residents often talked about issues of diversity and race within the community. While I never asked residents to define diversity, and in fact never asked them to talk about that diversity unless they named it as an issue of importance in their community, I began to notice talk that in some ways paralleled, and in other ways broke with, racial discourses in the United States. That is, while residents held tightly to abstract ideals of diversity and colorblindness, this discourse was fraught with ambivalence and contradictions as action moved from the abstract to the individual and community levels. In that process, residents reproduce a white habitus even as they enthusiastically embrace their diverse communities.

### **Universal 'Happy Talk' in a Local Setting**

My evidence for the production of white habitus is broken down into three sections, which mirror progressive stages in the link between ideologies and social actions. As such, it details the steps in the racial project of reproducing white habitus in a diverse space. I liken this process to a hurricane making landfall. Fueled by ideology, the discourse is strong and confident, sweeping far in its reach and having a pervasive impact on a local setting. This is the universal happy talk in a local setting that I detail in this section. But as the storm moves inland, its strength weakens. Very much still impacted by the storm, the inner coastal region of individual action enacts diversity as individualized choice and action. For a site like mine, this is captured by the everyday ways in which individuals 'do' diversity via choice and consumption. Finally, the storm weakens when it moves to the central landmass of collective social action. Here the discursive storm finally breaks apart, and residents are left dealing with the larger-scale decisions in the real estate market and in community issues. The discursive storm is less confident, but because it had been structured by the ideology of color-blindness, individual and collective social action uphold social and economic security for whites, which reproduces a white habitus even in a racially diverse community.

All three of the communities in my study claim diversity as a central part of their neighborhood identity, and residents in these communities actively claim it as well, to the extent that Fred, a white male, commented, 'Here in [this community], even if you don't believe in diversity, you certainly know you better sound like you do, okay?'. While the pressure to celebrate diversity is strong around the nation, in communities like these, breaking from that frame also undermines the identity of the community as a tolerant, progressive place.

This also forms a link between community and individual identity. For example, Laurie, a white female, had been discussing her involvement with a local political campaign and said:

Through my involvement in that [campaign], I learned more about different challenges in the area, and learned just really what a valuable jewel [this community] is in terms of being known nationally as one of the most diverse congressional districts or communities in the country. And that made me feel even better about living here, so

Yet just because the link is strong between diversity and the identity of these communities does not mean that most residents are able to discuss it in anything other than abstract terms.

When I met Walter, a white male, he spoke immediately about the value he places on diversity, yet connected it to his work life rather than home. When I asked him to talk more about why diversity was such an appeal for him, he said:

It's a very tough issue when you talk to some people where they get over the hump on it and realize it's a value. And I see diversity as a plus, in a sense. All great things come from the edge of a paradigm, and when you have a diverse workforce, a diverse body of people, they're all thinking different ways, so their paradigm's sounding different. So I think you come up with better ideas, more creative, with diversity. And it's more interesting.

Walter's explanation is revealing for its emphasis on cultural difference, as well as his reversion back to workplace rather than neighborhood examples, despite being someone who spoke several times during our conversation about the value he places on diversity in his community. Several other residents similarly emphasized the workplace over their neighborhood, mirroring a trend identified by Ellis and Wright (2004).

While universally positive about the idea of diversity and its intrinsic value, be it at work or at home, it was

also very common for residents to immediately expand the notion of diversity far beyond race, to emphasize the community's extra-racial diversity. This allows for the maintenance of the happy talk, while providing a space for race to be de-emphasized, which is coherent with color-blind ideologies. Shannon, a white female, had been talking about her comfort in the community and emphasized:

Yeah, and I think it's diverse in a lot of ways. Not just race. I mean the age thing makes a huge - the generational thing is huge, or your agenda in life, having family or not having a family. There's a lot of people who do have kids or don't and that's a huge experience for those people that have very different interests.

Expansive lists naming what diversity looks like in these neighborhoods were common among residents in this study, reminding me of racial diversity lists that eventually incorporate green and blue. This list-making serves a peculiar ideological function, as it accurately understands that diversity is not just about race, while at the same time listing so many elements that the racial component, which defines this community, is easily lost. Diversity itself becomes color-blind. This plays a key role in re-creating a white habitus in the community, as race is commonly not the buy-in for individual whites in diverse spaces. Emphasizing non-racial difference allows them to maintain a white core of privilege and identity in the community. While this is not unique to these spaces, as prior research has demonstrated that most whites do not see race as something critical to their identities and experiences (see Perry, 2001; Myers, 2005), in this community, diversity is personalized and often non-racial. This process maintains white habitus both discursively, as we see here, and in its individualized forms of action, as discussed in the next section.

Some residents recognized that lost meaning, playing with the term and its importance while at the same time accounting for the realities in these communities, as John, a white male, does here when criticizing his block club's mission statement:

You know, 'it's the mosaic of our diverse community' blah-blah-blah. We are a diverse community. There is a strong Balkan population there. We have a large gay community there. We have a large retired community. We've got homeowners versus condo owners versus high-rises, which present their own unique challenges. I don't think renters get a lot of attention. So you've got a lot of different kinds of diversity. And then you've got some other ethnic diversity in the community.

His use of the word 'mosaic' followed by 'blah-blah-blah' suggests that, for him, the idea of diversity has become cliché. He is critical of that co-optation. Yet at the same time, he also chooses to emphasize the non-racial elements of diversity. This is despite other points in our conversation where he was sharply critical of the community for its inattention to racial diversity.

While appreciative of the range of identities that diversity does indeed contain, this popular sentiment worked to diminish the significance of race contained in 'diversity' through the very process of celebrating it. While in Bell and Hartmann's (2007) study participants also generated expansive lists for what is contained within 'diversity', here there is a concrete buy-in to diverse communities among whites who also hold disproportionate power in shaping community action. It lacks what Twine and Steinbugler call racial literacy, which is defined as 'an everyday practice - an analytic stance that facilitates ongoing self-education and enables members ... to translate racial codes, decipher racial structures, and manage the racial climate in their local and national communities' (2006: 344). This is similar to Frankenburg's (1999) conception of race cognizance, which insists on the importance of understanding difference politically rather than through essentialist terms. Instead, as diversity is both celebrated in the abstract and expanded in its ingredients, it upholds a white habitus, which, following Bonilla-Silva and Embrick (2007), facilitates little inter-racial contact and does not provoke whites to see this as a problem. Margaret Anderson (1999) has famously called this 'diversity without oppression': there is no discussion of problems or inequalities in happy talk that might rock the boat, nor is there a challenge to whites in the community to consider the role of their own whiteness in shaping community dynamics. Unchallenged and firmly centered in the discourse within these communities, particularly for those active residents whose views and actions shape the community on a daily basis, privileges for whites and a secure white habitus remain intact.

## **Diversity as Individualized Choice and Consumption**

The next step in the racial project linking ideology to social action follows the happy and diffused discourse in ways that also sustain a white habitus. Primarily because diversity is seen (a) as something extra-racial, and (b) as a positive add-on to a white normative center, residents' concrete experiences around 'diversity' are individually focused and consumption-driven. Much like in the national study by Bell and Hartmann (2007), diversity is perceived as something extra rather than integrated into the core of a community, making diversity particularly appealing to whites who are looking to spice up or add flavor to an otherwise unchecked white normative life. Ironically, diversity may then have special appeal for whites.

This is vivid in that the primary way that most active residents talk about 'doing diversity' is through the individualized process of consumption. Given the prevalence of color-blind ideologies which specifically parse racial analyses from a consideration of racialized outcomes, it is perhaps not surprising that individual choice is the defining logic through which even diversity is refracted. One of the frames of color-blind racism in particular, abstract liberalism, rests its assumptions on the presence of already-achieved equal opportunity, leaving individual choice the prime explanatory factor for individual and collective outcomes. This freedom of choice easily translates into consumption, so much so that this becomes the key way that diversity is 'done' (West and Zimmerman, 1987) in the community.

This may be particularly disappointing given the hope invested in stably diverse communities. Michael Maly has called communities like these 'harbingers of the future of race relations in cities and the nation' (2006: 47). Camille Zubrinsky Charles notes: 'Far too little attention is paid to understanding the processes that produce and maintain the small but meaningful number of stably integrated neighborhoods' (2003: 200). All of the literature on stable racial integration suggests that intentional, community-driven processes are key to developing and sustaining diversity therein (Tax, 1959; Saltman, 1990; Nyden et al., 1998; Ellen, 2000; Maly, 2006). However, the outcomes from living and learning in diverse communities are far less clear. Integrated settings like schools and neighborhoods do not necessarily translate into diverse social networks like friendships or intimate relationships (Emerson et al., 2002). Indeed, work is more likely than home to be a place where interracial or other intergroup interaction takes place (Ellis and Wright, 2004). Whereas a small portion of Bell and Hartmann's (2007) study highlighted the overwhelming presence of consumption and choice as the primary concrete benefit of diversity among their participants, here that same result, detailed in the sections below, suggests that the community effort vital to sustain racial integration is lacking. It is consumed rather than engaged in relationships or community action.

Yet unlike the strategies employed in national surveys, where respondents may feel inclined to call up examples of diversity, I only asked residents how they have been able to engage diversity within the neighborhood if they brought up diversity as a central issue for them in the community. Indeed, most did. When I asked those residents what they appreciate about living in a diverse community or how they engage that idea of diversity, 'ethnic' restaurants, religious sites, and stores were the most common responses. In addition to coding for diversity I also coded for 'friendship', 'beach', 'restaurant', 'store', etc. This was also true in Bell and Hartmann's national study: 'Whether pegged to music, food, clothes, or some other aspect of consumption, an expanded range of choice is not only the most concrete but also the most common benefit of diversity our respondents had to offer' (2007: 900). This is significant in that the pull from the abstracted, idealized concept of diversity does not shape individual or community action in ways that the vested interest in these communities might hope. Residents in these communities are not engaging diversity in ways that radically alter the normative center of a white habitus, even given their location in a diverse community. As several scholars have noted, integration alone does not create community. Mouw and Entwisle, in their study of segregation and friendship networks in schools, claim that 'residential integration by itself will not make friendship segregation go away' (2006: 429). Similarly, as Twine and Steinbugler found in their study of intimate relationships, 'racial literacy is not an automatic consequence of being in a committed interracial relationship' (2006: 358). A white normative center is easy to uphold, especially when the activity connected to diversity is undertaken at the individual level. Without community and integrated networks, white habitus remains intact.

For example, Rick, a white male, answered my follow-up question about his appreciation for the diversity in the neighborhood as follows:

Rick: Well I get off on the fact that I can get a lot of different products here that are unique to the world. Or that, I guess they're not available elsewhere. Author: Uh huh. Such as?



Rick: Urn, soaps. I can go to Devon Avenue, I can do my grocery shopping and get fabulous produce. And nobody knows this but like the people that live around there. So if you prefer to go to Dominick's, I understand, and why you'd wanna go there to get Tony-O's pizzas. But you can't get those on Devon. So that's the choice that I have here.

Consuming goods like soaps and other products functioned as a proxy for more meaningful, sustaining action among the community and its residents. Erin, a white female, spoke about this as a feeling of connection that this diverse community provides through this consumption:

Erin: I just wanna feel connected to people like myself and also people unlike myself. You know, I'm drawn to this [at work], I'm drawn to - I've lived in [other parts of the world], working there. I like being surrounded by people [who] are different than me, and can share their culture with me. I think it makes for a richer community basically.

Author: Mm hmnr. And so what are some ways that you are able to do that in the neighborhood?

Erin: Well you know, there's restaurants that you can eat at. But it's even just like you're down at the park and here's a guy and he's from Ethiopia, and he's a refugee, and he's got his daughter, and you have a conversation, you know.

Responses like Erin's, which were common, share the literal meaning of consumption as something to take in or ingest, and in many cases something to benefit from rather than share in or give back to. The emphasis most often is on consumption as an achieved benefit rather than consumption as a process of community formation. Only 3 of the 41 residents I interviewed mentioned a significant interracial friendship or romantic relationship; two of these 4 were discussing each other. This even is true, as Todd's example below illustrates, for those who are otherwise most committed to diversity:

I get invited to dinner parties and I'm thinking, 'OK, knowing this person and what they do and all that.' I go there and it's *all* white people, and it's all a discussion about condos. That's the powers that be [in this community]. That's the people that are going to meetings that are involved in politics, whether trying to unseat an elected official or [working as] an ally of.... There's few places in this neighborhood that you really find a true diverse mixing of people in an everyday way.

Diversity as an achieved benefit rather than community formation may enhance the individual lives of those who consume it as such, but it does not alter the additive model, which keeps individual achievement and normative whiteness at the center of a white habitus.

This is true even when there is an emphasis on communing through food, especially when it is discussed in abstracted, future terms, as was the case with Carla, a white female:

Author: And you've talked a couple times sort of in passing about the diversity being an appeal. Can you talk a little bit more about what that meant for you and how you can kind of connect to that?

Carla: Food. *[Laughs.]* Food and music I think are the big.... Food and music and languages. I just think that those things can bring us - they can separate us, but they can bring us together, too.... And I just thought the kids need to be exposed to that. They need - food has always been important to us, too, and diversity of food, of quote, unquote, 'ethnic' food, I mean, if you can call it, but it's not ethnic to them. I mean, you know what I mean?... I think if we could just all eat together and have a party, you know, I mean, we might really appreciate each other and understand a little bit more about the cultural advances and that kind of thing.

Consumption is perhaps the only available means for engaging diversity in these communities, given their segregated community structures.

It is here that we see another window into what Bonilla-Silva and Embrick have called the 'apparent "paradox" between whites' commitment to the principle of interracialism and their mostly white pattern of association' (2007: 327). As Hughey notes in his study of nonwhites in white sororities and fraternities, 'when studying instances of racial "integration" we must not only examine access to resources.... [but also] how robust

white supremacist schema constrain and enable the interpretation of that access and those resources' (2010: 674). In short, Hughey argues, we must not treat integration as 'the successful end, [but rather] a problematic beginning of analysis' (2010: 653). Twine and Steinbugler note a similar problematic, in that 'intimate relationships with Blacks neither guarantees nor are sufficient to catapult one across the chasm of... color-blindness' (2006: 344). As these studies, and mine, reveal, the mere numerical presence of an integrated population does not guarantee that those within are not living lives structured along racial lines.

Further, the reality is that these restaurants, stores, and to a lesser extent religious sites are vital elements of these neighborhoods' stable diversity given their role in supporting their constituents. They are thus locations frequented by a diverse group of residents in the neighborhood. But as Moody reminds us, 'simple exposure does not promote integration' (2001: 707). What is sociologically significant about this practice is how residents see eating at these restaurants or buying these soaps *as* 'doing diversity'. Consuming is the most tangible act of encountering diversity in these communities. This is perhaps only enhanced by community efforts geared toward development, beautification, and crime-fighting in these communities, all of which support this market rather than focus on affordable housing or school improvement that would enhance the diverse community for all.

This trend also was manifest in residents' talk about spaces that were decoupled from economic exchange, but still tied to a sense of consuming, of taking in, and of scene-setting. Much like Erin above, many participants spoke about the general feeling of goodness that came from seeing something other than white faces on the sidewalk, white bodies on the beach, or white folks in the parks. Walter, a white male, tied this to urban, cosmopolitan life in general:

So that's a lot of the fun of the city is you can get all the diversity, you can walk, you got the park. Take a ride and down the park and you see all kinds of different people, meet different people. So I think that's the fun of living in the city.

It is easy here to imagine scenes in a film, landscapes flashing past a car window; in either case the emphasis is not on interaction but on scenery. It is passive and centered on, and to the benefit of, the individual. As Wellman (1997) notes, 'tolerance is not simply an attribute middle-class people learn; it is also a luxury they can afford ... because the questions are so posed that the issues raised have no direct meaning for these people' (1997: 51). Given this conceptual and emotional distance, it was rare to hear this scenery work its way into personal interactions.

That personal interaction, even when limited, was still abstracted, as Eric's case illustrates. Eric, a white male, had been talking about how he is able to build a diverse set of relationships in the community, and said:

I think in the community itself, too, we've met just a very diverse, broad group of people. Um, and like I said, it's a big walking outside community, so you meet, you know, people on the beach, and some people you see in October and then you don't see them on the beach again until you know, May or whatever. And they could have dogs or they could have kids, or they could have neither, but you just see them and say hi, what have you been up to. And sometimes you don't even know their name, either. That's kinda of the cool thing about it. But you know them. And you care about what they've been up to.

Eric does describe interactions that he codes as diverse, but they are still quite generalized, and to an extent superficial, as evident by his emphasis on faces, the seasonal aspect of the interactions, and not knowing people's names. He does care about the people he meets in this context, but his response still falls into the category of consumption rather than community-building, given its surface-level content. Bonilla-Silva and Embrick have noted that 'whites' extreme racial isolation from blacks does not provide a fertile soil upon which primary interracial associations can flourish regardless of blacks' level of assimilation' (2007: 341). This site of a racially integrated community steered by liberal, pro-diversity whites makes that isolation particularly vivid.

However, this consumption was not only limited to white residents, a fact which demonstrates the prevalence of a white habitus that can even be occupied by nonwhite actors. Anthony, a black male, described similar experiences:

It just makes it interesting to live around and see the Sudanese from Africa. On Sundays, along the lakefront, to see the Russian seniors walking along like it's the promenade. They dress nicely and they just stroll. And you can just tell they did this in their country, too. And it's just like living in a different country. I think it's beneficial for all to see that.

I think it broadens your mind and your horizons and it makes you want to - it makes me want to see more and experience more and get to know people. And I think sometimes when you see, when people are at ease, sometimes you'll see the Russian seniors watching the black guys play basketball on the lakefront, because they're just sitting there watching the guys. You know, they're just learning from, just that type of interaction brings people together. And it's not one big love test. But people can coexist together, just as long as there's mutual respect and standards. Respect for other people and their space.

It is interesting that the lakefront is the common site mentioned for the experience of diversity in these communities, given its centrality for real estate, as explored below. Further, it is important to note that all residents who spoke this way expressed a desire to see this site serve as a potential space for community. However, that site remains untested in most interactions. It seems that even in diverse communities, residents do not have the tools or community strategies to support and sustain such efforts. Instead, they are doing diversity alone.

Diverse communities are not immune to the national forces that emphasize individualism and consumption as a primary means of identity and community (Putnam 2000). Indeed, those same elements are at the core of a comfortable white habitus, even in a diverse community. Further, they may be working against the hopeful, abstracted intentions of residents in these communities by restructuring emotional segregation, 'an institutionalized process whereby [whites] are unable to see people of color as emotional equals or as capable of sharing the same human emotions and experiences' (Beeman 2007: 687). After all, individualism and consumption are at the core of market forces that are a continual threat to diverse communities. What else is gentrification if not the importing of a white habitus into a formerly diverse or nonwhite space? If residents are not taking a more active stand in fighting to sustain the racial diversity of these communities through anti-gentrification and maintenance efforts, they will likely lose the diversity that they are so happy to consume and claim.

### **Realty and Reality: Diversity Discourse's Fault Lines**

As I explored above, the national diversity discourse was actively claimed among residents as both a compelling feature and source of personal enjoyment via consumption in these communities. However, further discussion about both neighborhood and personal resources quickly eroded this positive discourse, which provides the final step in the cementing of a white habitus in a diverse environment. While the above sections explored the happy talk surrounding diversity generally, and the consumption-based practices that support it for individuals in daily life, this section will examine the ways in which diversity makes or breaks community action. This happens at both the real estate level, which seeks to appreciate the role of diversity as a deciding factor for moving into or out of a community, and at the collective action level, where the associated 'problems' connected to racial diversity in these communities are addressed. Both provide places where the happy discourse breaks but the color-blind ideologies continue to take hold. The result is a racial project of reshaping of the community, as well as the collective social action, that firmly entrenches a white habitus and privileges for whites.

#### **Realty**

I asked all residents I interviewed what caused them to move into the community. While diversity almost always made the list of favorable features in the neighborhood upon entry, residents would often eventually distill their choice-making process into its essential components: the trinity of affordable housing (be it renting or owning), proximity to the lake, and proximity to transit. That is, while residents actively participate in diversity's 'happy talk', it's rarely what brought or keeps them in these communities. When I asked Erin, a white female, what she most appreciated about her community, she answered, 'Um, I like the proximity to the lake. I like that it's a diverse community and an old community, you know, it's old buildings. Those are probably my top three.' Anthony, a black male who had lived in two of the communities I studied, gave me his list when I had only asked where he had lived: 'I moved to [the first community], and I liked [it]. Diversity, by the lake, good public transportation.... The same things I like about [that community], diversity, lakefront, transportation, I like about [this community].' Notably, despite the excerpts above, for a majority of participants, diversity was absent from real estate decisions entirely.

When I asked Rick, a white male, how he made the choice to buy his condo in his community rather than

elsewhere in the city, he answered:

Well, I was - again, with price. I mean, it's a wise move because there is an upside here that you don't see in a lot of communities. I could get a place that was reasonably priced, yet near the lake, with high in and out for still a good price. So that's why I stayed.

Residents spoke with a sense that these communities are hidden gems for buying or renting a home, and they appreciate the combination of amenities and affordability. Indeed, these communities do provide some of the best rents and housing for sale in the city, and the proximity to Lake Michigan, its parks, and transit is indeed better than most other parts of the city. Those for whom diversity isn't of driving importance on the real estate front were not necessarily adverse to diversity. Rather, for all diversity's happy talk, it is not often a central feature of the neighborhood for even its most active residents. Their emphasis is on the neighborhood's material amenities. The communities, like most others, are shaped primarily by market forces.

At other times talk about amenities was a direct departure from the happy discourse of diversity talk, which only underlines the discursive front on which so much of the community dynamics take place. Todd, a white male, acknowledged the idealism of diversity as happy circumstance rather than a driving feature in his choice to move or stay in the community:

I immediately knew I was staying here, and here I'll waive the cliché flag, (a) because of its diversity, and (b) because of the lake. And on any given day I could say that the lake is by far the reason I've stayed over *just* about anything. Because the people have changed and moved, and you know, you learn a little bit more about a place and its dynamics, but the lake is truly one thing that has drawn me here.

The acknowledgement of diversity as cliché from Todd is revealing. He knows that many residents name diversity as a defining feature of the neighborhood and something to speak positively about. And indeed he values it as well, as one of the two main reasons that he loves the neighborhood. But having said that, he admits that the lake is the thing that's really kept him there. The gap opened by this discourse allows more typical market forces, which do not deliberately sustain diversity in collective social or political action, to hold more sway than community action.

There was other talk about choices to move to or remain in the neighborhood that illuminate these fault lines. Adam, a white male, was discussing his choice to move to his community and said:

But that was really more the yard than anything else, I mean, to be honest with you. It was trying to satisfy our needs of how do we stay in the city, have a house with a yard that we can afford, and still, as a gay couple, feel like we're not the odd couple out. And again, this neighborhood fit all of those qualifications for us.

While for this couple being in a diverse neighborhood that was not adverse to gay homeownership was significant, the yard was still a central element to this purchase, as his 'honest' talk reveals. Others leveled the conversation with the word 'honest' as well. Wendy, a white female, answered my question about how she decided to move from a nearby community to her neighborhood as follows: 'Well, it was because I wanted to buy a condo. An honestly, the initial part of that was really because it was more affordable than [it was there].'

There is also a considerable amount of ambivalence connected to what residents see as downsides of the community. These may be the sites where the white habitus is most actively maintained. As Shannon, a white female, said:

I guess I don't know that I see myself living in [this community] for the rest of my life. Definitely I didn't see this as 'OK you're going to move [there] and stay in [there].' I never did. I think I see myself as the kind of person that would probably get married and have kids and want them to go to a certain school. And I'm not sure that I think all the schools are that great. I don't know.

Concern over the public schools is widespread among residents in all three neighborhoods I studied, and indeed almost all of the residents I spoke with chose to send their children to parochial schools rather than the public schools, making the schools a central factor in their choice to remain in the neighborhood. In the end, housing choices do not significantly center around diversity, but rather more traditional real-estate calculations. Further, the perceived risks of living in a diverse community were a continual part of this calculation. It also drove the

community action that protected and upheld white habitus, as I detail below.

## Reality

Analyzing the link between discourse and social action as a specifically racial project that upholds white habitus allows us to examine the contours and gaps in discourse. Diversity made the discursive cut when residents were speaking broadly about neighborhood values and how they appreciate their community. As individual actors, they will happily incorporate it into their identities and consumptive choices. But diversity also was linked to the things that they found challenging about the community, including in extreme cases what might prompt them to leave. The ambivalence they expressed was most vivid when their ideals about diversity met with some realities within the neighborhood.

The complexity and ambivalence they bring here disrupts the diversity happy talk in some ways, but also echoes the uncertainty that many residents face when diversity moves from an abstract ideal down into one's lived experiences. It is here that the uncertainties with which most Americans view the role of race and racism in shaping social outcomes is revealed. The color-blind ideologies loom large, and some are more willing than others to discuss race in this context. As Bell and Hartmann note: 'Respondents typically define diversity in broad and inclusive terms, but when asked to describe personal experiences with difference, their responses are almost exclusively tied to race.... Therefore, although 'diversity' may sound race-neutral ... the discourse of diversity is deeply racialized' (2007: 905).

Walter, a white male, had been talking about community efforts to fight crime and said:

Well, I think people that live in the area, in general, I think there's a lot of the people that enjoy the diversity of [this community], and celebrate that. But there's other people that moved here and still have racial fears and fear of the ... somebody different. And that's always gonna be around. The only way the best way is if you can have a diverse society, you find that well, 'he looks different, but jeez, he's not any different. He's not so frightening'. And, uh, so that helps.

But I'd say in general, there's more people here that are ... I think enjoy the diversity than a lotta other places.... But it's a growing experience. It will take years and years more. We're getting better. I think it's a lot better than what we had, but we're not home free yet.

Residents like Walter are acknowledging that crime, or more often perceptions thereof, are also an element of these neighborhoods' identities. His response struggles to construct a narrative around diversity that is simultaneously positive and realistic. But this desire is not often reconcilable with some of the social realities residents encounter, which they understand in deeply racialized ways. As Frankenburg has shown in her study of those who make an effort not to see racial difference, 'a number of strategies for talking about race and culture emerged, effectively dividing the discursive terrain into areas of "safe" and "dangerous" differences, "pleasant" and "nasty" differences, and generating modes of talking about difference that evaded questions of power' (1999: 149). These responses were common when residents discussed the challenges in the community. Erin, a white female, said:

[This] is known to be a community where there's a lot of crime, a lot of violence, a lot of gang activity. This summer I was walking back from the beach and I stepped in a syringe in the middle of the street. You know, it's like - it's not a perfect community. There's a lot of people with severe persistent mental illness who live up here, and there are social services agencies.

I don't mean it's not perfect, I mean I think there's complications you - not only you benefit from the diversity that's here, you know, there's also challenges I think associated. Um, there are certain parts of [this neighborhood] where I just wouldn't walk by myself at night. And certainly wouldn't feel comfortable when my child's older having him walk around.

There were some residents who resisted this ambivalence, and told me about times when they worked to disrupt the discourse of racialized fear in conversations with others, while still extolling the positives of living in a diverse community. Todd had been talking about the challenges in attracting businesses to [the community], and said, 'I've met plenty of people who, over the years, "Oh, you live [there], isn't that dangerous? A lot of black people.'" (pause) You know.' While Todd went on to explain his challenge to such coded language and its

racialized assumptions, his account reveals these neighborhoods, and in tandem the discourses surrounding them, as sites of negotiation and challenges, not a uniform positivity.

Oftentimes residents were able, even in color-blind terms, to speak about how they have negotiated their relationship to the community in light of this 'downside' of diversity. Hank, a white male, explained his decision to move into his community as follows:

I looked at [this community] ... with one eye closed because of the remembrances of all the homeless walking the streets and people sleeping on the curbs and things like that, and knowing the history of that. That's the thing that got me, if I can keep the gang bangers, drug guys away from my community, that's all I can offer. And then hopefully the next group down pushes them further someplace else, but you'll never get rid of them, you know. I'm not condoning it, it's just, what are you gonna do?

Some residents are very clear about the value that they place on diversity relative to other social issues in the community. This created a very real tension for residents who struggled to reconcile these values, as Franklin, a white male, laments:

You know, it's just gosh, it would be so much easier if we just went out to the suburbs. And her brother lives in [a northern suburb], and they've got a nice park district system, and they've got a nice pool that they can go to, and they've got a huge back yard, you know, where the city lots you don't have much outdoor space. So it's constantly in the back of our minds, you know, if we're doing the right thing, if we made the right decisions, if life could be easier.

Amidst that, there is the hope that their investment in their community and in their property will pay off. Lucy, a Latina, said:

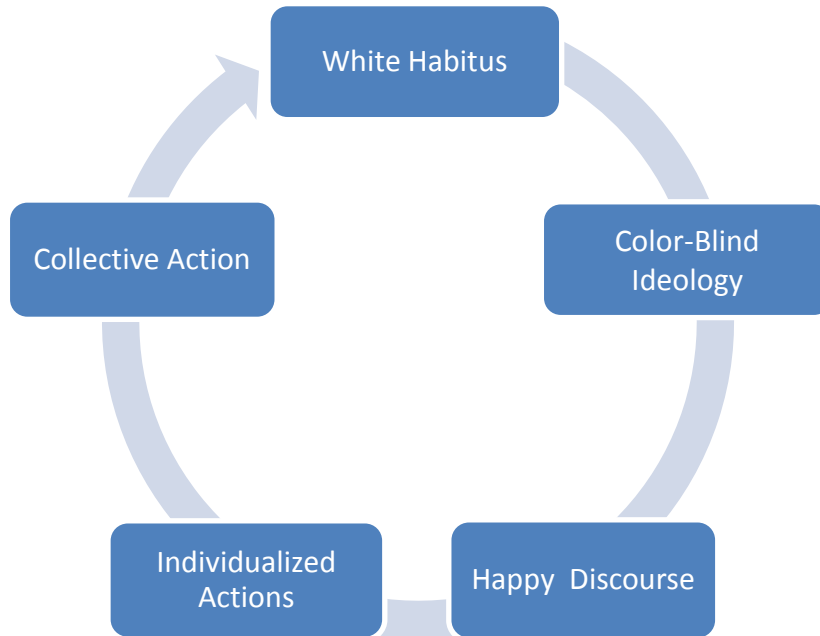
Gentrification was just starting. And, you know, uh, it was perfectly all right with me. Yes, I know what's happening in the neighborhood, and that's why I want to live here. Uh, I want to live with gentrification. I want to live with the yuppies. And yes, the neighborhood is going gay. Hallelujah!

The level of commitment that was given to sustaining racial diversity amidst other social forces is perhaps best illustrated by the forms of community action, which were by and large not devoted to justice or sustaining diversity. Most efforts were geared toward fighting crime, getting to know one's neighbors (oftentimes to help subvert crime), contesting development decisions, and beautification efforts. While all such efforts are important in any community, and here undertaken by residents who most often do place at least an abstracted value on their communities as diverse spaces, the social action continues to recreate a comfortable white habitus rather than a community that has the economic and social benchmarks, such as quality public schools or housing safety nets, to make for diverse governance and empowerment.

### **Fault Lines: Racial Ambivalence**

The strategy in this research has been to analyze the links between color-blind ideologies and community action using the racial formations theory. I claim that a coherent racial project takes place in the linking of these ideologies with individualized and collective action in these neighborhoods. Because the dominant ideology does not allow for a coherent and utilitarian approach to analyzing and acting around the significance of race in these communities, community members are left to act on the only means available to them - individualized, consumption-driven actions and those that keep the community safe and intact for the interests of whites and homeowners.

**Figure I. Reproduction of white habitus**



Where Hartmann and Bell (2007) have shown the gap between discourse and action in their analysis of happy talk, given their national sampling methods there is no way to link this to individual or community action, especially as it takes place in concrete local environments. Here I have done just that. Further, where Bonilla-Silva and others have shown the influence of color-blind ideologies on racial attitudes and responses to national policies and hypothetical scenarios, here we see the ways individuals immersed in a concrete local setting are influenced by these ideologies. Far from the backstage overt racism and discrimination that Picca and Feagin (2007) identify, here well-meaning residents who are already committed to their communities through their social action and community organizations grapple for meaning and attempt, but ultimately fail, to connect those ideologies with meaningful social action.

These are people who do like the diversity in their community, wish there was a wider representation among the leaders in the community, hope that their communities are wise investments and viable places to live, and yet cannot or do not connect that desire to collective social action that would counter the market forces that could unravel them. Just on the contrary, consumption and the marketplace remain the easiest and most comfortable ways to both do diversity, as evidenced in their individualized actions, and enhance and promote the community, as evidenced by the range of collective action taken.

This racial project, these links in the chain between ideology and discourse, and individualized and collective action, work together to produce and reproduce white habitus. That racial project is articulated in Figure 1. White habitus itself is the engine of color-blind ideologies, as the ideology of color-blindness explicitly legitimates and leaves intact the racial order that it purports to explain. Those color-blind ideologies then inform the discourse, which is explicitly coherent to a race-positive and yet empty set of principles. Because that discourse itself is contingent on a white normative center, individualized actions will seek to add to rather than alter that white center by consuming diversity instead of engaging it in community or democracy. Further, collective action, the end result of either discrete individual market choices (including the real estate market) or as a collective enterprise, will seek to protect this white center in its sensibilities, safety, and security (economic and otherwise). As such, it then reproduces this white habitus, even in a racially diverse environment. As a racial project, it then lays the land for the racial formations process (Omi and Winant, 1994) to continue. Whereas with Bonilla-Silva (2003) we have 'racism without racists', and in Anderson (1999) 'diversity without

oppression', here we have white habitus in a racially diverse community.

## Conclusion

This article takes a step further than prior research has by articulating the process whereby ideology is refracted through discourse, individualized actions, and collective action to reproduce social environments (such as a white habitus). It outlines the architecture of ambivalence and contradictions around diversity as experienced by individuals in a concrete environment. In order to change this reality we need a new racial project, one that is driven by racial consciousness rather than color-blindness. A focus on a racial and social democracy will integrate a white habitus and instead provide the basis for fostering diverse communities that benefit all, rather than just whites and/or homeowners.

Working to fight gentrification, enhancing public schools so that they are attractive to all parents in a neighborhood, and overtly committing to the maintenance of a diverse community are concrete steps that have been identified as key elements for maintaining communities like these (Ellen, 2000; Nyden et al., 1998; Maly, 2006). While seemingly basic, pitching for both the existence of, and positive features within, diverse communities plays a vital role in calming either overtly racial or 'race-based neighborhood' (Ellen, 2000) fears about the communities and their stability. Direct marketing, positive national media attention, political stumping, and affirmative marketing programs not only help to underline the legitimacy and success of such communities, but may also play a role in attracting stable businesses and jobs to the area, which in turn elevates the real estate value and legitimacy of such communities.

Ellen suggests that modest governmental intervention, including at the federal level, is justified in these communities (Ellen, 2000). She argues that such intervention has both an economic and a moral legitimacy that most Americans could accept. Primarily she suggests the kinds of information campaigns detailed above, but also tax-based incentives to move into these communities, as long as such incentives are racially neutral and equitably available. She further suggests incentive programs for blacks to move into white neighborhoods as well as for whites to move into integrated neighborhoods, as such an effort would decrease the number of segregated communities nationally. While the particulars of such programs are likely debatable, the combination of affirmative marketing at the national level coupled with federal incentive programs is widely thought to nurture and uplift integrated communities. Again, this is all the more likely to be successful when paired with a frank discussion about racial inequality, both its roots and its modern manifestations, at the national level.

At the local level, it has been widely recognized that an intentional commitment to the continued diversity in these communities is vital to local efforts, regardless of whether the communities emerged as diverse by direction or diverse by circumstance. Maly notes that the absence of indicators of rapid re-segregation 'does not mean that diverse-by-circumstance communities' local efforts are not necessary to maintain the integration ... conscious efforts ... are required if integration is to be maintained over the long haul' (2006: 47)

This insistence on the primacy of planning has long been the case for integrated communities and their efforts. Sol Tax, in documenting the efforts of Hyde Park to become integrated rather than re-segregated in the 1950s, noted: 'nothing at all could have been done if racial integration had not been an explicit and integral part of the plan.... nothing would have happened without deliberate social action' (1959: 22). Juliet Saltman has said, 'Eternal vigilance is necessary to counteract the massive institutional forces that hasten neighborhood instability and re-segregation' (1990: 547). Finally, Nyden et al. have noted that even in communities like these, 'community-based initiatives also influence the diversity and stability of neighborhoods' (1998: 12). This is primarily created through coalitions, as the diverse pool of community groups work together toward common goals, which collectively sustain the diversity in these communities.

Concrete efforts such as working to support and elevate local public schools would have a great impact on children from all racial and ethnic groups and all socio-economic classes. Actively engaging antidiscrimination laws are also a significant piece of the ongoing project of sustaining diverse communities. A Lakeside Community Development Corporation report published in 2006 highlighted the reality that both discrimination and free market principles were working together to undermine the diversity in this community, primarily through a loss of rental housing (LCDC, 2006).

Business support is also critical for diverse communities to remain stable. This seems to function itself as something of a marketing strategy. Block grants for minority-owned and local businesses can help secure their stability as well as provide a context for jobs to grow and remain in these communities, which keep both tax dollars



for schools and other shared public amenities and a diverse pool of residents alive in the community.

Finally, disseminating positive media and marketing around diverse communities and responding responsibly to negative stories, blogs, and perceptions of these communities is vital. Those who are already living and working in diverse communities can play a crucial role in paving the way for others - when it is no longer so odd to make one's home and forge one's community in places like these, other communities are sure to follow. While the presence of color-blind ideologies and limited diversity discourses do not indicate that these communities are by any means perfect, the presence of an engaged, active, caring community who talks about and respects its racial diversity provides, if not a perfect model for our nation's future, then at least a humble, fragile, but promising beginning.

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### Note

<sup>1</sup> I use quotes because I borrow directly on this useful term created by Joyce Bell and Douglas Hartmann (2007).

### Appendix A

#### *Community Characteristics*

**Table 1.** Uptown racial demographics 1980–2000

Percent of Total	White	Black	Latino	Asian
1980	47	15	24	11
1990	39	24	23	14
2000	42	21	20	13

**Table 2.** Uptown socio-economic data 1990-2000

Year	Median Income	Percent Rental Housing
1990	\$26,328	85.6%
2000	\$32,368	77.4%

**Table 3.** Edgewater racial demographics 1980-2000

Percent of Total	White	Black	Latino	Asian
1980	63	11	13	10
1990	51	19	17	12
2000	48	17	20	12

**Table 4.** Edgewater socio-economic data 1990-2000

Year	Median Income	Percent Rental Housing
1990	\$33,010	71.6%
2000	\$35,987	68.2%

**Table 5.** Rogers Park racial demographics 1980-2000

Percent of Total	White	Black	Latino	Asian
1980	70	9	12	7
1990	45	25	20	8
2000	32	30	28	6

**Table 6.** Rogers Park socio-economic data 1990-2000

Year	Median Income	Percent Rental Housing
1990	\$31,646	82.9%
2000	\$31,767	81.4%

## Appendix B

### *Participant Characteristics*

**Table 7.** Participants' race

	Whites	Nonwhites
Rogers Park	10	2
Edgewater	11	6
Uptown	9	3
Total	30	11

**Table 8.** Participants' gender

	Men	Women
Rogers Park	5	7
Edgewater	11	6
Uptown	7	5
Total	23	18

**Table 9.** Participants' gender

	20s-30s	40s-60s	70+
Rogers Park	3	8	1
Edgewater	0	15	2
Uptown	2	8	2
Total	5	31	5

**Table 10.** Participants' homeowner status

	Own Property	Rent
Rogers Park	8	4
Edgewater	14	3
Uptown	8	4
Total	30	11

**Table 11.** Participants' tenure in the community

1-10 years	11-20 years	21-30 years	30+ years
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Rogers Park	6	3	2	1
Edgewater	6	5	4	2
Uptown	6	3	1	2
Total	18	11	7	5

**Table 12.** Participants' political views

	Libertarian	Conservative	Moderate	Liberal	Progressive
Rogers Park	0	0	1	7	4
Edgewater	0	0	5	11	1
Uptown	1	0	5	6	0
Total	1	0	11	24	5

**Table 13.** Participants' sexual identities

	Gay or Lesbian	Heterosexual
Rogers Park	1	11
Edgewater	7	10
Uptown	2	10
Total	10	31

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