The Role of Agency and Place-Making in Urban Redevelopment
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In "Urban Redevelopment, Past and Present," Kevin Gotham argues that a critical political-economy approach to urban redevelopment emphasizes five things. This list includes: the importance of class and racial domination, the powerful role of real estate actors in redeveloping cities, the role of growth-assisted government actors in city development, the importance of place-making, and the importance of the global context of urban development (Gotham, 2001, 3). Using salient literature in the field of urban redevelopment, this list can be narrowed down even further to three main ideas: the lens used to view class and racial domination, the role of public-private partnerships, and the importance of place-making and branding. These ideas must be contextualized in the scope of neoliberal urban development to explain the historical processes that led to uneven development and that facilitate gentrification and displacement in the present.

Neoliberal Urban Redevelopment and the 'Right to the City'

The 'Right to the City' and Urban Renewal

David Harvey, one of the most notable proponents of the "right to the city" movement, argued that the most important issue in the creation of cities is capital accumulation (Gotham, 2001, 2). This idea is rooted in the importance of property and land in overall wealth, which explains much of the wealth gap between races. Urban renewal has served as a case study of the death of the city. Gotham sees urban renewal as being centered around "slum shifting" as a result of two faulty assumptions. The first is the assumption that private capital would come into renewed areas once officials cleared out demolished buildings and the other was the assumption that residents in affected areas would support large-scale clearance of their low-income neighborhoods (Gotham, 2001, 11). Furthermore, he sees the redevelopment of public housing as

an opportunity to increase the exchange-value through the process of privatization while diminishing the use-value for the low-income residents through an attempt to recommodify public housing space (Gotham, 2001, 21). This idea can be extended further to other public spaces in the city that increased in exchange-value through redevelopment but through this process have restricted access to low-income and minority groups. Christopher Mele echoes this sentiment, "for neoliberal urbanism, the public right to the city is not extended to privately managed (yet publicly subsidized) spaces of development" (Mele, 2013, 611). Thus, not only does the legacy of urban renewal stay salient, the forces that shaped the process of renewal did so through privatization.

Public Private Partnerships and Capital

Gotham argues that "a corporatist partnership between an elite business community and the Democratic political machine formulated and carried out urban renewal" (Gotham, 2001, 18). Mele further explained the story of CEDA (Chester Economic Development Authority) as a manifestation of the shift in administrative and fiscal power from local governments to a "quasi autonomous organization," commonly manifesting in the form of a public-private partnership (Mele, 2013, 605). CEDA acted in the way many BIDs (Business Improvement Districts) do and prioritized economic interests. Consumption becomes the main basis for regulating behavior and the determining factor for inclusion and exclusion in the redeveloped city. Therefore, acceptable behaviors are determined by consumption, which agrees with David Harvey's analysis of capital accumulation in cities. Fainstein draws from these ideas by defining a fourth period to post-1949 urban development, creating the "privatized" period from 1982 to 2008. This period is seen as a response to the problem of abandonment in the conserving period (1975-1981), as cities

responded by attempting to attract private investment (Fainstein, 2011, 155). Contrary to Mele and Gotham, she argues that it is no longer about where the capital is invested, but what type of capital (Fainstein, 2011, 158). The main purpose of programs is to attract private money by using public subsidies, which "insulate large-scale development from democratic input" (Fainstein, 2011, 165). This idea is similar to that of Gotham, who argued that the role of the state in urban planning was to use space for social control (Gotham, 2001, 22). The privatization and shifting focus on capital as the driving force behind a city has framed the use of space through consumption, which favors the wealthy and dictates the use of the city around affluent, privileged users.

Agency and Community Involvement in Redevelopment

As the literature highlights the focus on the state in social control and facilitating privatization, the "right to the city" can be defined by the power of citizens to take back agency from the state (Beebeejaun, 2017, 325). Beebeejaun echoes the work of Lefebvre in the disconnect between urban residents and their ability to participate in the production of space. Beebeejaun takes this work a step further, and defines the "right to everyday life" as "the site of authentic experience, of self, of the body and of engagement with others" (Beebeejaun, 2017, 326). She advocated for the importance of looking at everyday life to inform planning decisions. As a feminist geographer, she was concered with the active inhabitation of space, and how women's rights become restricted in public and private space. "Women challenging the norms of public space are powerful reminders of how the choreography of the city can restrict freedom of movement within cities" (Beebeejaun, 2017, 330). Her analysis of agency within the city differs from other literature because she is looking at uneven distribution and uses of space by gender,

but lacks nuance in terms of use of space by many other marginalized groups of people. Just looking at the use of public space by race-- the presence of private security or police can change how black residents use space. The absence of factors such as capital, race, and class show holes in her work, however, the lens she uses to view action within space is valuable.

In contrast, Gotham recounts the long history of money given by the federal government to local government. This money has historically been used for services in affluent areas instead of reinvestment in poor areas. "Use of tax subsidies and other redevelopment tools to attract capital had weakened democratic processes and safeguards, strengthened the power of private capital in private and public life, and "depoliticized" local decision making and policy implementation" (Gotham, 2001, 15). Beebeejaun's call to take power back from the state echoes Gotham's sentiment. Public private partnerships served as ways to transfer responsibility from the government to business institutions, and through doing that, prioritized goals with economic interests over welfare. Beebeejaun aims to refocus on everyday life, and Gotham seeks to unravel the implications of diminishing democratic agency. One of the most effective ways that private institutions redeveloped cities by diminishing citizens' agency was through place-making and branding.

Place-Making and Branding

A discussion of place-making and branding must begin with why those forces are so important. Beebeejaun argues that struggles over space can reveal power dynamics within the ordering of space, as well as exclusions from the process of place-making. In her case, she explained that identities, specifically gender, are reconstructed at different scales (Beebeejaun, 2017, 323). The same can be said for racial identities. "Honoring and recognizing the different

groups that constitute urban space are important in retelling the city through multiple narratives and reaffirming rights" (Beebeejaun, 2017, 330). The right to everyday life and the right to city is affirmed through symbols, culture, and the things that inhabit and characterize space. Through neoliberal policy and the process of privatization, these forces are changed in order to attract capital. Gotham argues that cities now use a created culture to enhance their economic competitiveness (Gotham, 2001, 22). "Production of images and discourses is an important facet of activity that has to be analyzed as part and parcel of the reproduction and transformation of any social order." (Gotham, 2001, 19).

Expanding on this idea, Mele explains that developers use popular conceptions of ethnicity to reinvent neighborhoods. In many case studies presented in the literature, developers use diversity as a selling point. Mele counters this idea, "diversity reflects an innocuous, sanitized version of ethnic and racial differences, scrubbed clean of their potential anti-development, political, or social content" (Mele, 2013, 599). He argues that diversity is presented in this way because of color-blind ideology that strips race of its relationship to social conditions of domination and subordination (Mele, 2013, 602). This aligns with the neoliberal tendency to relate problems to the private rather than the social sphere, which gives legitimacy to neoliberal urban planning. An example of this, CEDA worked hard on the production of an appealing place identity, but walked the tightrope between "playing down issues of race and highlighting the advantages of diversity" (Mele, 2013, 609). Many neighborhoods in Washington, DC boast the historical connections to the "chocolate city," and use black history as a way to promote business that are not only benefitting a mostly white, affluent private sector, but also actively displacing black and low-income residents.

"Physical development aimed at improving the quality of a place without assisting the people who originally occupied it constitutes a form of thick injustice" (Fainstein, 2011, 170). Here, Fainstein is arguing that the first step is changing the discourse around redevelopment so justice becomes a salient milestone. Although this is a good first step, Mele's argument against color-blind ideology compels a more direct change in the discourse surrounding redevelopment. The absence of racism in the literature surrounding redevelopment incentives is clear. These scholars argue that government and private forces are gentrifying and displacing folks because of a quest for capital or because of a gendered view of the use of space. These answers miss the racist policies and outlooks that pushed black residents into the slums, bulldozed their homes, and now capitalize on their culture. These explanations represent a good start and a convenient answer to the forces which facilitate redevelopment, but could benefit from more diverse perspectives.

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