INVISIBLE HOUSING:

SOCIAL MOVEMENT RESPONSES TO THE STUDENTIFICATION AND

DISPLACEMENT OF URBAN MANUFACTURED HOUSING COMMUNITIES

by

GRAHAM PICKREN

(Under the Direction of Nik Heynen)

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the changing spatial contours of gentrification within the context of an American college-town by examining the Garden Springs manufactured housing community that was redeveloped into a luxury student apartment complex in Athens Clarke-County, Georgia in June of 2001, displacing the 500 residents who lived there. The socio-spatial processes that drive this 'studentification' are examined and critically analyzed, and it is suggested that 'studentification' in Athens is fundamentally an example of class conflict. The collective efforts of those residents displaced by studentification are discussed in order to gain a better understanding of the intersections between geography and social movements, and how a grassroots movement is combating the injustice of gentrification in their local community.

INDEX WORDS: Gentrification, Studentification, Social Movements, Manufactured Housing, Land Use Planning, Community Land Trusts.

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GRAHAM PICKREN

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Major Professor:	Nik Heynen
Committee:	Steve Holloway
	Hilda Kurtz

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Summary of the Research Problem

In June of 2001, residents of the Garden Springs manufactured housing community (MHC) in Athens-Clarke County (ACC) were notified that the land their homes sat on had been sold for redevelopment and that the roughly 500 residents would be evicted (Gallentine and Stroer, Athens Banner Herald 07/04/01). MHC's, commonly known as mobile home parks or trailer parks[1], represent a significant portion of the affordable housing stock in the state of Georgia[2], and there are over sixty parks in ACC (Stroer, Athens Banner-Herald 07/07/01). Manufactured housing, on individual lots and in parks, accounted for 21% of new home sales in Georgia in 1997 (UGA Housing and Demographics Research Center, Report on Workforce Housing 2001) and comprised one-fifth of the 1999 single-family housing starts nationally (Beamish et al 2001). While many in Garden Springs owned their homes, they rented the land from Garden Springs LLC, a private landowner who lived in Vermont. The land was sold by Garden Springs LLC to a group of investors from Gainesville, Florida who placed a gated,

[1] There is an important distinction between trailers, mobile homes, and manufactured housing. The term trailer is no longer used in official HUD language since federal codes were imposed on construction and quality standards in 1976. Trailer implies a unit that can be towed behind a vehicle and harkens back to an era of transient workers moving their trailers from town to town in search of work. The terms mobile home and manufactured home replaced trailer after federal standards were introduced. Yet even today, there is still an important nuance: manufactured homes are often sited on permanent foundations and are not mobile because they do not have a chassis. The homes in Garden Springs, were for the most part not trailers, but were both mobile homes *and* manufactured homes (although there was one travel trailer in the neighborhood). They were manufactured homes because they were assembled in factories, yet they possessed a chassis, which allows them to be mobile. When referring to Garden Springs, I will use mobile home and manufactured home interchangeably

[2] The Georgia Manufactured Housing Association reports that "over one million Georgians, or 12% of the population, live in manufactured homes" (GMHA.com/review/facts.asp). The average price of a manufactured home without land is $48,000 and the median household income of a Georgia manufactured homeowner is $24,111. (ibid).

luxury student oriented apartment complex where Garden Springs once stood. Homes that were built before 1976 were prohibited by zoning ordinances from being moved anywhere in the county, and those homes that could be moved were also restricted by zoning ordinances that prevented them from being placed in any stick-built subdivision. Residents that could afford the $2000-$6000 cost of having their home inspected and moved could only relocate to existing parks, which had a 1% vacancy rate (People of Hope, Myths about Manufactured Housing accessed online). The result of the changing land use was the displacement of 101 families and the disruption of a working class community, many of whom were Latino/a immigrants. Residents scrambled to find replacement housing, but in a market where the average rental price of a two-bedroom apartment is $665 (Partners for a Prosperous Athens, 2006), options for people who had been paying $165 in ground rent were extremely limited. In response, displaced residents formed a social movement that evolved into the non-profit group The People of Hope (PoH), an affordable housing advocacy group dedicated to creating a resident-owned community and eradicating some of the *outdated policies and social stigma* that inhibit MHC's from becoming a legitimate affordable housing choice. The struggle of the PoH is ongoing and their story is a remarkable case-study on affordable housing.

As a geographer interested in the production of space, understanding how a grassroots social movement takes on urban development policy in a local context provides some insight into the political-economy of ACC, as well as to some of the particular bias' facing manufactured housing communities. Class-based politics, which are complicated by racial and ethnic identities, weave throughout this narrative. These are the major foci of this research. In addition, **t**here is limited, if any, geographic literature regarding manufactured housing, student populations, and their relationship to the debate on gentrification (see Hamnett 1984, 1991; Ley

1980, 1987, 1996; Slater, 2006; N. Smith 1986, 1987, 1996 for the major debates). The dialectical relationship between the disinvestment and decline in manufactured housing communities, the (re)investment in higher-end student housing, and the politics of property and growth are central to understanding processes of urban transformation in Athens. While numerous new student-oriented housing units have gone up in ACC, six other parks have closed in the period between 2002 and 2007 (Aued, Athens Banner Herald 4/01/07). Furthermore, local regulations designed to manage growth have negatively impacted the provisioning of affordable housing in ways that were perhaps unintended. The tensions between these phenomena will be explored as I attempt to gain an understanding of the dialectical relationship between the economic and cultural forces that cause MHC's to gentrify, as well as informing my understanding of how those effects have played out for the residents involved. By drawing attention to the unevenness of development, I hope to *amplify* the causes and concerns of displaced residents of manufactured housing in the South, a group that has been extremely understudied in urban policy and geographical debates. I also intend to demonstrate the complexity of the political economy of affordable housing within the system of capitalism, and to illuminate the ways in which this system is simultaneously managed, facilitated, and challenged by various social actors.

Furthermore, this research contributes to geographical debates about gentrification as an object of study - Garden Springs provides the basis for a case-study examining the effects of gentrification as well as studying the transmutations of gentrification itself. The replacement of low-income housing with student housing on the periphery of an expanding urban area is not exactly gentrification as understood in the classical texts of the 70's and 80's, but is more akin to a new process of "studentification" (D.P. Smith 2005, 2007). One of the theoretical challenges

of this research is to engage with how the term gentrification can be used to "engage with the multiple trajectories of urban revitalization, which are known by a plethora of other names – according to the economic, cultural or socio-spatial distinctiveness of a particular process" (D.P. Smith 2005, 88). Therefore, it is important to exercise reflexivity in defining the particular urban transformations at work in ACC and to be precise about exactly what the gentrification of Garden Springs means both empirically and theoretically. I will address conceptual issues of gentrification later in this paper. For now, suffice to say that I find it useful to think about these connections between manufactured housing, urban revitalization, and student housing as being dialectically related processes.

1.2 Research Questions and Theoretical Perspective

In order to critically examine the studentification of MHC's in a way that incorporates dialectical reasoning in understanding processes of urban transformation, I asked several questions:

1) What are the socio-spatial processes that led to the formation of the People of Hope?
    - What is unique about manufactured housing communities and how are they particularly vulnerable to gentrification pressures brought on by studentification?
    - What does studentification mean in the Athens-Clarke County context, and how does the presence of an institution of higher education impact the growth and (re)development of housing in the local area?
2) How is the People of Hope working to address these socio-spatial processes of uneven development that led to the displacement of the Garden Springs community?

- What is a community land trust and why does the People of Hope see them as a way to create an affordable and stable manufactured housing community?
- How does the new POH resident-owned community land trust mitigate the impacts of studentification in ACC?

I approach my research questions from a historical geographical materialist perspective that emphasizes a dialectical understanding of Garden Springs as a historical moment tied to a set of inextricably related processes. Ollman writes:

> "Dialectics restructures our thinking about reality by replacing the common sense notion of 'thing' (as something that *has* a history and *has* external connection with other things) with notions of 'process' (which *contains* its history and possible futures) and 'relation' (which *contains* as part of what it is its ties with other relations)" (2003, 13).

To see these events as crystallized moments of a particular set of political-economic and socio-spatial *processes* at work is to make connections between the logic of capitalist development and the lives of real people. Dialectics emphasizes that the demolition of a neighborhood is not an isolated *thing*; the history of Garden Springs, therefore, is tied up with the social milieu and political-economy within which MHC's are embedded. The story I will tell goes beyond just those 500 people who lost their homes; dialectical reasoning is a powerful tool for understanding how capitalism unevenly shapes the urban environment based on its own tortured internal logic of capital flows (Harvey 1989, 2006; N. Smith 1984) and how a myriad of social actors (MHC residents, homeowners, students, developers, the state, etc) both shape, and are shaped by, those structures of uneven development. It becomes impossible to answer any questions about Garden Springs without also asking about the unique history of manufactured housing, about the political-economy of manufactured housing and affordable housing generally, about the political struggles over development carried out by various social groups, and without engaging with a

student population that drives demand for such uneven housing development. By focusing on Garden Springs as an isolated moment of displacement, there is the unfortunate potential for ignoring the ways in which people, houses, jobs, places, and universities i.e. actors and structures, are related under the patterns of capitalism (Ollman 2003, 3). The importance of these *internal relations* is one of the stunning insights of historical geographical materialism and provides the theoretical foundation for this project.

In order to understand how and why the People of Hope emerged out of the remnants of the Garden Springs community, dialectics allows one the ability to unravel the complex web of social, economic, and political relations that underpin all historical processes. In other words, if one wants to understand why Garden Springs was gentrified, one cannot begin at the point when the bulldozers arrived to clear the lot. Nor can one begin at the moment when the residents of that community received their eviction notices. Indeed, my investigation led me to cast a wide historical net that encompassed political activity that seemingly had little to do with manufactured housing and gentrification. Yet, taking a broader look at the whole urban environment revealed incredibly important processes that were seemingly external, but in fact crucially related to, Garden Springs. Dialectical thinking requires a deeper historical investigation that embraces the messiness of urban life, whereby any decision or process within one part of the urban milieu intersects with the whole. In taking such a broad view of the urban system, this research ended up begging more questions *in situ* than I had originally proposed; some of my analysis indicates where my thinking about these issues was forced to go beyond my original ideas about studentification and manufactured housing in order to engage with more subtle factors like local development politics, NIMBY-attitudes, and, most importantly, capitalist ideology. The conceptual purity of the research project is not tainted by encompassing such a

wide study area, however. On the contrary, dialectics allows concepts to be connected with one another organically and inductively, and this tying together of various conceptual strands forms the core of my analysis. Pursuing my original interest in the relations between MHC's and student-based economies led me to a wider critique of the process of capital accumulation itself, and these conceptual changes ended up making this research stronger.

In order to investigate the whole, in this case the urban system of Athens (which is itself embedded within various geographic scales), one must engage in a process of *abstraction*. First, however, it is important to ask the question "does our analysis make an appropriate point of entry into the *real concrete* world?" (Russell 2007, 46). We then must ask, what is the real concrete world? In Marxian dialectics, Ollman defines the real concrete as "simply the world in which we live, in all its complexity" (2003, 60). So we begin with the world we live in – Athens Clarke County, Georgia, the United States, the globe – but then we must abstract out from that real concrete world, identifying in our minds the categories that are important for our analysis. Ollman's interpretation of Marx's method of abstraction identifies the key elements:

> "Marx claims that his method starts from the 'real concrete' (the world as it presents itself to us) and proceeds through 'abstraction' (the intellectual activity of breaking this whole down into the mental units with which we think about it) to the 'thought concrete' (the reconstituted and now understood whole present in the mind)" (2003, 60).

The process of abstraction, therefore, is one of constantly dismantling processes into their crucial parts, examining those parts not as atomistic forms but as sets of relations, then reassembling those relations into a synthesis that has explanatory power.

To focus on certain elements of the urban dynamic in ACC – in this case, the structure of MHC's, the presence of the student population, and land use planning - as being relevant to understanding why and how gentrification has taken place in a particular moment, I am

embarking on a method of abstraction. These elements of abstraction emphasize class as the dominant paradigm for thinking about these social relations, yet dialectical thinking "avoids falsely universalizing…because…each part of society is itself a collection of relations connected to other aspects of society as well as the whole" (Russell 2007, 36). In other words, dialectics avoids hierarchical thinking without crippling the mind into saying nothing at all. My abstractions are nodes of social relations, parts pulled from the whole, examined, and then reinserted into the whole from whence they came. Dialectics does not prevent me from privileging certain factors over others because there is a "pre- and post-conceptual commitment to their interrelationship" (Russell 2007, 52) with other factors. For example, the story I am telling has many other components to it, the racial and ethnic identities of mobile home park residents, for example, that are important and these other factors intersect with my abstractions. Yet I can still emphasize particular factors, like class, as important as long as I am careful not to fetishize them. If we return to the question of whether or not my analysis provides a point of entry into the real concrete world, the answer is yes. I agree with Ollman, who argues that "Marx is saying that for this factor, in this context, *this* is the influence most worth noting, the relation that will most aid our comprehension of the relevant characteristics" (2003, 27 emphasis in original). The whole remains a swirling mess of interrelationships, yet certain elements of my research findings emerged as more relevant. My abstractions do not stand alone as universal factors; they intersect with other elements of the social milieu but remain paramount for this particular slice of urban life that I am examining.

1.3 A Note on Methods

As I have just explained, dialectics is the method of enquiry that will allow me to understand how various actors within my study manage what I call the "politics of property". By politics of property I mean the interconnections between ideologies surrounding the exercise of private property rights and the material manifestations of those ideologies in a real community of actors. The owner of Garden Springs was absolutely within his rights, as a property owner, to cash in on his investment and displace his tenants, yet the right to do so is by no means a universal truth, but rather it is a social construction based in an ideological discourse of property. Therefore, this research takes on both a material and discursive politics. The dialectical method allows me to see the *whole system* of capitalism at work when analyzing how disinvestment and reinvestment become positioned as the logical choices for low-income communities. This approach examines the flows of capital and power that dictate the material production of urban space, yet there is also an important discursive component involved with this production. In other words, capital may shape the urban form but it does not do so without human input; flows of capital are given power via a set of socially constructed rules that are managed through ideology and discourse.

Power is wielded everywhere and at all times by various actors, and ideology and discourse are often the tools with which that power is wielded (Foucault 1984). The strength of this post-structuralist approach is that it builds on political-economy studies by examining not only the operation of capitalism and markets as structural forces producing spaces, but by also examining how the operation of those markets can be made to appear *natural*. Dialectics is therefore strengthened by the use of a critical discourse analysis method which seeks to enhance our understanding of how neighborhoods, housing, markets, displacement, etc is supported by a

legitimizing discourse. In other words, it is important to study how *structures* of capitalist development operate while simultaneously being supported, reinforced, propagated, and also challenged via the use of discourse by social *actors*. Indeed, this 'cultural turn' within social sciences has allowed researchers to more fully engage with how processes of uneven development are facilitated and/or challenged by actors on the ground (Rydin 2005). This research hopes to further the discipline of political economy by acknowledging the myriad ways in which local communities shape, and are shaped by, structures of capitalism.

Since most of my data was collected via interviews (additional data will draw on written texts such as archival materials), a critical discourse analysis was useful to investigate the ways in which manufactured housing, studentification, private property regimes, and resistance are given meaning in a local context. Interview data and archival materials are texts, and as such, these texts perform various functions; "they construct representations of the social world through language (ideational function); and they enact social relations and identities (interpersonal function)" (Fairclough 1995, 25). By interviewing the various actors mentioned above (MHC residents, students, developers, the state, etc) I can create a body of data (texts) that can be analyzed using a system of coding (more on coding in chapter 4).

The advantage of conducting semi-structured interviews and using discourse analysis to compliment the theoretical analysis of capital and development provided by dialectics is that I can probe into how capitalism is maintained and organized as an *ideological* as well as a material structure. For example, interview data can be used to understand what sort of discursive strategies under-gird policies that maintain the *status quo* of manufactured housing communities as temporary or derelict housing. Stated another way, interview data analyzed critically can also be used to uncover "whether a person is conscious of the ideological investment of a particular

discursive convention" (Fairclough 1992, 228). A bias towards manufactured housing that limits the empowerment of such communities is an example of such an "ideological investment". To give another example, gentrification is supported by an ideological structure that maintains the operation of the free market as the just distributor of social goods, such as housing. This ideological structure may go undetected in more traditional political-economy approaches that do not engage with discourse as a tool of power. My research pays close attention to the discursive representations of space, place, and property in order to understand the relationship between manufactured housing communities, studentification and development, and the social movement response to uneven development.

Written texts will also be used as a secondary source of data that will compliment the analysis of interview-based data. Examples of such texts include government reports on housing policies and planning, historical planning documents such as zoning changes and land use plans, newspaper accounts relevant to the topic of affordable housing, policy recommendations created by local non-profit groups, and other relevant data will be analyzed under the method of critical discourse analysis.

1.4 Organization of the Thesis

The first two chapters of the thesis will deal with the literature and theoretical lens that provide support for my empirical data. Chapter 2 will break down into several subsections, each providing a detailed foundation for later analysis. The first subsection of chapter 2 will deal with the status of manufactured housing communities as affordable yet unstable and unable to capture value. I will argue that this status is not an inherent part of the manufactured housing community, but is rather a social product created by policy and market forces, which themselves

are socially produced. My research shows how poor ownership and maintenance of these neighborhoods feeds into negative perceptions of these communities, furthering their status as "temporary" housing without value. The remaining three subsections of chapter 2 link the political economic and cultural milieu of manufactured housing with the political economic and cultural processes of gentrification. I establish the closing of the Garden Springs community as within the purview of gentrification studies, and then proceed to examine the specific process of studentification as being driven by the logical operation of capital in urban space as well as an extension of the cultural proclivities of a new urban class, that of student gentrifiers. Chapter 2 concludes by examining the linkages between the vulnerability of manufactured housing communities and the ongoing expansion of student housing (demonstrated through a review of both supply-side as well as a demand-side explanations).

Chapter 3 similarly breaks down into subsections that buttress my findings. This chapter will focus on the People of Hope (PoH) as an urban social movement attempting to mitigate the factors that led to the destruction of their community. Chapter 3 theoretically address the question of what residents have done, and are doing, in order to empower themselves against further community displacement. The chapter will begin with a discussion of how social movements organize themselves and mobilize for action; section 3.2 will fully explain what the PoH is doing – creating a resident owned community under the community land trust model; section 3.3 will situate the community land trust model and the PoH as a subversion of the 'natural' market principles and ideologies of property that have created uneven landscapes of development in ACC. This last section in particular provides the most sophisticated critique of the contradictions of capitalism. Chapters 2 and 3 will provide the theoretical cornerstone for my analysis.

Chapters 4 and 5 further detail my methods of data collection and analysis, respectively. Chapter 4 demonstrates with detail how my findings have been procured using rigorous qualitative methods. This section foregrounds the importance of using a dialectical approach, informed by critical discourse analysis, in constructing an analytical narrative of class transformation and resistance. Chapter 5 uses my empirical data to build on the theoretical and methodological foundation that I have created in the previous chapters in order to finally make a definitive statement about the political-economic and socio-spatial processes of housing development in Athens-Clarke County. Chapter 6 concludes the thesis by summarizing my main arguments and offering up new directions for research and activism.

CHAPTER 2: MANUFACTURED HOUSING AND THE SOCIO-SPATIAL PROCESSES OF STUDENTIFICATION

2.1 Manufactured Housing: Affordability without Value?

Manufactured housing embodies some contradictions not found anywhere else in the housing market. On the one hand, manufactured housing is very affordable, at about half the cost per-square foot of a site-built home, and serves a population whose median income of $23, 413 is far lower than the U.S. median income of $37,005 (UGA Housing and Demographics Research Center, Report on Workforce Housing 2001). On the other hand, manufactured homes provide low prices but little value in terms of wealth-building and few of the consumer protections and programs that stick-built housing enjoys. Thus, it is useful to think about manufactured housing communities as having *affordability without value.* This is due mainly to the uncommon configuration of people owning their homes but not the land underneath. This creates a matrix of policy regarding manufactured housing that places a tremendous burden on consumers, further marginalizing them from stick-built housing consumers that have access to conventional financing, taxation, and legal protections that create stability and the potential for equity building. Regarding the institutional categorization of manufactured homes by zoning and building agencies, mortgage bankers, and insurance companies, Wallis (1991; vii) writes:

> "In large part, the institutional process of categorization has been conservative. Its motivating force has been the desire to preserve the 'order of things'. Such conservatism serves an important function; it helps make housing choices predictable. Thus, by limiting the range of acceptable housing, institutions maintain the stability of the market while preserving their own power and authority over it".

The result is that mobile homes are treated as "temporary housing at best, and totally *invisible* at worst" (Wallis 1991, 207 emphasis my own). The invisibility of manufactured housing manifests itself discursively through a dominant ideology that does not recognize it as a "real" affordable housing choice. Like public housing, people living in mobile homes are supposedly only doing so temporarily while they transition to something better. Because planners and policy makers often impose that temporality upon the trajectory of mobile home communities, and policies that could help sustain these parks are not implemented in part because they are seen as impermanent.

More locally, the state of Georgia does not offer the legal displacement buffers/protections that some states do. In Vermont, for example, state law gives tax benefits to park owners who sell their property to residents and gives tenants the right of first refusal to buy parks offered for sale (Genz 2001, 399). Such policies are instrumental in protecting tenants from eviction and displacement. Another detrimental aspect of the legal/policy framework is that manufactured homes in Georgia are taxed and financed as personal property unless they are on a fixed foundation. This designation suggests that manufactured homes are not "real" homes because they are technically mobile, although Wallis has shown that only one out of a hundred mobile homes is ever moved from its original site (1998, 348). The result, in short, of personal property financing and taxing is that the consumer has less access to "housing subsidies, tax benefits, resale institutions, financing, and legal protections that site-built owners take for granted" (Genz 2001, 409).

The stigma of manufactured housing is interwoven through these legal and financial precedents. Common perceptions of residents as "trailer trash" and the perception of declining

property values brought on by manufactured housing parks fuel the bias toward these communities (Beamish *et al* 2001). Surveys conducted in Virginia and Georgia indicate that while residents of manufactured housing are satisfied with their homes, opposition, in the form of NIMBYism, by nonresidents affects the homes' placement and thus limits the housing choices available to limited-income households (Beamish *et al* 2001). The impact of this NIMBYism in ACC, which is discursively supported by invoking middle-class ideas about property values, will be discussed in Chapter 5. This discursive strategy translates into policy, as Genz captures the "invisibility" of manufactured housing by noting that the stigma attached to them leads to "serious shortcomings not inherent in the factory-built home itself" but rather are a result of the "laws, policy choices, and business practices that are selling millions of people short" (2001, 395). Manufactured homes, in other words, fall short of creating real value due to culturally supported policy neglect.

Clearly, there are significant barriers to creating a model manufactured housing community that is affordable, stable, and has the potential to accumulate value for its residents. However, the PoH demonstrates that the best way to keep these communities affordable and stable is to limit the speculative accumulation that drives gentrification. What becomes clear in examining the PoH is that a sense of community and an attachment to place trump the accumulation of exchange value in property. A major part of this research project will seek to understand how the PoH social movement is navigating these tensions between community and accumulation. Those efforts will be discussed in detail in chapter 3 and chapter 5. As I have demonstrated in this section, manufactured housing communities suffer from some major problems; some that are based in reality and some that are socially constructed. Communities like Garden Springs do not bring in large amounts of cash for property owners compared to other

potential land uses, and this simple fact – "the rent gap" (N. Smith 1987, 1996) – was the primary driving force behind the displacement of this vibrant community.

I will explain the rent gap in more detail later in this chapter, but stated simply the rent gap is the gap between the capitalized ground rent of a site and the potential ground rent of that location (ibid). In other words, the gap between what Garden Springs was worth as a trailer park and what that property could be worth under a different use creates an easy option for any economically motivated land owner to cash in on redevelopment possibilities. The rent gap represents the supply-side arguments for the causes of gentrification; the demand-side explanation states that gentrification is primarily driven by changes within occupational structures that has expanded the number of middle class professionals who have a disposition towards city living and a disdain for suburbia (Lees *et al*, 2007). These arguments are not mutually exclusive and can greatly inform our understanding of urban change in ACC. I will begin by explaining in detail why I think Garden Springs' closing was an example of gentrification and present an argument as to why the student population in ACC represents a new class of gentrifiers that has been understudied by urban scholars. I will then support that argument by explaining how the rent-gap applies to this debate and will conclude with a review of some of the major work on gentrification over the past forty years.

2.2 Pushing the Boundaries of Gentrification Theory

A literature review of gentrification reveals a broad lens through which to examine some of the empirical processes at work in ACC, yet some conceptual issues remain as to how this literature applies to the disappearance of Garden Springs. Under the vast conceptual umbrella of gentrification, which has widened over the past twenty years of debate (see Beauregard 1986;

Clark 1992; Lees 1996; van Weesep 1994), the term ‘studentification’ can be deployed to specify new manifestations of urban transformation that fall under the macro-level concept of gentrification. I will now present an argument in support of encompassing a diversity of socio-spatial processes, such as studentification, within the critical literature on gentrification.

The debates about the existence and causes of gentrification that raged in the 80’s and 90’s have left gentrification firmly entrenched as an area of study in urban research. Much of the current debate surrounding this phenomenon concerns whether or not the theoretical lens of gentrification should be broadened to include a plethora of processes across various scales that do not adhere to ‘classical’ gentrification schemes associated with deindustrialization. The recent theme issue of *Environment and Planning A* (vol.39, 2007) specifically addresses the question of whether to extend the “conceptual meaning of gentrification to capture emerging processes of urban change, such as studentification”, or to “endorse new conceptual terms, such as ‘residentialisation’, to ensure that the conceptual purity of gentrification is not diluted” (D.P. Smith and Butler 2007, 3). Understanding Garden Springs and the process of studentification that led to its closing offers an opportunity to simultaneously widen the scope of gentrification research while specifying the diversity of socio-spatial processes that constitute gentrification (Butler 2007, 176).

2.2.1. Widening the Criteria for Gentrification

Davidson and Lees (2005, 1170) have established a criterion for defining gentrification that I find useful. Gentrification involves: “1) the reinvestment of capital; 2) the social upgrading of locale by incoming high-income groups; 3) landscape change; and 4) direct or indirect displacement of low-income groups”. I would argue that all four of these processes must

occur in some form in order for a process to be called gentrification. In his analysis of new-build development in Bristol, Boddy (2007) argues that the processes of converting nonresidential space into residential units is *not* gentrification primarily because it does not involve *displacement* of previous residents. Boddy takes Davidson and Lees to task on their analysis of a similar research project on new-build development in London, arguing that simply because residents *feel* that "no housing [is] being provided for the working class" (Davidson and Lees 2005, 1185), does not mean that people are being displaced. Boddy correctly points out that measuring displacement, whether direct or indirect, is complex and difficult. He shows that Davidson and Lees may have "put a particular gloss" (Boddy 2007, 101) over their data in order to state that "long-term residents reveal a growing sense of disconnection and displacement from their neighborhoods" (Davidson and Lees 2005, 1185). Boddy's criticism is apt; residents may feel resentment towards the changes in their neighborhoods but more empirical evidence needs to be collected to actually measure these changes. Yet simply because there is vague empirical data on the effects of gentrification does not mean that anecdotal evidence from qualitative research is misguided. If residents perceive negative changes in the character of their neighborhoods, these claims need to be taken seriously and investigated critically. Boddy seems somewhat flippant in his dismissal of these qualitative findings. Boddy argues that in this instance, gentrification as a concept has been stretched too thin as to remain useful. I would argue the opposite.

The major point of contention that I have with Boddy's otherwise well thought out paper is that it is perhaps the notion of *displacement*, rather than gentrification that needs to be rethought. In the case of new-build development and the conversion of offices and warehouses into residential units there may not be direct displacement of former residents. Indirect

displacement resulting from rising housing values that price out low-income residents, however, still remains an issue, although Boddy correctly argues for using caution in interpreting data related to this. The point is that perhaps displacement should be modified to include the *exclusion* of lower socio-economic groups from inner-city spaces. Boddy acknowledges that provisions for affordable housing in this area of Bristol have not been met, yet he fails to concede that gentrification has occurred despite the fact that lower-income folks have effectively been shut out of the inner-city by the high cost of new developments. By arguing that the 'residentialisation' of space is not a form of gentrification, Boddy has himself depoliticized gentrification to the point that it is not a useful concept. This is precisely the type of uncritical investigation of the return of capital to the city that Slater (2006) rails against. Processes of urban transformation are always imbued with power relations of winners and losers, and by shying away from this discussion Boddy has dulled the critical edge of gentrification scholarship. If, as he argues, "gentrification is almost too quaint and small scale a concept to capture the processes at work" (ibid, 103) in cities like Bristol, should the argument not be that gentrification needs to be broadened in order to capture these changes? The uniting theme of gentrification research is that it draws attention to class conflict and class transformation – the literature (and those affected on the ground) only benefit if research can capture these conflicts across various scales and across various socio-spatial processes, whether in new-build gentrification or studentification. Even though displacement has not occurred in his study and its presence in Davidson and Lees' study is questionable, the argument still holds that gentrification displaces *and/or excludes* certain populations from having a right to the city.

Although Garden Springs is an empirically different case from those debated above, the theoretical issues remain relevant. Gentrification may not always involve displacement but it always involves exclusion in some form or another. Whether the example given is in new-build development in inner-city locations or in a transformation of the housing stock and types of residents in a suburban community, the essential factor remains the tensions created by capital transforming the landscape. Garden Springs was not an inner-city community of once fabulous homes that became devalued and subsequently gentrified; it is a community on the periphery of the urban core that was swallowed up by expansion of the demand for student housing in a college town. In this way, the issue at hand is unique perhaps to college towns that have populations of manufactured housing residents. This research project is part of a burgeoning sub-field within urban studies that will be further explored in the next section.

2.3 Studentification

In his pioneering article, Darren P. Smith (2005, 74-75) identifies four dimensions of studentification that are parallels of gentrification that I will abbreviate here:

1. Economic – studentification involves the revalorization and inflation of property prices, which is tied to the recommodification of single family housing or a repackaging of private rented housing to supply houses in multiple occupation (HMO) [or apartments] for higher education students.
2. Social – the replacement or displacement of a group of established permanent residents with a transient, generally young and single, middle-class social grouping; entailing new patterns of social concentration and segregation.
3. Cultural – the gathering of young persons with a putatively shared culture and lifestyle, and consumption practices linked to certain types of retail and service infrastructure.
4. Physical – associated with an initial upgrading of the external physical environment as properties are converted to HMO.

Here we have a more specific framework within the gentrification literature that enables engagement with the multiple factors that impact (re)development in a university-town. The ability to widen the lens of the gentrification literature is crucial to encompassing this form of urban revitalization both empirically and theoretically. Studentification is not an alternative to gentrification, but rather represents a particular manifestation of gentrification in a particular space. All of the core elements of gentrification as identified by Davidson and Lees are still present: reinvestment of capital, social upgrading of locale by incoming high-income groups, landscape change, and direct or indirect displacement of low-income groups (2005, 1170). The key factor that unites studentification and gentrification in this case study is the presence of class conflict, regardless of whether it is initiated by large-scale reinvestment supported by state programs or whether it occurs via investment of individual sweat-equity on a smaller scale. In this case, studentification is driven primarily by the capital of student's parents, who are willing to buy homes and expensive apartments for their children, thereby placing those students in direct competition with permanent residents for the provisioning of housing. I will attempt to intertwine this class-centered definition of gentrification with the requirements of studentification in order to establish a parallel, if not mutually constitutive, understanding of the studentification of Garden Springs as an example of gentrification.

2.3.1 Political Economy of Garden Springs

Economically, Garden Springs became viable for redevelopment for several reasons. As a manufactured housing community, the land was not generating major profits for the absentee landlord and much of the housing was older and in less than ideal condition. The presence of the rent gap (Smith 1987, 1996) was a primary causal factor because the potential for speculative

profits under a different land use existed. Local zoning politics also played a role however, as the 1999 Comprehensive Plan introduced sprawl reduction strategies that focused high-density development on in-town neighborhoods. The potential value of neighborhoods like Garden Springs increased, and a group of savvy investors from Florida took advantage of their opportunity to buy a piece of now premium land before someone else did (this will be discussed in great detail in chapter 5). The real "pioneers" here, then, are large-scale developers rather than individual gentrifiers, a fact supportive of research on post-recession or third wave gentrification (Hackworth and Smith 2001, N. Smith 2002). Gentrification did not occur gradually as a wealthier class of "revanchist" (Smith 1996) pioneers brought their individual capital to bear on the neighborhood, but rather was stimulated by a large investment of capital from outside developers. These investors had no long-term interest in the community outside of extracting a profit and were simply looking for a place with the right zoning and the appropriate demand for the type of housing they were trying to build. Investors were encouraged by the local government's emphasis on high-density development. Furthermore, the neoliberal emphasis on private development of housing ensures that affordable housing will not be built unless the state provides incentives to private developers.

2.3.2 Students as Gentry: Cultural Capital and Geographies of Exclusion

D.P. Smith identifies the displacement of local residents by a younger more mobile population as key factor in the process of studentification (2005, 2007). While the experiences of the displaced residents are important to my study of Garden Springs, for this section I will focus specifically on the student population as the gentrifying class and how the cultural proclivities of this group impact the social and physical environment. Garden Springs was razed

in order to build a luxury student-oriented apartment complex called the Lodge of Athens. Examining the Lodge in more detail will provide an understanding of how the creation of studentified spaces in Athens represents a demarcation (both culturally and physically) between student and non-student populations.

The presence of the rent gap and the political NIMBY factor of manufactured housing (i.e. exclusionary zoning) are only part of the gentrification of Garden Springs. The production of gentrifiers and the demands of the student population have a tremendous impact on how space is used and valued. The Lodge provides many of the amenities as well as a location that is desirable for students. The complex is surrounded by a steal gate with a video monitored entrance that requires a key pass for access. Safety is often a primary concern for young students who may not have lived on their own for very long and are worried about crime. The apartments themselves are furnished and have internet connections and the Lodge offers flexible lease options that can be either 9 or 12 month agreements, which make it attractive to migratory populations who are only in town for the academic year. Furthermore, the Lodge has a commons featuring a large pool area with billiard tables, basketball courts, a movie rental kiosk, a gym, a sauna, and even a floating beer pong table for the pool[3]. The management often holds events sponsored by beer vendors and local bars. According to one Lodge resident, a furnished apartment costs about $700 a month. Again, because students primarily do not work or only work part time, it is the parents of students who are able to support the production of these student spaces. The Lodge is a community within a community much like Garden Springs was, although the socioeconomic status of the residents have changed as have the amenities and attractions of the space. Given a food source, students would have little reason to ever leave the Lodge (except of course, to attend class).

[3] Beer pong is a drinking game where you throw a ping pong ball into a cup containing alcohol

Writing about the insular nature of the cultural trajectories of the lives of higher education students in Bristol, Chatterton describes spaces like the Lodge as "exclusive geographies" (1999). Chatterton argues that cultural provisions for students are created and reinforced by an infrastructure of both symbolic and actual interventions in the landscape resulting in segregated student communities within college towns (ibid). While he does not focus on residential patterns specifically, Chatterton's analysis of the impact of middle and upper class students in Bristol parallels my discussion of Garden Springs and Athens:

> "The economic status of traditional students enables them to be spatially selective and to cluster within prosperous and centrally located areas such as Clifton. Students are often a gentrifying force and, through house price inflation in the private-rented accommodation sector, can force out local groups. However, this spatial segregation also reflects their desire to be removed from other groups through a perceived fear of violence and crime against students. Traditional students, then, can be regarded as one of the many mini-communities within the divided city which are generated through ritualized and segregated activity" (ibid, 132).

There is an identifiable student habitus[4] (Bourdieu 1977) that is established within these residential spaces that provides a common ground for social interaction. Places like the Lodge, Polo Club, and other large student apartment complexes in ACC are expressions of residential preferences clearly linked to the cultural capital of students as gentrifiers. Smith and Holt (2007 153) argue that "studentified spaces have been represented as 'factories' of gentrifiers, or the socio-spatial settings in which 'apprentice gentrifiers' acquire and sophisticate their cultural capital". Ley (1996) has argued that this cultural capital, acquired in studentified spaces, is central to the production of gentrifiers.

[4] Bourdieu defines the habitus as an unconscious social coping mechanism, or "the strategy-generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations" (1977, 72). The student habitus, therefore, can be interpreted as providing a seemingly automatic regulation of perceptions and experiences that helps students make sense of their world.

Furthermore, these spaces can be seen as exclusionary geographies because the student habitus is often quite separated from the social spaces of non-student local residents (Chatterton 1999, 2002; Gumprecht 2006; Kenyon 1997). Given the short term nature of student residence patterns and the insular communities that accommodate large numbers of students, the social effect of studentification can be negative. Kenyon (1997) found that students often have little interaction with their neighbors and that the presences of student populations "leads to an erosion of feelings of stability, cohesiveness and confidence within the community" (293). It is interesting to note that in most of the literature on studentification, researchers have focused on students living in houses-in-multiple-occupation, where students reside in 'student ghettos' and drive down the value of an area because of their transience and lack of long term commitment to the community. While this phenomenon is certainly observable in ACC as a whole, the case study of Garden Springs is actually a different arrangement, where student housing is increasing the value of the neighborhood. Gumprecht (2006) has noted a decline in 'student ghettos', or run down rental housing populated by higher education students, and acknowledged a shift towards better accommodations. One developer that Gumprecht interviewed in the college town of Ithaca, NY noted that (257):

> "In 1975, students [weren't] interested in aesthetics. A quarter century later, students are looking for quality. They want apartments that are clean, fresh, and new, close to campus, with the latest technology, superb services, and views. Basically, students want pretty much the same thing as the tenant in a new high-rise tower in a big city".

In either scenario, whether students are living in ghettos or in luxury apartments, there is a noted *social* separation between students and non-students, where one group may feel threatened by the other, especially long-term residents who perceive changes in the character and quality of their neighborhoods. Studentification as I have described it in ACC meets all four of the criteria for

gentrification established by Davidson and Lees: there is an investment of capital at a large scale rather than at the individual scale; there is a socio-economic upgrading of the neighborhood accompanied by a change in the landscape dictated by new cultural demands; and there is the direct displacement of previous residents.

In sum, gentrification can be used as the macro-level concept under which scholars can address the "subtleties and interconnections between different processes of change and across different spatial scales, and to tease out [the] diverse geographies of gentrification" (D. P. Smith and Holt 2007, 158). The revalorization process needs to be understood as spatially and temporally contextual, rather than as a fixed notion. Yet this contextual definition of gentrification does not necessarily weaken the usefulness of gentrification as a concept as some scholars have argued (Alvarez 2007; Boddy 2007; Buzar et al 2007). Calling gentrification something else, like residentialisation (D.P. Smith and Butler 2007, 3), implies that this process of social and economic change is somehow simplistic and uncontroversial; that it is simply a matter of building homes where there were none before. Gentrification is a useful concept mainly because it is a "dirty word" (N. Smith 1996) and implies a critical investigation, often in defense of working-class residents who may be jeopardized by the shifting contours of their neighborhoods. One of the poignant questions that critical research on gentrification asks is "who's interests benefit?" from policies encouraging 'social-mixing' and 'revitalization', and Slater (2006) is rightly upset by the seeming disappearance of such research within urban studies.

While some have clamored for strict adherence to gentrification as a very specific phenomenon, I argue that one need not abandon the body of literature on gentrification simply because it does not conform exactly to a set of predetermined events. The essential thrust of

gentrification research involves the study of *class transformation* of neighborhoods and this transformation can take many forms. While I foreground the importance of class in this study, there are obvious racial and ethnic components that intersect with class in important ways. Because Garden Springs was predominantly a minority community, composed mostly of Hispanic residents (some of whom were undocumented immigrants) and African Americans, it could be argued that it is the racial change in neighborhood composition that really signifies gentrification having taken place. This shift is an important one, but in this case, it is my view that the determining factors in the gentrification of Garden Springs were steeped in class inequality. Of course, the fact that racial and ethnic minorities represent a larger proportion of the working-class indicates the importance that race plays historically in generating the conditions for that economic inequality. In other words, minorities may find themselves economically disadvantaged and vulnerable to things like gentrification, but the presence of this disadvantage has deep roots in structural racism and discrimination. Therefore, the importance of class and race are tightly intertwined. Garden Springs gentrified primarily because it was a poor neighborhood, but the roots of that poverty may be racial or ethnic.

The Hispanic population in ACC was estimated to be 6.4% in 2000 (US Census), but informal counts by the local Catholic Social Services employee that I met indicated a significantly higher percentage. Many of the large mobile home parks that remain in ACC, like Pinewoods, University Heights, and Winter Grove are predominantly Hispanic. Many of these parks that I have been through have ethnic stores in or nearby them, and are close to places that have money wiring services and check cashing stores. It is clear that mobile home parks house many of the poor and undocumented Hispanic residents of ACC, and this fact clearly adds a layer of complexity to the social, political, and economic intersections that comprise

studentification. One of the major impacts that race and ethnicity has had on this study, particularly in regard to mobile home parks, is that Hispanic residents may have been more easily taken advantage of by slumlords because of language barriers and a lack of knowledge of legal and financial rights. Residents that are undocumented laborers may choose to live in mobile home parks because they are affordable, but they are also less likely to make any demands of landlords or ask for government services, leaving them in a vulnerable state. These racial nuances are present throughout this study, and although my focus remained on class, there are some obvious ways that my study was impacted by race and ethnicity that come up in my analysis. While I see these racial components as crucial to this narrative of displacement and studentification, I see them as fundamentally stemming from problems of class.

By embracing a broader lens, such as Hackworth's (2002, 815) definition of gentrification as "the production of space for progressively more affluent users" scholars can continue to be critical of capital's return to the city. Gentrification, when not accompanied by displacement, may not be an entirely malevolent process, but is important for urbanists to be wary of gentrification as a mere spatial fix to deeply rooted problems. This does not, however, mean that gentrification researchers should allow preconceived notions about the process to color the empirical realities on the ground. Gentrification is indeed a nuanced process, and while scholars should begin from a critical stance of capital's return to the city, they should not approach research with theoretical blinders on. Clearly, however, calling the events of Garden Springs something other than gentrification would seem to lessen that critical edge and would do a disservice to those displaced by that process. Before moving on to the next chapter, it will be helpful to briefly review some of the classic scholarship on gentrification in order to understand the theoretical framework that I am attempting to build on.

2.4 "Classic" Gentrification

Gentrification, as a set of related interrelated processes, was identified by Ruth Glass (1964) within the context of London as processes that produced neighborhood disruption and class conflict. The key elements of gentrification theory identified the phenomena as an element of class transformation, in which "deteriorated housing is subject to speculative pressure – a pressure which may lead to urban renewal under a different kind of housing or a transformation in the use of the land" (Harvey 1973, 174). This scenario is common to places where the poorest people live. Landlords that own deteriorated property in certain urban areas cave into speculative pressures, often under maintaining and "milking a property for all it is worth" (Harvey 1973, 175) before redevelopment occurs. This notion of 'milking' occurred in ACC, where the landowner purchased Garden Springs and allowed needed maintenance on the property to go undone while he still collected rents. The general process that occurs is captured by Harvey (1973: 175), when he suggests:

> "the physical obsolescence, generated out of this economic obsolescence, results in social and economic pressure which build up in the worst sections of the housing market and which have to be relieved, at some stage or other, by a 'blow out' somewhere. This 'blow out' results in new construction and the taking up of new land at the urban fringes or in urban redevelopment – processes which are both subject to intense speculative pressure".

Taking a slightly different approach than Marxist scholars, Ley (1980) has argued that the "culture of consumption" of young urban middle-class white-collar workers figures significantly into the process of gentrification. Speaking of the 'return to the city' of this middle-class, Ley writes (1980: 128) "the neighborhoods themselves include a measure of life-style, ethnic, and architectural diversity, valued attributes of middle-class movers to the central city…these desiderata of the culture of consumption should not be underestimated in interpreting the revitalization of the inner-city". The primacy that Ley gives to consumption choices is not

rooted, however, in a non-material argument that excludes economic imperatives for gentrification. Rather, Ley sees the changing post-industrial economy and the rise of the service sector as an important structural change in the division of labor that contributes to the possibility of gentrification:

> "Job growth [in] the white-collar complex of downtown head offices, producer services, and indirectly, [in] public institutions and agencies…in nodal centres…leads to the 'production' of professionals, managers, and other quaternary employees working downtown, who then provide the demand base for housing re-investment in the inner-city…this population, as it gives political and economic expression to its own predilection to urban amenity, will restructure the built environment and accelerate the gentrification process" (Ley 1986, 532).

According to Neil Smith (1996) and others (Hackworth 2002; Newman and Wyly 2006; van Weesep 1994), the type of model we need to understand gentrification must go beyond consumer preferences and incorporate a dialectical understanding of production and consumption as a symbiotic process, one in which "the movement of capital in search of profit predominates" (N. Smith 1996, 57). The rent gap theory proposes that as inner-city neighborhoods devalorize while overall growth in the community simultaneously continues, a gap between the potential ground rent and the capitalized ground rent of a neighborhood becomes great enough to allow for reinvestment, which capitalizes all of the potential ground rent of an area (ibid, 68). The simultaneous disinvestment in the Garden Springs community coupled with the growing local population (mostly students) results in the emergence of the rent gap that makes gentrification possible and, indeed, ideal via the logic of market capitalism. A manufactured housing community is one in which the potential ground rent, defined as "the amount that could be capitalized under the land's 'highest and best use' (in planners parlance)" (ibid, 62), would be much higher under a different land use, i.e. an apartment complex oriented toward a more affluent student population.

It is incorrect to assume that the arguments presented by Ley and Smith are incompatible. Rather, the rent gap theory is *complimentary* to demand side arguments for gentrification's causes. Clark (1992, 359) puts the debate into focus when he writes that, "The *potential land rent* of a site has its foundation in latent *demand* for 'higher and better uses' of the site. The *capitalized ground rent* of a site on the other hand is founded on *demand* for the present use of the site" (emphasis in original). Criticizing the redundancy of the gentrification debate, he further explains that "…to continue to place rent gap explanation of gentrification squarely outside the cosy conceptual box of consumption and demand side explanation is to propagate a dichotomy which serves no useful purpose other than maintaining barricades and the comfort of identity they provide" (ibid).

After having conducted a thorough review of the literature on gentrification, it becomes clear that research must move beyond epistemological struggles and critically engage with the process on a deeper, case-by-case basis (as I am attempting to do here), rather than adhering to an abstractly holistic theory of gentrification. The linch-pin by which a critical examination hinges, however, is being able to understand how gentrification can be a tool of class transformation and "class privilege" (Newman and Wyly 2006: 31), where "displacement is the leading edge of the central dilemma of American property – the use values of neighborhood and home, versus the exchange values of real estate as a vehicle for capital accumulation" (ibid). Garden Springs is an example of this dilemma. The next logical step is to inquire into how the negative effects of gentrification are being combated at the local level in ACC.

CHAPTER 3: A SOCIAL MOVEMENT'S RESPONSE TO STUDENTIFICATION

3.1 Social Movements and the Production of Urban Space

The removal of the Garden Springs community and the subsequent social movement that followed provides a point of entry for studying how people mobilize and struggle around issues of urban space. Before discussing the specific ways in which the PoH is responding to affordability without value and studentification, it is important to theoretically situate their struggle within the appropriate literature. Geographers need to address the absence of attention to the geographic structuring of social movements (Miller and Martin 2000) that has hindered the social sciences from gaining a fully contextualized understanding of social movements. In other words, social movements are both historically and *geographically* rooted.

At a fundamental level, this case study about MHC's collective resistance to gentrification demands a dialectical analysis of the urban system and social movements, of cities and citizens (Castells 1983). Therefore, in order to understand how urban space is contested and formed, we must focus on the relationship between what Henri Lefebvre calls abstract space and social space (1979, 241):

> "The essential spatial contradiction of society is the confrontation between *abstract space*, or the externalization of economic and political practices originating with the capitalist class and the state, and *social space*, or the space of use values produced by the complex interaction of all classes in the pursuit of everyday life".

Put simply, urban social movements are the product of this contrast between commodified abstract space and the non-commodified spaces of daily life in which people live. Indeed, the

social movement of the PoH has largely revolved around the defense of the use value of space and the importance of community and place.

Castells has written that the city is a social product whose form results from conflicting social interests and values (1983). Dominant interests that have been institutionalized either through the state or through free market hegemony typically resist grassroots movements aimed at changing a city's meaning and structure. The PoH began as such an urban social movement, what Castells (1983, 278) defines as "a conscious collective practice originating in urban issues, able to produce qualitative changes in the urban system, local culture, and political institutions in contradiction to the dominant social interests institutionalized as such at the societal level". If an urban social movement contests the production of urban space from the perspective of non-elite interests, how then does it accomplish its goals?

In attempting to answer the question of how MHC's might better resist gentrification and become more stable communities, social movement literature suggests both resource mobilization theory (RMT) and political process models. RMT asserts that the primary determinant of collective action is the availability of resources for protest, whether these resources are money, leaders, social networks, organizational form or all of the above (Gamson 1990 [1975]; Jenkins 1983; McCarthy and Zald 1973; Oliver and Marwell 1992). RMT provides an opportunity to understand how a group like the PoH internally organizes for and sustains collective action. It also raises some fascinating questions about the relationship between direct action protest and institutionalized social movement organizations (Piven and Cloward 1979). If, in the case of PoH, "organization-building activities tended to draw people away from the streets and into the meeting rooms" (ibid, introduction xxii), are elites as likely to respond to social movement organization as they are to insurgency? Understanding the manifestation of

"contentious politics" (McAdam et al 2001) is important in our discussion of the production of urban space. By "contentious politics", I am referring to a "collective political struggle" (ibid, 5) that is "episodic" and "public" (ibid) rather than continuous and private. The PoH movement can be understood as contentious politics because it blurred the line between institutional and non-institutional politics, engaging with but, going beyond what comprises the majority of political action – "ceremony, consultation, bureaucratic process, collection of information…military service, voting, paying taxes" (ibid). The notion of contentious politics is useful for analyzing resource mobilization and political process models because it acknowledges the messiness of political action as dynamic and active across multiple scales (streets, meeting rooms, etc).

Political process models build on RMT by including the external political environment as an object of study (Eisinger 1973; McAdam 1982, 1996; Tarrow 1983, 1989, 1996; Tilly 1978, 1984). Political process models stress the importance of both formal institutional structures and the informal constellation of power relations in a political system (Miller and Martin 2000, 24). Particularly with regard to urban social movements, understanding how these movements evolve and accomplish their goals in a contingent, path dependent way is largely determined by the type of state-civil power relations (Nicholls and Beaumont 2004). More precisely, the frustrations and successes of the PoH can be understood by examining:

1. The relative openness or closure of the institutionalized political system;
2. The stability or instability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically under-gird a polity;
3. The presence or absence of elite allies;
4. The state's capacity and propensity for repression (McAdams 1996, 27).

Using these processes as a guide for understanding the struggle of MHC's in defining their own sense of place, it should be possible to answer the question of how MHC's can create a model of resident-owned affordable housing communities. Examining the availability of resources and the power struggles at play for these resources provides key insights into the interaction between social movements and the wider political process.

Earlier in Chapter 2, I addressed the contradiction of homeownership without land ownership that is at the center of the instability of MHC's and their marginalization within the ACC community. I turn now to a discussion of community land trusts as a practical policy choice that has radical theoretical implications on notions of property, ownership, and markets.

3.2 Capturing Value in Manufactured Housing Communities: A Discussion of Community Land Trusts

One way in which the PoH is addressing the unstable land tenure of manufactured housing communities is by creating a community land trust park in ACC. Following successful models in New Hampshire and other states (Wallis 1991; New Hampshire Community Loan Fund), the PoH has partnered with the Athens Land Trust in order to create a resident owned community that is dedicated to providing housing as a social good rather than a market commodity. Community land trusts (CLTs) maintain affordability by effectively removing land from market pressures (Bourassa 2006, 402), a process that Marcuse calls "decommodifying" housing (1985). In a CLT, the cost of the land is subsidized by a third party (in this case the Athens Land Trust) so that residents pay only the cost of the structure. By subsidizing the land and not the structure, a CLT is able to pass on the affordability to the next resident. The subsidy is passed on by limiting the amount of profit that an owner-occupier can earn on resale and rental housing can be subsidized in ways that effectively shelter the community from rent increases and

loss of affordability (Imbroscio 2004). While this is a radical departure from the tenets of free market neoliberalism, it is not explicitly a non-market form of land ownership. This unique, grassroots model of creating a community dedicated to long-term affordability seems to offer the greatest potential for preserving low-income housing, particularly mobile home parks, in perpetuity. While CLTs have been effective in states like California and New Hampshire, there have been no manufactured housing CLT's in Georgia and the People of Hope intend to demonstrate the practical utility of this model for millions of Southern park residents.

In this section, I intend to examine how CLT's operate organizationally, financially, and socially and to discuss this model as a practical tool for creating sustainable affordable housing communities. Later in the chapter I will discuss the ways in which CLT's are a theoretical subversion of the common logic surrounding property ownership. The first section of this chapter will deal with CLT's and the mechanisms used to create long term affordability. I will explain these mechanisms in detail and provide some context for how CLT's differ from conventional low-income housing development. The second section will place CLT's within the larger context of "third sector" (J.E. Davis 2000, 2006, 2007) housing as a type of innovative public-private partnership that is beginning to make an impact on policymakers and affordable housing advocates. This section should demonstrate that affordable housing can be created and sustained in a way that is sound from a fiscal and policy perspective and also serves the needs of low and moderate income populations that have been shut out of the housing market. Understanding these policies will demonstrate with clarity how the PoH is asserting their right to place within larger structures of capitalist urban development.

3.2.1 A Survey of Land Trusts

A household is considered to have a problem of affordable housing if it makes below 80% of the area median income and it spends more than 30% of its income on housing costs[5]. Housing prices in the U.S. have begun to outpace wages at an alarming rate – the number of households that paid 50% or more of their income on housing rose by 14% from about 13 to 15 million between 2001 and 2004. Of those 15 million households, 47% were owners and 53% were renters[6]. This widening affordability gap is placing a great burden on low to moderate income families. CLT's offer these low-income consumers a step onto the housing equity ladder. Before delving more specifically into how CLT's operate, I will outline a few important facts about the history of CLT's in the U.S.

The first CLT actually appeared in rural Georgia in 1968 as a solution to the racially inequitable patterns of land ownership and the displacement of African American farmers in the South (J.E. Davis 2006). Many of the first CLT's appeared as a result of major individual efforts of organizing, or from the efforts of non-profit community groups, although now more and more municipalities are becoming engaged with forming CLT's (Sungu-Eryilmaz and Greenstein 2007, 4). The conceptual roots of the CLT model can be traced back to thinkers like Henry George, a 19th century political economist who believed that competitive markets were the best institution for allocating society's resources (Brown 1997). However, he understood land to be a different commodity than others traded in the economy. He argued that there is both an individual and a community interest in land (ibid). George was a progressive philosopher who recognized the dialectic interaction between land value being both naturally produced and publicly supported through various interventions in the landscape (public services, infrastructure,

[5] Joint Center for Housing Studies 2006.
[6] Ibid.

etc). Therefore, he thought that land value that was produced by anything other than private actions should be captured by the public (Sungu-Eryilmaz and Greenstein 2007). Balancing private rights with public interest is one of the key theoretical implications of this model (J.E. Davis 2007). There are three definitional aspects of CLT's that need to be clarified (Sungu-Eryilamz and Greenstein 2007, 6):

1. A CLT removes the cost of land from the housing price by having the land and the house owned by separate entities. A private, nonprofit corporation (i.e. Athens Land Trust) acquires land parcels with the intention of retaining long term ownership.
2. The non-profit organization then provides for the private use of the land through long term ground lease agreements. Leaseholders pay what is called a ground rent to the non-profit organization holding the land. The leaseholders may own their homes or other improvements on the leased land, but resale restrictions apply.
3. The rights, responsibilities, and benefits of the residential property are shared between the individual homeowners and the non-profit group which represents the interests of the leaseholders and a larger community. Leaseholders are placed within a democratic community support system in which resources and decision making abilities are pooled together.

3.2.2 Organizational and Financial Structure of CLT's

Of the 190 CLT's identified in the United States, only 4 were established more than 25 years ago (Sungu-Eryilmaz and Greenstein 2007, 10). Of all the organizations that have been formed, all cited rising housing prices as a major impetus for organizing (ibid). Most of the organizations were formed by non-profit community groups, but the last 15 years has seen increased involvement at the local and state government level. Public funds were important to over half the CLT start-ups in the years 1990 to 2006, a marked contrast to the first CLT's that were mostly supported without public investment (ibid). Also, like the Athens Land Trust, most CLT's are small in staff and budget resources. The median staff size is 3 and the mean budget for fiscal year 2005 was $200,716 (ibid).

The governance structure of CLT's are a crucial part of their ability to achieve the goals of providing affordable housing in the long term. The PoH-ALT[7] board consists of three parts, each containing an equal number of seats. The tri-partite structure represents the multiple interests of affordable housing, private ownership, and community building. A third of the PoH board is made up of former Garden Springs residents who have a vested interest in the security of their community but also have an interest in generating some profit from their homes. Another third is drawn from members of the Athens Land Trust and the final third is made up of public officials, local funders, and affordable housing advocates. The structure is set up so that two-thirds of the members are committed to restricting speculation in the property. This is done in order to prevent residents from changing the resale formula (by popular vote) and selling their homes at market rates or from renting out their units at market rates. The residents, although not the majority of the board, serve to keep the Athens Land Trust in check by preventing them from operating as the sole landlord and making decisions on the use of the land without considering the impact on the lessees. This unique private-public partnership structure, based on checks and balances, is the best model for long term affordability in manufactured housing communities. Essentially, the residents sacrifice *some* of their ability to make a profit on their homes in exchange for the stability provided by cooperative ownership.

3.2.3 CLT's in Comparison to other Affordable Housing Programs

The major problem with most affordable housing programs is that they too easily revert to market rates, thereby wasting precious public subsidies on short-term uses. Section 8 is the most common affordable housing program and has been leading the shift of responsibility for

[7] The PoH has a separate board from the ALT. When the community is built, there will be a new board that consists of members of both organizations, as well as other members from the community.

affordable housing from the public to the private sector that began in earnest during the Reagan era (Benham 2003, J.E. Davis 2000). The program has private owners contract with HUD to make some, or all, of the rental units affordable. The owner is allowed to charge Fair Market Rate rents, typically set at the 40th percentile of area rents (Benham 2003, 20). The tenant will pay a monthly rent equal to 30% of their income (affordability threshold) and the government will pay what is needed to equal the Fair Market Rate (Siegesmund 2000, 1129). There are two subsidies involved: one is given to private developers to build or rehabilitate affordable housing, and the other is in the form of tenant-based vouchers (Benham 2003, 20). The main problem with Section 8 is that the contracts that keep the housing affordable only last for fifteen years, after which the owner is allowed to revert the property back to the market.

Section 8 would benefit from longer contracts that would keep subsidies from being wasted over fifteen year periods. As fair market rents rise at a faster rate than income, the government is spending more and more each year to subsidize housing (Siegesmund 2000, 1138). Section 8 is a type of public-private partnership, but it contains no mechanism to ensure truly long-term affordability.

The HOPE program was initiated in the early 90's as a response to the "failure" of public housing. HOPE programs oversaw the destruction of high-rise public tenements in favor of mixed-use development. The idea was that the program would create stable communities and help residents to become self-sufficient so that they can eventually leave subsidized housing (Benham 2003, 22). However, HOPE's emphasis on low-density development saw many more units being torn down than were being built. In 1992, of the 5,000 units of affordable housing that were razed only half of the residents were able to return to the replacement developments (ibid). This situation exacerbates the affordable housing crisis rather than alleviates it.

Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) are another public-private development plan that involves public funds being used to subsidize private development of affordable housing. Owners of approved low-income rental properties can claim a tax credit annually over a period of ten years (Siegesmund 2000, 1135). Critics argue that LIHTC's do not create opportunities for home-ownership. Since rents rise faster than wages, renters are spending a higher percentage of their income on housing. Homeowners, on the other hand, are finding that as their income increases with inflation they begin to pay a lower percentage of the income to housing (Benham 2003, 30). Homeowners also have the ability to build equity. LIHTC's have also been criticized for not serving populations with very low incomes. LIHTC contracts allow owners to receive the tax credit for renting at 50% of area median income. Families making less than 50% of the area median income are shut out of this program (ibid).

The programs listed above are some of the most well-known and popular affordable housing programs, yet their success has been varied. J.E. Davis identifies the impact of shifting affordable housing onto the private sector as a situation where non-profits compete with each other every year for federal subsidies that decrease annually. The private affordable housing market is expected to do more with less (2000). The problems identified above can be thought of as problems related to the short-term use of subsidies and the pressure on owners to revert to market rates. HOPE programs have also been identified with gentrification and displacement of low-income residents (Hackworth 2002). While they are certainly not a panacea, community land trusts are a policy alternative that creates long-term affordability, homeownership and equity building potential, and places community control firmly at the grassroots level.

3.2.4 Restrictions Imposed in a Community Land Trust

As stated previously, CLT's provide affordable housing by heavily subsidizing or excluding the cost of the underlying land and by imposing strict limits on the amount of capital gains (profits) that owners can earn upon resale, thus keeping prices low for subsequent buyers. By tying the subsidy to the land and not the structure, the subsidy can be preserved for future buyers. In the typical affordable housing provision, a house will be subsidized for the first buyer, who can then achieve a windfall by either selling or renting out the subsidized unit at full market rates when the contract expires. I will return to this comparison in the next section, but it is important to understand this unique function of CLT's.

There are four generic formulas used by CLT's to determine the resale price and the amount of appreciation that is allowed to the CLT lessee selling her home: Indexed formulas, itemized formulas, appraisal-based formulas, and mortgage-based formulas. I will focus on appraisal-based formulas because they are the most widely used. Appraisal based formulas work by "upwardly adjusting the original price by giving the owner a specified percentage of market appreciation, as measure by appraisals that are done at the time of purchase and at the time of resale" (Sungu-Eryilmaz and Greenstein 2007, 30). In other words, when selling the home the owner will regain the original purchase price plus a certain percentage of the resale price.

Because the PoH and Athens Land Trust want to keep their financial contracts private, I will use the Burlington Community Land Trust (BCLT) as an example of how a typical CLT operates. The BCLT was formed by the City of Burlington in 1984 under the care of socialist mayor Bernie Sanders. The BCLT board consists of nine members – three residents of the BCLT, three non-resident members who support the land trust model, and three public representatives of either non-profit housing groups or public officials (Bourassa 2006, 11). The

bylaws prohibit the sale of any land unless approved by two-thirds of the board, 75% of members (non-board residents), and 100% of directly affected leaseholders (ibid).

The original resale formula of the BCLT was changed several times because the way that it was structured only allowed for minimal returns for leaseholders. Abromowitz notes that there is a continuum of resale formulas between very strict and limiting of resale profits (but high preservation of affordability to future residents) and loose resale formulas that allow for higher returns but a reduction of long term affordability (2000). In the case of the BCLT, the original resale formula only allowed for residents to earn a profit on *appreciation of the structure and improvements on the structure,* which appreciates at a much lower rate than the property as a whole (structure and land). The BCLT changed the resale formula to define the return as a fraction of the *total appreciation of the property rather than just the return on the structure* (Bourassa 2006, 15). These organizational decisions are made through a democratic process initiated at board meetings.

Here is an example of how a resale would work in the Burlington model[8]. The BCLT provided for lessee's to earn 25% of the appreciation of the total price earned at resale. If the original appraised value was $100,000 and property appreciated at 3.8% per year for five years, the appraised value at the time of resale would be $120,500. Appreciation would be $20, 500. If the initial house price was subsidized with a $40,000 grant (to pay for the land), the net purchase by the resident would have been $60,000, or 60% of the total market value of the property. Upon resale five years later, the seller would be entitled to 25% of 60% of the appreciation ($20,500), or $3,075 in addition to recouping the $60,000 they paid for the home. In other words, the seller earns 25% of the profit earned on the resale of their share of the property (60%).

[8] Example taken from Bourassa 2006 pages 15-16.

3.3 Radical Housing? The Theoretical Importance of the PoH and Third Sector Housing

Most affordable housing programs work with the short-term provisioning of public subsidies towards private markets that have an unwavering ideology of profit accumulation that ultimately works against the interest of housing produced as a social good. However, community land trusts are a part of a small contingent of *private, non-market* forms of land tenure and ownership that help create communities that are affordable in the long term. The new PoH community being built near the site of their former neighborhood is a testament to the collective power of this third sector that rests upon cooperation between low-income residents, housing advocates, and policymakers working to achieve a socially sustainable goal. In addition to community land trusts, the third sector is comprised of private-public partnerships that promote programs like deed restrictions, limited equity condominiums, mutual housing associations, and limited equity cooperatives (Davis, J.E.2000). J.E. Davis identifies three characteristics of third sector housing (2000, 233):

1. *It is privately owned*. Title to residential real estate is held by a person, a household, a family, or a private corporation. The property may be publicly subsidized; it may be publicly regulated; but it is not publicly owned by a municipal corporation.
2. *It is price restricted.* A contractual limit is placed on the future price at which the property's units may be rented or resold, preserving the affordability of those units for a targeted class of low-income or moderate income households…Price restrictions do not lapse when the housing changes hands, nor do they expire after a short duration to allow the owners to cash in on the property's appreciated value.
3. *It is socially oriented.* The property's main function is to meet the social needs of present and future occupants, not to accumulate wealth for the property's owners. Homeowners are…linked together in a supportive network of operational oversight, shared resources, pooled risks, and mutual aid."

The notion that private housing might have price restrictions and be socially oriented goes against the grain of conventional ways of thinking about property. Land and property have for centuries been seen as marketable commodities that individuals will 'naturally' exchange for

the highest price. This idea stretches back at least to John Locke's labor theory of property, which enshrined private property as a sacrosanct Western value. Locke's idea that "As much land as a man tills, plants, improves, cultivates, and can use the product of, so much is his property. He by his labour, does, as it were, inclose it from the commons" (Locke 1980, 21). Locke's ideas have been the foundation of a historical narrative of the "highest and best use" of the land that is now common in every planning department in the U.S. Not only is the independent control over private property an inevitable fact stemming from human evolution from agricultural society to a trading economy safeguarded by government (Blomley 2004, 85), but private property is also seen as a divine right (ibid). According to Locke (ibid),

> "God gave the world to men in common; but since he gave it to them for their benefit, and the greatest conveniences of life they were capable to draw from it, it cannot be supposed he meant it should always remain common and uncultivated. He gave it to the use of the industrious and rational, (and *labour* was to be *his title* to it)". (emphasis in original)

What Locke established was a 'natural' right to unlimited amounts of private property, and that accumulating more property than was needed was not morally objectionable as long as it was not "wasted" (Locke 1980, editors introduction, xviii). The market is thus attributed to a state of nature (ibid). It is upon these ideological shoulders that the principle of the market as a fair and just distributor of goods rests. It is fundamentally an ideology that legitimizes inequality by decoupling societies needs from the means to acquire those needs, placing them under the control of the 'invisible hand'. Affordable housing, then, like every commodity, is only within the reach of those with enough capital to successfully compete in the market place.

Third sector housing is an affront to the spirit of these rules. Community land trusts, whether initiated by grassroots organizing or by municipal governments, are a statement that "price restricted housing does indeed serve a public purpose - that society's best interest is

sometimes served by removing real estate from the speculative market" (J.E. Davis 2000, 247). The highest and best use may not always serve the needs of people, as demonstrated by the growing inequality gap in the housing market. In this light, third sector housing appears to be a radical subversion of sacred American values steeped in capitalism. Yet because it is practical and works as a long term solution to affordable housing, third sector approaches can appease even staunch free market proponents who are tired of wasting public subsidies year after year (provided, of course, that third sector programs operate as designed and are able to become self-sustaining).

3.3.1 The (Problematic) Logic of Capital Accumulation

The production and reproduction of private property as it plays out in modern capitalism is fraught with contradictions that result in the interests of capital being served above the interests of the community and social welfare. Harvey, Neil Smith, and many others have spent major parts of their careers studying the processes of capital accumulation and their findings indicate that capital plays a dominant (but not necessarily deterministic) role in the production of the landscape.

The tendency toward overaccumulation in the productive industrial sectors of the economy (primary circuit) result in a shift in investment towards the built environment (secondary circuit) (Harvey 1989). Over investment in productive capacity leads to flooded markets, falling prices and rising inflation. Ironically, this occurs in part because of competition between capitalists for the creation of surplus value. As the primary circuit becomes overproductive and profits are maximized, accumulation must continue somewhere. This is accumulation for accumulation's sake – capital must always expand or shift geographically in order to increase profit year after year. Investment must find an outlet and therefore shifts to the

secondary circuit - in the form of buildings, infrastructure, housing, etc. The secondary circuit, however, also experiences overaccumulation albeit at a slower rate than the primary. This problem is exacerbated in the secondary circuit because of the longer turnover time for investments in the built environment than in the productive sector:

> "The problem is that the physical structures that are created in the course of capitalist investment in the built environment last so long that they act as *barriers* to further accumulation. Thus even as some "fractions" of capital are reaping profits from their past investment in the built environment, other "fractions" have an interest in razing these buildings to make way for new investment" (J.E. Davis 1991, 287 emphasis in original).

Buildings are sometimes razed, but more often than not capital simply shifts to areas of disinvestment and decay, where the presence of the "rent gap" (N. Smith 1987, 1996) makes reinvestment attractive and even logical. This is the classic story of gentrification explained in chapter 3. Capital must destroy what it has created, only to recreate it elsewhere or in different forms, a process that Harvey calls "creative destruction" (1989). This is the dialectic at work; a system that is both its thesis and antithesis. The result is uneven development (Smith 1984) that stems from the "natural" operation of the free market. Allowing this "hidden hand" to dictate the provisioning of social goods, like housing, creates a tremendous burden on those without the capital (economic and political) to resist. Ironically, the government that lubricates the operation of the free market is left to deal with the negative consequences of gentrification, the international division of labor, and the environmental destruction wrought by the contradictions of capital. It is within this context of exploitation and domination that groups like the PoH form pockets of resistance to the logic of capital.

3.3.2 Community Resistance to Neoliberal Landscapes

Communities can and do form counter-narratives to the dominate ideology of using space to its "highest and best use". They often do so by limiting the dominance of the hidden hand in their communities; many times this involves a blurring of the line between public and private property. Who owns a place like Garden Springs? The legal title and deed belonged to an absentee landlord with no personal connection to the space, yet some residents had lived there for decades and made the place what it was. Residents owned Garden Springs collectively and socially, although they did not own the land legally. Such claims to collective ownership have been made and supported in anti-gentrification protests in Vancouver (Blomley 2004). If a landscape is produced both materially and visually by those that inhabit it, then those who input labor into the production of that space can claim some entitlement to collective ownership of a site (ibid). Blomley suggests that ideas about property are far from settled. Yet the dominant ideology of space and place is a pervasive force with respect to discussions of housing and land tenure. In considering the home as a site of capitalist reproduction, one can identify competing ideologies surrounding property in a local community. On the one hand, property and land tenure can be a conservative, pacifying force that serves the *status quo* by dividing property owners among themselves and reinforcing restraints on alienation[9]. Indeed, the right to have one's property unencumbered is such a "righteous, uncontested ideal of the American Dream that alternative conceptions of tenure are all but excluded form the market place of ideas" (J.E. Davis 1991, 126)). Hence, community groups can and do rally around notions of place in defense of exclusion, racism, and NIMBYism (M. Davis 2006).

[9] The restraints on alienation is a legal principle concerning one's freedom from having restrictions imposed on one's ability to sell property (Abromowitz 2000).

On the other hand, the local community can be a site of subversion of capitalist reproduction. The PoH, for example, has ideas about community and property that are not conducive to capitalist accumulation. This does not mean that the PoH is unconcerned with material well being, but rather that the social and cultural interests of the community as a whole trump the market ideology. Community in this sense is not based on one's restraint from alienation and right to accumulation, but instead serves as "something of a haven against the marketplace, rather than an extension of it" (J.E. Davis 1991, 304). What is important for the PoH members is being close to a social support structure and close to needed jobs and services, in short, having a "right to the city" (Lefebvre 1991, Mitchell 2003). In summation, the local community can be a site of reinforcing the dominant capitalist production of space or it can be a site of antagonism and collective identity formation.

Community land trusts present immense opportunities to create neighborhoods that are resident controlled, democratic institutions that serve a long term social function. From a practical perspective, allowing an unfettered marketplace to determine the provisioning of socially necessary goods like affordable housing has clearly been a failure in the United States. On a theoretical level, CLT's and third sector housing represent a *radical* resistance to such forms of social reproduction. Radical because acknowledging that some things are beyond processes of speculative accumulation is indeed a subversion of many of the principles our housing policies rest on. Community land trusts make a statement that echoes past urban theorists like Weber:

> "The market economy as such is the most impersonal relationship of practical life into which humans can enter with one another…The reason for the impersonality of the market is its matter-of-factness, its orientation to the commodity and only to that. Where the market is allowed to follow its own autonomous tendencies, its participants do not look forward towards the persons of each other but only toward the economy; there are no obligations of brotherliness or reverence, and

> none of those spontaneous human relations that are sustained by personal unions. They would all just obstruct the free development of the bare market relationship…" (quoted in J.E. Davis 1991, 302).

While community land trusts represent only a small fraction of the affordable housing programs in place today, they offer the best choice low-income residents seeking *stable* communities, and hence CLT's are a perfect remedy to the instability of manufactured housing parks. And for low-income residents, the idea of a resident-controlled community capable of building equity is an exciting step towards creating a better life and a way out of poverty. Security of place, in this instance, can only be achieved when capitalism is held at bay and democratic, collective community building is the guiding principle.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODS

4.1 Study Area

The proposed research will center on the former Garden Springs community on North Avenue in Athens, GA (see Figure 1). This research site is important for several reasons. To begin with, it is located close to downtown Athens and the University of Georgia (less than two miles), which is a major reason why the community was profitable for reinvestment. Second, the removal of the Garden Springs community is one of the most publicized local incidents regarding affordable housing in the past decade. As a case study, the history of Garden Springs provides an opportunity to explore questions about the rights of poor people to "stay put" (Newman and Wyly 2006) in their communities. Third, the scale of displacement in Garden Springs compared to other MHC's that have closed provides a more dramatic context from which to argue against the social injustice of gentrification. Lastly and most importantly, dialectical reasoning allows me to connect the PoH response to the political economic structures of urban housing and paint a more complete picture of how development plays out in this local context.

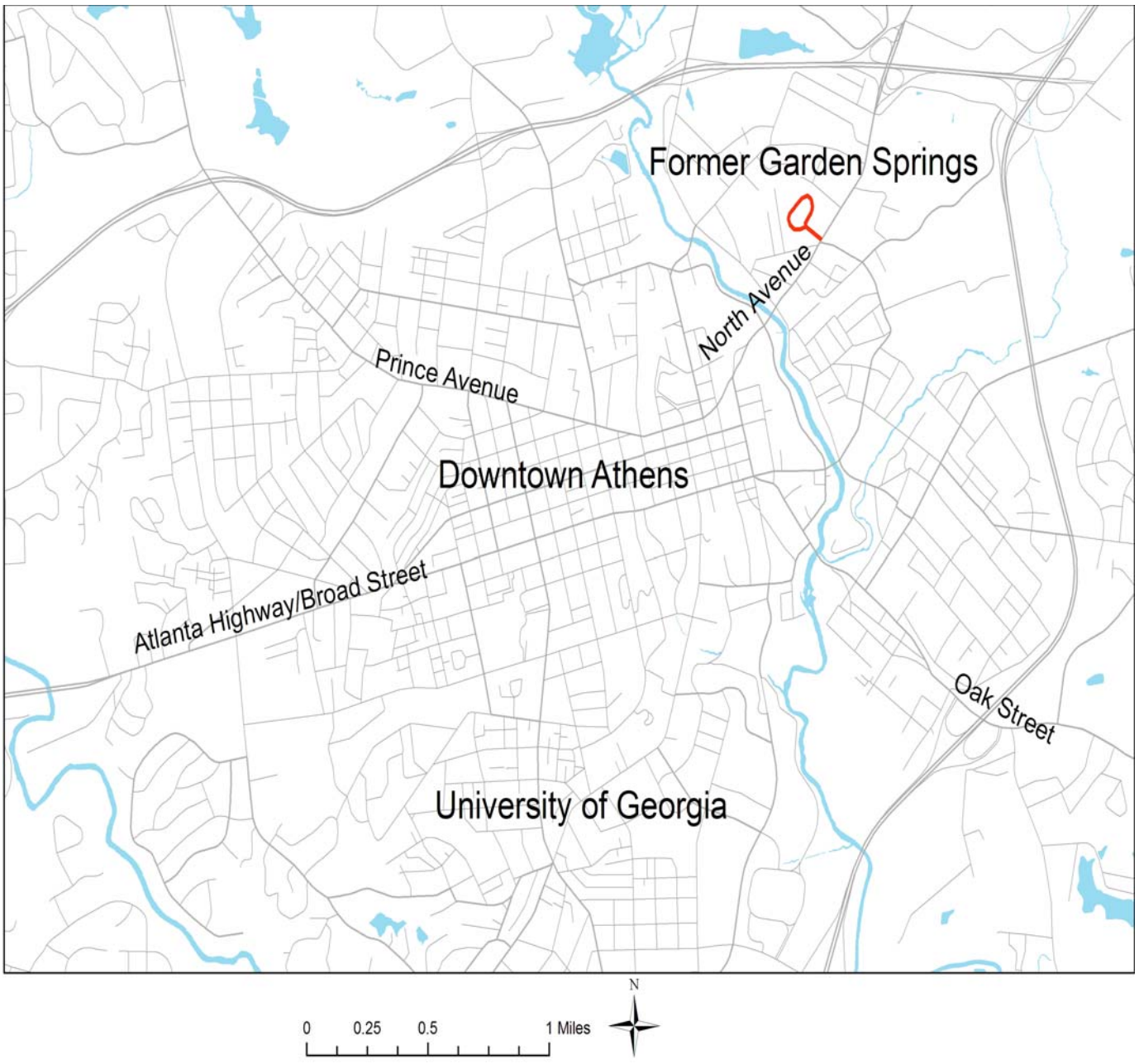
4.2 Research Methods

I conducted eighteen interviews in the active interview style where knowledge is co-constructed between researcher and participant (Holstein and Gubrium 1995). These interviews

were intended to let participants create their own narrative as opposed to following a rigid question-and-answer formula (see Miles and Crush 1993). Qualitative interviews have been conducted with two primary groups: members of the People of Hope organization, and other actors involved with affordable housing including local government officials, activists, financial institutions, and affordable housing program administrators. I had intended to interview developers, real estate companies, and university officials dealing with community affairs, but my repeated requests for interviews were either ignored or denied. This in and of itself was an interesting finding, as it may be true that people involved in the private market were less willing to talk critically about their jobs. (See Appendix B and C for examples of interview questions).

Quantitative archival data was used to triangulate qualitative methods. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) define triangulation as "the use of multiple methods in an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question…it is a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth" (3). Triangulation, it should be noted, is not a validation of qualitative methods because qualitative research stands on its own as research that understands "phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them" (ibid). Dozens of newspaper accounts on Garden Springs, local politics surrounding development/land use, and affordable housing were analyzed. In addition, I was able to obtain zoning records and minutes from planning sessions that involved zoning decisions. Two of the key documents that I engaged were the 1999 Comprehensive Plan and the 2007 update to that document, which outlined strategies for growth in ACC. Together, these archival materials gave me crucial insight into all of the varying social and political dynamics that feed into planning and development.

Figure 1: Former Garden Springs Location



4.2.1 Interrogating the Political Economy of Manufactured Housing and Studentification

Data Collection – Gaining access to the various actors involved with housing development, financing, planning, etc, was facilitated by participation in public meetings and planning sessions, as well as using the Internet and email to contact potential participants. These interviews allowed me to gain insight into how manufactured housing was perceived and regulated in ACC's policy and planning. Interviews with local housing experts were especially important in terms of understanding the interaction between housing in ACC and the impact of the student population. Interviews in this phase had a more technical emphasis, focusing on specific housing and growth policies that effect MHC's. There was an interesting power dynamic in the interviews, one in which power was tightly interwoven with the interview site and where I once again had to acknowledge my outsider and non-expert status (Elwood and Martin 2000). However, as I gained a better understanding of the political nature of policy and how policies are influenced by ideology and discourse, I felt that I was able to hold my own ground as a burgeoning expert. As I learned, it became easier to think critically during the interviews and to ask more pointed questions on the fly.

The collection of archival materials was facilitated by free online databases of newspaper articles from the Athens Banner-Herald and from the websites of various organizations, including the PoH, Athens Grow Green Coalition, the UGA Housing and Demographics Research Center, the Georgia Community Loan Fund, Flagpole Magazine, the Red & Black newspaper, and many others. In addition, I spent many hours over several days in the office of the ACC Planning Department looking over publicly available zoning documents and records of land use.

Data Analysis - Once the interviews were conducted and other secondary quantitative materials collected, I began a process of transcribing and coding my interviews using NVivo software for interview analysis. This software allowed me to more easily code my transcriptions by highlighting themes that I found in interviews and archival material, separating and isolating differing voices and ideas, and creating a network of ideas using "nodes" and "trees" in an NVivo file. If, for example, I created a node called "politics", I might have various other nodes branching off that that were related, like "greenbelt" and "zoning". These nodes would often appear in other networks as well, depending on the context of the discussion. For example, "zoning" appeared in the "politics" tree but it also appeared in the "NIMBY" tree of ideas as well. I could then link those together to show that some of the things that people said about zoning, while appearing to be matters of policy, were in fact thinly veiled NIMBY attitudes parading as technical jargon.

Coding, isolating, and identifying the ideas of my respondents allowed me to categorize my own thoughts based on what was appearing in the data. I used a combination of deductive and inductive coding. An example of using the deductive approach might be to look for disparaging remarks about manufactured housing as irrelevant or derelict, or other responses signaling manufactured housing as temporary and outside of the 'real' housing discussion. The inductive approach to coding built the coding schemes organically out of the conversations themselves. For example, the importance of the Comprehensive Plan and issues of growth management and sprawl reduction were ideas that emerged out of the interviews. Once I began to incorporate these ideas into my coding, I could see that there were different ideas about affordable housing and about 'beautification' that were talking past each other. Looking at newspaper accounts of the fervor around the greenbelt, there was a clear discourse that stressed

the importance of environmental protection. But at the same time, there were articles on affordable housing and Garden Springs that never acknowledged the impact that planning might have had. Coding this archival data and linking it to some of the interviews that *did* see the connections between housing and growth management helped me understand the nature of politics and how all things within urban space are connected. Through deductive and inductive coding, I was able to analyze the data from both ends by building on my own theories while simultaneously responding to the independent flow of the interviews and to the archival material. NVivo has been useful for pulling apart numerous interviews and ideas and linking them; it has been a tool for dialectical thinking because concepts can be stripped down and then rebuilt again in a synthesis. It was also instrumental in analyzing discourse and seeing how ideas shape policy and regulations. Having coded the data, I was able to connect it directly to my questions (See Appendix A).

Expected Contribution – This phase of interviews was designed to shed light on how both public and private institutions manage growth and development from both a policy and a planning perspective. What was the role of the state in limiting the supply of affordable housing? Is gentrification fueled by student-led demand or do political planning decisions also factor in? How do private developers, real estate agents, and financial institutions support (or not) MHC's? What sort of safety net is in place to deal with displacement? The goal of this phase was to understand the overall growth strategy regarding of ACC and to determine what factors impact development and how. Additionally, it was crucial to gain insight into how an urban social movement mobilizes resources (both persons and materials) and how, and why, it might succeed or fail (Piven and Cloward 1979). Some of the specific topics of discussion included the politics of zoning and more importantly, finding out how growth management can

limit the supply of affordable housing and increase costs within the urban area. Additionally, finding out how low-income housing subsidies are distributed, how policy-makers view housing and land use, how financial institutions support MHC's, and whether gentrification is an implicit or explicit strategy for growth were all a part of this phase.

4.2.2 Examining the Response of the People of Hope

Data Collection – I was able to interview the two full-time employees of the PoH organization multiple times and worked with them in their office writing their annual newsletter. However, there was considerable difficulty in gaining access to the former residents, as many of them were either too busy to be interviewed or there was a language barrier between myself and the resident. I spoke with the president of the PoH, who was also a former Garden Springs resident, informally at their Christmas party in December of 2007 but was unable to secure a more structured interview. Luckily, these difficulties with access had been foreseen, and in response I directed my attention to people outside of the main core group of residents – those who had been involved with relief efforts in 2001-2002. I was able to interview the PoH attorney and numerous other people (activists, church members, etc) who were directly involved with fundraising and organizing efforts. My focus shifted from thinking about the actual reality of displacement to thinking about the details of creating a community land trust park and how that model reflected a genuine alternative to affordable housing development as usual. Therefore my interviews involved the PoH and its supporters but I felt it was also important to interview a wider range of experts and policymakers who may or may not have been sympathetic to the PoH cause.

There was significant overlap between those who I interviewed concerning the political economy and student impact on housing and interviews concerning the creation of a resident-owned community. Many participants wore several hats, being activists, experts, and policy-makers all at once. Nearly all of the participants had been in their respective positions for several years and were very familiar with trends in policy and development. Therefore, the information that I gleaned from them stands as a form of expert knowledge that proved very useful in understanding the totality of the political economic and socio-spatial processes at work. I do not feel that my research suffered because of my lack of access to former residents; while their trials and tribulations create an emotional narrative, my goal was to understand the root of the problem and to assess the solutions proposed. The research process is never without its obstacles and it is important to be reflexive and adapt one's project to the realities of the field. My project was actually strengthened by examining the political process and the institutions vying for power within the local community as opposed to retelling a narrative of displacement.

Data Analysis - I used the same process of coding and analysis as stated above. Both deductive and inductive reasoning informed the process of analysis. The deductive form involved approaching the data with certain terms and key words in mind; for example, I might be looking for discussions of "resistance" or "justice, or use of the term "trailer" to connote bias. Inductive reasoning was useful in assessing the ways in which housing was discursively produced as a commodity rather than as an entitlement or a social good. This was important in determining ways in which the ideology of the marketplace influenced support or antagonism towards the PoH and affordable housing. I was also interested in how the PoH competes for limited housing subsidies and the role that their activism played in influencing the political climate and drumming up support. The relationship between activism and politics proved to be

centrally important, as it became clear that to some extent, both activists and politicians use one another for various reasons. Additionally, I was interested in the conflict between growth management and the appropriation of affordable housing. It became apparent that my initial research questions about student populations driving demand and making housing less affordable was only one part of the puzzle. Growth management strategies emerged as vital after a few initial interviews and my analysis moved to encompass these factors into my original hypothesis. Some examples of my analysis ideas are listed in Appendix C.

Expected Contribution - The interviews conducted with the PoH members provided the initial context for further understanding how urban space is contested and constructed in ACC. Interviews with the PoH and related activists focused on a narrative that described how people dealt with the loss of community, friendship and social networks, the difficulties of finding temporary or replacement housing, as well as how they became involved in the active resistance against their collective circumstances. Reflexivity is important in researching social movements, in that I had to realize my own state of "betweeness" (Katz 1994); I was simultaneously both in the field and an outsider at the same time. I recognized that I could not speak for the participants simply because they were dispossessed and marginalized; the interviews were intended to give the marginalized and dispossessed an opportunity to create their own past (Miles and Crush 1993) and to amplify their own concerns in their own words. Fortunately, it became apparent that I was not attempting to speak *for* people, but rather that I was speaking *about* them in ways that were beneficial to their cause. I discussed this problem of "speaking for" people who I had never met with some of the PoH members and activists. They dismissed my concerns and instead focused on the fact that it was more important, in their eyes, to educate a wider audience about some of the problems facing low-income communities in Georgia.

As I have mentioned above, engaging with the political context that the PoH operated within allowed me compare their goals and attitudes with those of other affordable housing providers and policymakers. This enabled me to gain a wider perspective on how housing is created both materially and discursively. There was clearly a discourse of the market as provider and another quite different discourse of the market as the problem. These competing discourses played out in interesting ways that I will explain fully in the next chapter.

My general rubric for analyzing both sections of interviews was to focus on both policies and perceptions of manufactured housing and who, what, where, and why certain individuals or groups advocate these policies or perceptions. Again, my historical geographical materialist lens informed my coding and analyzing procedures and allowed me to tack back and forth between the historical moment and what people had to say about it in the present.

There was a point of saturation in my interviews where I begin to notice many of the same ideas coming up over and over. After about fifteen interviews I felt like I had covered a lot of ground and talked to the full range of actors – from business oriented policymakers and experts to social justice oriented activists. This range of perspectives was by no means monolithic and there were as many nuances in ideas as there were people involved. However, a consensus did emerge, although as I just stated it was not absolute and across the board. Both the interviews, participation in housing meetings, and secondary resources yielded a connection between policies designed to manage growth, which had the unintended consequence of driving up urban land values, student-led demand for a culturally specific housing form, and the increasing difficulty of very-low income residents to secure adequate housing. Although the job of dialectical reasoning is never truly done, I think a point of saturation that was reached with my data collection.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

In most research projects, more questions and lines of inquiry emerge during the research process than were originally foreseen at the outset. This is, of course, what makes research both interesting and enlightening. I initially proposed that there were essentially two driving factors behind the closing of the Garden Springs community and the displacement of its residents: an ownership structure that was disadvantageous to manufactured housing park residents, and a demand for student housing driven by the vast numbers of student renters in the local community. My research showed that my hypothesis has been in fact largely correct – although incomplete as I will demonstrate. My interviews revealed a more banal factor that I had previous overlooked when thinking about socio-spatial processes that lead to class conflict in urban areas: that of land use planning. Having only been a resident of Athens for less than two years, my historical knowledge of local politics was limited. However, the use of dialectics requires historicizing events in order to locate them within the social relations that produced them. Therefore my analysis in the following section will trace out some of the local politics that were (and continue to be) monumentally important in understanding affordable housing and development in Athens.

Stated simply, the local government of ACC adopted a land use plan in 1999, roughly two years prior to the sale of Garden Springs. The plan advocated for high density infill development within “the loop” and an emphasis on protecting greenspace in rural parts of the

county. The 1999 Comprehensive Plan adopted by ACC was a highly contentious political document, pushed largely by environmentalists with the honest intention of protecting the non-developed areas of the county from falling victim to unplanned, sprawl-style development. It did so by lowering density in rural areas and increasing density in in-town neighborhoods. Unfortunately, policy is all too often crafted by narrow interests who push an agenda in the name of 'best intentions' and 'public good' while ignoring the larger implications of that agenda. Planning, as my analysis will show, is always a political project and is subject to the real political-economic and cultural power struggles of various social actors.

What emerged in the research process was a conflict between growth management (limiting sprawl, protecting the environment, etc) and the needs of affordable housing. Basic economics state that if you limit the supply of any commodity i.e. land available for development, the price of that commodity will rise. By encouraging the creation of a greenbelt, environmentalists that pushed vigorously for the noble goal of protecting our natural resources may have inadvertently made the provisioning and maintenance of affordable housing within the central urban area more difficult. Rising property values are good for governments and property owners, but those positive effects do not *necessarily* benefit low-income families that only see their cost of living going up. The sacred ideology of private property and the subsequent emphasis on accumulation of exchange value, in fact, only furthers the inequality between owners and non-owners. Clearly, it is not the 'rising tide that raises all ships'. This notion of class conflict was informed by my reading of the literature on political process models, which allowed me to encompass the impact of the wider political environment on Garden Springs and the People of Hope. Understanding how land use planning accelerated dense (re)development in

and around downtown Athens added another layer of complexity to this narrative of class conflict in the city.

To give a brief example of why dialectics is so important in answering the stated research questions, consider the relations (abstracted from the concrete world) between land use planning, studentification, and manufactured housing communities. Land use planning is inherently a political process and it is designed to use land to its "highest and best use". Through planning, local governments maximize utility and efficiency. Yet governments are subject to the will of the public. The public in ACC is and has been concerned with preserving greenspace. This concern leads to the setting aside of land that is "safe" from high density development. Limiting development to certain areas increases land values (both real and potential values) in those areas, which widens the rent gap to the point where landlords may choose to cash in on the potential value of their land. Yet this closing of the rent gap does not operate in a social vacuum; the potential value of that land is dialectically related to the latent demand for housing that the UGA student population supplies. Student housing is not just built anywhere either; student renters are restricted by county zoning and ordinances from living in more affluent single family areas. Furthermore, a land use such as a manufactured housing park presents its own set of factors that figure into this equation. The residents are often taken advantage of by slumlords and are seemingly powerless to affect their own ability to stay put. To summarize, this is not just a story about supply and demand or cause and effect, it's a story about how power is negotiated throughout the urban system.

I want to begin my analysis by doing the second step in the "dance of the dialectic" (Ollman 2003): historicizing. The 1999 Comprehensive Plan effected the supply of land in ACC. It had ramifications throughout every aspect of the community and I will take

considerable space in section 5.2 for dealing with the importance of this set of recommendations in relation to the future closing of Garden Springs. Section 5.3 will examine the relationship of the student population as a demand side explanation for the studentification of Garden Springs. The following section (5.4) will examine the ownership structure of Garden Springs and will deal with that specific community in full detail. Although these three sections will be separated, I will treat them as absolutely dialectically related and mutually constitutive of one another and will attempt to weave those relations together into a singular tapestry.

The second half of this chapter will examine the efforts of the PoH in attempting to construct Georgia's first resident-owned manufactured housing park under the community land trust model. The main thrust of this section will be to examine how the ideals of the model come up against the difficulties of putting them into practice.

The conclusion will suggest that this trifecta of socio-spatial process - land use planning, studentification, and the ownership structure of urban manufactured housing communities - exacerbated a situation of class conflict that jeopardized the ability of low-income families to stay put in their community. These same market forces and class-based values that have been at play are also visible in the difficulties PoH has had in constructing their community.

5.2 The Impact of Land Use Planning on Garden Springs: A Story of Class Conflict, Political Power, and Unintended Consequences

Before Garden Springs closed, and its 500 residents were evicted, there were developments that made that neighborhood more vulnerable to redevelopment. One of these developments - namely the creation of the greenbelt under the 1999 Comprehensive Plan– was an external political process that combined with a latent demand for student housing as well

deteriorating internal conditions within the park to lead to its eventual demolition. From a political-economy perspective, it is important to understand how restricting the supply of land increased the rent gap between capitalized and potential ground rent on the site of Garden Springs and made redevelopment *more likely*. I choose the phrase "*more likely"* as opposed to "*necessary*" or "*possible*" because, of course, the landowner of Garden Springs could have sold his property at any time of his choosing for any number of reasons. My argument, supported by my data, is that political decisions regarding land use increased the possibility that a "cash cow" property like Garden Springs would finally reach the apex of its earning potential for the landlord. In other words, land use planning widened the rent gap of that property to its tipping point, making it possible, indeed logical under capitalism, for the landlord to cash in on his investment and walk away, leaving the residents to fend for themselves.

The narrative of Garden Springs begins long before the 1999 Comprehensive Plan, however. In the early 1970's, HUD's Model Cities Program and its initiatives had reached Athens Clarke County and were responsible for the clearing of low to moderate-income, predominantly African-American neighborhoods along North Avenue. According to ACC government staffer #1[10], a government staff member with thirty years experience working with housing in ACC,

> "The Model Cities approach was to acquire that property [along North Avenue] and remove all the shacks and put the folks in public housing. So you broke families up, put them in subsidized housing away from their old neighborhoods. And then the land got back out on the real estate market and smart investors bought it while we watched our black families be destroyed…If it wasn't for Model Cities, Garden Springs would never have been there. They would have been owned, they would have been a series of small half acre parcels owned by poor families."

[10] Rather than use pseudonyms for research participants, I will be using generic job titles/descriptions of the participants.

So the cycle of development, underdevelopment, and redevelopment, what Neil Smith calls the "locational-seesaw" (1984), had begun long before eviction notices were sent out in 2001. The clearing of decaying, older black neighborhoods preceded and paved the way for the use of the parcel on North Avenue as a mobile home park. Garden Springs was built in the mid-1970's following the changes wrought by Model Cities. Ironically, the same cycle of disinvestment and reinvestment i.e. creative destruction (Harvey 1989) that uprooted Garden Springs had formerly taken its toll on the community that existed even before Garden Springs itself did! This interesting historical note provides an interesting backdrop for examining how a new set of policies and development plans impacted Garden Springs more than thirty years later.

5.2.1 The Main Points of the Comprehensive Plan

The 1999 Comprehensive Plan was created out of a two-year planning process and was intended to serve as a guide to growth for ACC over a twenty year period. As its name suggests, the plan covers the entire gamut of policy and included recommendations for housing, natural resource protection, education, teen pregnancy prevention, economic development, and transportation planning. One of the main thrusts of the plan was to reduce sprawl-style development that was characterized by "land intensive construction on previously undeveloped tracts of land" (Comp. Plan 1999, ch.2 pg.17). Using past trends, land use was projected to absorb "430 acres of new land [per year]…for a total of 9,465 acres over the planning period [1999-2020]" (Comp. Plan 1999, ch.7 pg.20). Residential use accounted for the majority (246 acres per year) of the projected land use (ibid). Allowing development to proceed unchecked into the rural parts of the county would have had the obvious effect of eliminating greenspace but also would have increased the need for the extension of public infrastructure out to those areas, a

process that is expensive and time consuming. The alternative to the continuation of sprawl in ACC was to recommend in-fill development in places near or between existing developments so that residential developers could take advantage of existing infrastructure (Comp. Plan 1999, ch2. pg.17). In-fill development is seen as less burdensome on county residents because they pay less for new developments that use existing infrastructure more "efficiently and effectively" (ibid).

The county plan wanted to prevent more single-family subdivisions from going up on the rural fringes of ACC, which threatened the aesthetic character of the county and posed serious infrastructure-related costs. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan identified the numerous natural resources and fragile ecological environments that existed in ACC. The combination of reducing sprawl and preserving greenspace resulted in the following recommendations:

> "The recommendations are designed to address the three issues facing Athens-Clarke County. Specifically, the Future Land Use Plan calls for *the managed growth of multi-family residential construction, and higher density development in general, in the urban areas of the county where services are already in place*. In addition, the rural and largely undeveloped portions of the county are designated to remain rural with only agricultural and low-density, clustered residential development permitted" (Comp. Plan 1999, ch.7 pg.21, emphasis added)

The Comprehensive Plan recommendations regarding housing and the creation of the greenbelt were enacted into policy over the next five years. The actual greenbelt itself was legislated into existence through the designation of a new zoning code – AR or agricultural/residential- in 2003 that applied to land along the borders of the county with the exception of the southern border, which was already developed. It is important to distinguish the comprehensive land use plan, which is a set of recommendations, from the zoning ordinances, which are *policies* guided by that set of recommendations. The 1999 Comprehensive Plan did not immediately change all the zoning in ACC, but it nevertheless had the immediate impact of drawing development into the

central areas of the city. So over the course of the five years following the 1999 Plan, zoning of in-town neighborhoods began to change and developers were "really paying attention to Athens at that time" as ACC planner #1 told me.

5.2.2 Zoning

While many neighborhoods saw their zoning increased from single to multi-family densities (single family has several designations ranging from a low density of one unit per 40,000 square feet to a high of one unit per 8,000 square feet; multi-family zoning ranges from sixteen multi-family units per acre all the way up to fifty units per acre), Garden Springs never actually experienced a zoning change. The parcel of land on 211 North Avenue was, and continues to be, zoned at RM-2, which allows for 24 multi-family units per acre. I was actually told by several participants that the zoning of Garden Springs itself had changed and this was what made the parcel of land desirable for redevelopment. However, my examination of old zoning maps in the Planning Department showed that Garden Springs was already zoned for high density and was therefore suitable for an apartment complex like the Lodge.

Although the zoning of Garden Springs remained as it was, other in-town neighborhoods were up-zoned to higher densities. The land trust experts that I talked to suggested that "the planning department said they wanted to 'clean up' these in town neighborhoods so they zoned them multifamily because they knew the investors would come in and buy things up if they could put more than two students in a house". In other words, the local growth limitations installed by the Comprehensive Plan created a situation where developers looking at Athens could stand to make sizable profits in areas that were zoned or rezoned to multi-family density.

The main person that provided legal assistance to the displaced residents (attorney/activist #5) described the land use plan as making affordable housing "a target" for redevelopment by increasing density. She elaborated:

> "I actually went to the commissioner meeting and spoke up about affordable housing and what they were about to do. But I was the only person that did. What happened was they passed the land use plan and then increased the zoning and then…within a year this property had been sold [Garden Springs]…What pissed me off, I'm sorry, was that I was the one who went to the meeting and said you are making affordable housing a target. Then I ended up with Garden Springs".

Other activists who worked with Garden Springs from the beginning echoed the sentiment that the land use plan had a big impact on development and that savvy developers would be competing even more than they already were for properties that were zoned or rezoned to multi-family. Campus Development Group of Gainesville, FL, had done a nation-wide search for a piece of property with the right zoning, with close proximity to a university and downtown. Even Mike Ahwash, an investment partner in the Campus Development Group firm acknowledged the impact of the land use restrictions on his firm's redevelopment plan: "There's really not that much available land left in Athens. There aren't very many choices for people like us who are trying to fill the demand for student housing" (Stroer, Athens Banner-Herald, 6/17/01). One person that I spoke with (activist #3) described the land use plan:

> "So that is the story across the board, increasing density downtown and not making specific, ya know, putting in place specific protections for existing affordable housing probably means that it will be snapped up".

All over town, neighborhoods that had been zoned at single-family were being up-zoned. The landscape architect I interviewed told me that over 100 parcels of land were zoned to higher density in the period following the approval of the Comprehensive Plan. This change had many ripple effects beyond the Garden Springs community as well. The neighborhood between Broad

and Baxter, just west of downtown, was one of the areas that was rezoned. Neighbors complained that they were getting calls from developers wanting to buy their properties to build apartments. They had no idea that the zoning had changed underneath them. Several participants told me that city commissioner Alvin Sheats (who represented that neighborhood) lost his seat to George Maxwell partly because Maxwell championed the zoning of that neighborhood back to single-family. Clearly, access to, and participation in, local political events is central to determining the future of neighborhoods. However, access and participation with the political process breaks down along class lines, a topic I will return to later. There is one other zoning requirement that was centrally important to dictating the type and location of development in Athens at the turn of the 21st century.

Despite the fact that the 32,000 students at UGA have enormous economic clout (which stems from their parents economic status) within the local community, they are still what UGA professor #1 calls a "disfavored group". In the summer of 2000, the Comprehensive Plan was in its implementation stage and the zoning designation of RG – residential general – was being done away with. Areas that were zoned RG were restricted in the number of unrelated persons that could live in one house to four persons. Some areas, like Five Points, for example, would be changed to RS – residential single-family – under the new plan and these RS zones further limited the number of unrelated persons that could live together to two persons. These restrictions only applied to areas zoned for single-family use and to areas zoned AR – agricultural residential.

This zoning change was directed at homes in single-family areas that were being turned into rental properties for students. In Five Points, residents complained of trash piling up, loud parties, cars parked in the yard, and other nuisances associated with several students living in a

house together. One Five Points resident called her Bloomfield Street neighborhood "a 'war zone' of fights and noisy parties" (Gallentine, Athens Banner-Herald, 04/10/01). Despite complaints from rental property owners in these RS and AR zoned areas who felt they were being deprived of income by the restrictive ordinance, residents won out on their proposal and the number of unrelated persons able to live in a house in RS or AR areas was limited to two. The zoning ordinance passed in June of 2001, right before Garden Springs was sold. The Athens Banner-Herald, talking to Mike Ahwash, the developer, suggested (Stroer, 6/17/01:

> "He [Ahwash] said his research shows students and their hosts in Athens want a development like the one he envisions, far from neighborhoods already hemmed in by student renters, and close to downtown so his new renters would pose minimum sprawl problems. With the 31,000-student university poised to grow to 32,500 students and beyond, he said the county needs developments like the one planned for North Avenue, *especially with a new county ordinance restricting the number of unrelated tenants living in single-family neighborhoods*. Besides, he said, dozens of Garden Springs families are behind on their rent [!]" (emphasis added).

The developer is explicitly saying that the location of the parcel of land combined with building restrictions put in place by the Comprehensive Plan led him to purchase that property and build The Lodge. Notice also that the quote implies that the neighborhood on North Avenue was somehow unoccupied because it was not "already hemmed in by student renters". Neil Smith's notion of the "urban frontier" (1996) comes to mind – that a space occupied by low-income folks is somehow dead or unused and ready for 'real' tenants to move in. In addition, not only was he (the developer) providing a much needed service to ACC by creating new housing for students, he was also doing Athens a favor by evicting some troublesome families who were behind on their rent!

To summarize, the Comprehensive Plan recommended sprawl reduction strategies involving high density in-fill development. In-town neighborhoods across the board, not just

Garden Springs, became targeted for (re)development and properties values skyrocketed because of competition for the scarce resource of available land. Planner #1 told me that "We're seeing all the in-town urban mobile home parks as the first to go because that's where the costs are going up". On top of that, high density student development was restricted by another zoning ordinance from occurring in single-family or rural areas where the residents of those communities had made a point of preserving their quality of life. Developing a place like The Lodge, then, could only take place in areas that were already zoned for high density and that had a constituency that was at least as dis-favored as students were. UGA professor #1 put it this way:

> "Where can I build my student housing? I have to build it where there is currently another underrepresented, dis-favored group. The reason why student housing will replace affordable housing is because both of them are dis-favored developments".

What is apparent is that there is a class-based hierarchy that determines how, where, and what types of development will proceed in ACC. Students stimulate development and demand with their sheer numbers, but the location of student housing is restricted by a political constituency that is well represented and wants to keep students out of their neighborhoods. The 1999 Plan mentions specifically that in the Danielsville Road Corridor, the Barnett Shoals/Gaines School Corridor, and Five Points, "area residents have expressed concern regarding the transition of owner-occupied units to rental-occupied units and the associated negative affects on neighborhoods" (ch.7 pg.22). In turn, student housing (re)development primarily occurs in the only "frontier" left - working-class/minority neighborhoods with close proximity to downtown and UGA. My interview participants suggested that these neighborhoods are also less able to come up with the political resistance to these changes. When the political process of determining future land uses is controlled by a small range of interests, in

this case environmental interests and private development interests, other voices are not heard. The political dynamics of creating a land use plan factor heavily into this story of displacement and deserve additional analysis.

5.2.3 The Politics of Land Use

On Decemeber 12th, 2000, about 600 demonstrators held a candle-light vigil outside of City Hall to protest the commission's 6-4 vote to adopt a land use plan that allows one unit per acre of density in the newly created AR zone (Gallentine, Athens Banner-Herald, 12/13/00). The protestors, most of which were affiliated with the Athens Grow Green Coalition, felt that this density was too high and that it would stimulate suburban development in the areas that the land use plan was trying to protect. The Grow Green group wanted Mayor Doc Eldridge to veto the commission's vote and suggested a new plan that implemented a lower density of one unit per ten acres in the AR zone. Eldridge did eventually veto the plan, but was later overridden by the commissioners in another vote. Eldridge was later voted out of office, in part because he was unable to make the greenbelt work during his term. It wasn't until 2003 that the one unit per ten acre density in the AR zone was approved and made policy. The purpose of this story is to demonstrate the political importance of the greenbelt issue in ACC. The protest was dramatic, with about 300 of the protestors filing through the commission meeting holding their thumbs down in disapproval of the density plan. The group was eventually victorious and the greenbelt became a reality, but there is an important link to the protests that came out of the Garden Springs evictions.

What may have been overlooked by those who vigorously fought for the greenbelt and limiting development to in-town neighborhoods was the impact that it would have on working

class communities/communities of color. The correlation is not direct, but there is a relationship between the Grow Green protests and those initiated by displaced Garden Springs residents. The two protests were working from opposite ends of the same issue: those protesting the closing of Garden Springs were arguing that land values were threatening working-class communities' ability to stay put; those protesting on behalf of the greenbelt were arguing that land should be preserved for environmental purposes. Activist #3 made the connection between the two: "if you preserve one there will be less of the other" [greenspace and affordable housing]. She went on to describe how these issues become emotional and blur the connections with other parts of the community:

> "There's a tension with smart growth as in pretty growth and taking care of your community…Its definitely one of those ones where its like, it can be a mob mentally, the mob was like lets get a greenbelt and couldn't get anyone to focus on what that would mean and how it would play out. And then the pendulum swings the other way and they're like lets do Garden Springs!"

Navigating these tensions requires a great deal of attention to the subtle interconnections of all the parts within urban space. Experts on land trusts feel that the land trust model is the best way to both preserve greenspace and affordable housing, but this model requires limiting equity and interfering with the market. I will return to the importance of land trusts later in the chapter, but it is interesting to note how politics can stampede over these subtleties.

People within the green movement in ACC tend to be very liberal, in the Lockean sense that individuals should pursue freedom unless it unduly tramples on others; attorney/activist described them as people who want to be part of the solution, not the problem. But there are unintended consequences when a mob mentality takes hold. Attorney/activist #5 talked adamantly about balancing social and environmental issues and how most people don't recognize the connections:

> "the other thing that drives me crazy is that all these environmentalists running around creating new and more regs [sic] that are making housing more expensive and out of the other side of their mouths saying they are for affordable housing. But they are not looking at what their actions are doing".

Three of the main activists I talked to described how this conflict played out along class and racial lines, with the predominantly middle-class environmentalists organizing, attending city meetings, and pushing for their community to reduce sprawl and 'beautify'. On the other side of that coin, when the Garden Springs residents began protesting, it was the first time many of them had participated in politics at all. Activist #2, who helped residents relocate, said many of the residents were scared to go to the Human and Economic Development office to pick up the money that was earmarked to help them. They simply did not trust government. She suggested that this was largely because many of the Hispanic residents were fearful over their legal status and did not want to draw attention to themselves. Of course, Garden Springs residents were not politically ineffectual and created a great deal of commotion that stimulated public support for their plight (more on this later). But this was only after the changes in land use policy had been enacted. The land use planning process had numerous public meetings but working class residents either did not participate or did not understand how they might be negatively affected by the plan. Ethnicity was also important, as many of the non-English speaking residents may have been unable or unwilling to stand up for their rights, rights they may not have even known they had. Attorney/activist #5 described this cultural-political divide: "it goes back to low-income individuals being so stressed and so financially strapped that they don't have the time to go meetings or they don't even understand, it's a whole different culture". This class/ethnic divide was born out in interviews with the PoH staffers, who noted that many of the residents were simply too busy working to pay attention to politics, or that their lack of English made them fearful of situations where they were outside of their social network.

The purpose of the plan was to make Athens more beautiful, but there was a conflict with providing affordable housing. Some who protested on behalf of the greenbelt also protested on behalf of Garden Springs residents. Activist #3 described that situation: "some of them were on the frontlines [of Garden Springs protests] saying things but there was a lot more of the green community who doesn't give a crap about affordable housing they just want everything to be pretty". Clearly the tensions played out in a way that protected greenspace at the expense of existing working-class communities; hence an accurate assessment of this political process would argue that the crux of the problem lies in the class conflict between those that want their community to be beautiful and those who are more concerned about survival.

Other zoning ordinances also funneled student development towards these working-class/minority neighborhoods, which I will address in the next section. Returning to the issue of dialectics and abstractions, I reiterate that my analysis of the processes that led to Garden Springs closing is based on how I break down the concrete world into its interrelated parts, assemble those empirical findings into sets of relations, and reinsert those relations into a synthesis of the whole that provides an explanation of my subject. The Comprehensive Plan played a major role in stimulating demand for high density housing, as did zoning restrictions on where students could live in high volume. However, these points of analysis are not causative on their own and are not universally applicable. For instance, property values had been rising in Athens the last three years of the 90's (Stroer, Athens Banner-Herald 6/17/01) without the land use plan being implemented. All over the country, property values have been going up faster than wages. To be fair, there is much debate over the relationship between growth management policies and affordable housing, and the results of this debate need to be briefly explored.

Voith and Crawford (2004) argue that growth management policies like those implemented in ACC can *theoretically* facilitate the production and maintenance of affordable housing. They argue that planning that implements high density housing tends to create more multi-family housing, which is typically more affordable, and concentrating people into smaller areas tends to put them closer to jobs and lessens transportation costs. Infrastructure costs are often lower as well. By this line of thought, housing costs can be offset by reducing some of these other costs of development. These arguments in favor of growth management are essentially the same as those found within the Comprehensive Plan. Voith and Crawford's analysis misses the mark, however. As has been the case in Athens, the construction of affordable housing is typically politically unpopular and resisted by homeowners who enjoy seeing land limited for development because it raises the value of their properties. Growth management policies might theoretically encourage affordable housing, but the political reality of land use is often very different. Powerful local interests are often opposed to the higher property taxes that would be required to accompany growth restriction policies in order to make the creation of affordable housing possible.

Growth management policies like the ones implemented in ACC are not the sole determinant of housing prices. Nelson et al (2004) argue that it is market demand that is the primary determinant on housing prices and that isolating regulatory constraints on land supply as a causal factor on housing price is difficult. Clearly, demand for student housing in ACC compounds any effects on housing costs that the Comprehensive Plan may have initiated. Nelson et al go on to argue that growth management policies can vary widely in the practical implementation, ranging from practices that intentionally raise housing costs in order to exclude certain income groups to practices that increase the quality of life in the targeted areas by

reducing sprawl. Case studies on places that have implemented growth management measures show results that fall all along this continuum of possible effects. A review of the literature on the relationship between affordable housing and growth management policies like the Comprehensive Plan reveals a few major conclusions: growth management policies can theoretically coexist, and even promote, affordable housing, but

> "such a desirable outcome will occur only if the growth management programs involved contain provisions specifically designed to offset those aspects of growth management that inherently limit the land available for development *and* if there is a strong political will in the communities concerned to actually implement those pro-affordability provisions" (Downs 2004, 19 italics in original).

While growth limitations in ACC were not inherently negative, they were imposed without the teeth to promote affordable housing provisioning.

So the Comprehensive Plan did not on its own create the necessary conditions for redevelopment in ACC, but it did further stimulate the market forces that were already in place. The Plan inadvertently made affordable housing a target by increasing competition for land, sending values through the roof and therefore destabilizing working-class communities' ability to afford to live close to jobs and services. Tax assessor records show that when Neal Holland purchased Garden Springs in 1998, he paid $1 million for the property. Just three years later, he sold Garden Springs to Campus Lodge of Athens LTD for $1.7 million, an increase of nearly 75% in value. Today, with the Lodge is worth almost $15 million.

The next two sections will explore some of the other processes that helped facilitate the demolition of the Garden Springs neighborhood. Both sections reiterate the importance of class conflict/ethnic issues in determining the production of space. Section 5.4 will examine the process of studentification and how developers and students drive the types of (re)development that predominate in ACC. Section 5.5 will look more specifically at the Garden Springs

community and suggest that the ownership structure of the park, which put the residents at the mercy of a slumlord, also played a major role in understanding why the park closed. This discussion of slumlordism will segue into the final two sections that discuss the emergence of community activism and the struggle to get a new community off the ground.

5.3 The Power of the Student Market

Everyone who I spoke to, without exception, told me that students have a tremendous impact on the housing market in ACC. Indeed, their impact is so great that the Athens Housing Authority put up the original bond money to build the East Campus Village dorms in 2004 in order to soften the negative impact that students have on affordable housing. If a state-run housing agency is willing to put up funding to build student housing on campus in order to reduce the numbers of people pushed out by students and into public housing, clearly there is a strong negative dynamic at play in a student-driven housing market.

According to Doug Bachtel, a UGA demographer, apartment construction rates in Athens were 63% higher than the national average (Stroer, Athens Banner Herald, 7/7/01). Many apartment complexes around town have high vacancy rates because there are so many more apartments than people who could fill those beds. The 1999 Comprehensive Plan noted that there was a severe over-supply of housing, with total land devoted to residential land uses increasing by 58.6% between 1983-1999 while population increased by only 23% over the same period (1999 Comp Plan, ch.7 pg.9). The laws of supply and demand supposedly correct this problem through a process of filtering. For example, an apartment complex that has high vacancy rates would be forced to lower their rates to attract consumers, thereby creating more affordable housing. But activist #3, who has extensive experience working with local

development, argued that apartment owners would rather keep rents high in order to compete for the highly valued student renters:

> "The planning department has a very mixed relationship with affordable housing. They are like from the numbers standpoint, we are overbuilt, the economy of supply and demand should correct itself by you know, these apartments are 50% full so eventually they will reduce their prices and people will get in. But that's not how the market works, they want to keep it looking a certain way so they would rather eat the losses of 50% vacancy and keep the rents high so people feel like it's the place to be".

This anecdotal evidence suggests that apartment owners would rather keep rents high in order to retain an attractive image for students than to allow their units to filter down to a lower income bracket. The vacancy rates in ACC are unclear, with the Athens Housing Authority putting them at 1%, census data at 6%, and other local officials estimating vacancy rates as high as 20% (Aued, Athens Banner-Herald, 03/04/07). In 2000, UGA's Red and Black newspaper surveyed 10 large student apartment complexes and found occupancy rates between 75-98% (Niesse, Red and Black, 3/27/00). But they also found that regardless of vacancy rates, none of the complexes they surveyed were lowering rents (ibid). Despite the over-build of apartments, the Red and Black found that "apartment managers say they have no reason to lower rent – students will still pay more" (ibid). The Athens Housing Authority director backed that argument, saying that landlords can make a bigger profit by charging higher rents to fewer tenants than lowering rents and removing vacancies (Aued, Athens Banner-Herald, 03/04/07). He argued that when units are vacant, landlords can take the opportunity to renovate them (ibid). Clearly, the student housing market is quite healthy because owners can bank on a steady consumer base that demands a certain style of living year after year. The boom and bust cycle that plagues housing nationally has a less pronounced effect in Athens, according to the experts I spoke with.

Developers are in a situation where the easiest way to generate cash flow is to rent to students. The director of a local affordable housing non-profit had some interesting insights:

> "Yeah I definitely feel like students have had a large impact on the lack of affordable housing here. Uh, because what it does is it turns into a lot of property acquisitions for the rental market…I mean its way easier to receive a check from somebody's mom and dad monthly than it is to chase down a blue collar worker who might not pay the rent on time. So from a landlord perspective it's more attractive to rent to a student"

Government staffer #1, who has thirty years of local experience, echoed that sentiment:

> "I don't think developers are interested in building affordable housing. I think they are interested in student housing where they know there is a profit and a cash flow. I think a lot of the development that occurs here in the South particularly between Atlanta and here, people are developing so they have cash flow. Not necessarily to make money on the property, they just want to keep the money flowing through their bank accounts so they can go onto the next deal where they can make some money".

The interesting dynamic that plays out revolves around a preference for student-rentals as cash flow generators over the housing needs of the county's working poor, estimated to be 31% of the total population, according to recent data compiled by UGA demographer Joe Wharton (Aued, Athens Banner-Herald, 11/17/07). As the university expands, working-class and minority communities like Garden Springs find themselves in the path of gentrification, a process spurned on by student demand as well as supply restrictions. The simple fact is that building market rate housing geared towards student populations is a near-sure thing when it comes to a sound investment. People who need affordable housing are put in *direct competition* with the other third of ACC's population, our "highly resourceful student body", as planner #1 explained. The market dynamics favor studentification: "[It] is a huge market to have to compete with if you're a low income renter or first time homebuyer because it attracts all kinds of out of town investors. Land costs here are just not like they are in places that aren't dealing with that market force".

5.3.1 The Hope Scholarship

Why is the student body in ACC so resourceful? One of the things that emerged out of casual conversations with people before I started this project was that the HOPE Scholarship played a significant role in the relative affluence of the student population. The HOPE Scholarship allows any high school student in Georgia with a 3.0 GPA or higher to attend a state university for free, provided they keep their grades up during their time there. Without any prompting, three of the people I interviewed brought up the HOPE Scholarship as one of the reasons that students in ACC are able to dictate the housing market to the extent that they are. Planner #1 described the market effects that the HOPE Scholarship has:

> "We are a tiny county geographically yet one third of our county is a highly resourceful student body that can afford single family homes. Especially with the HOPE scholarship, I think that has exacerbated it. Parents have put aside this money for students and they end up not having to spend it. They're just going to buy a place, take the tax deduction, keep their child there and then sell it or maintain it as a rental property afterwards".

When I told activist #1, one of the student activists who helped relocate Garden Springs residents, that I was concerned about my own rational behavior as a student renter being part of the reason for rising land values that out-priced permanent residents, he did little to dissuade me of my opinion: "if you want to be really cynical you can say that that whole scholarship [HOPE] has something to do with it because you have more disposable income to spend on rent". The HOPE scholarship is funded by the state lottery, and any cursory examination of the geographic placement of lottery ticket outlets will show that lottery tickets are primarily sold in low-income areas. Essentially, the HOPE scholarship is paid for by poor people and benefits students, whose parents may have enough money to send them to school already, but instead, they send their child to UGA and buy them a house or an expensive apartment. More empirical research needs to be done, but this basic idea was born out through discussion with my interview participants.

The HOPE scholarship appears to be a merit based program, where good students are rewarded for their academic achievements with a free college education, but on further examination it appears to actually punish those poor people who fund it. Life with the HOPE scholarship may actually be more difficult for the poor in ACC.

The HOPE scholarship represents the errors of a merit based society by exposing the fallacy that if an individual works hard, they will be rewarded. Surely, those high school students who could obtain a scholarship must have worked hard, and they are rewarded with a free education. On the other hand, the poor in ACC also work hard, indicated by unemployment rates that are lower than state and national averages (Partners for a Prosperous Athens). Folks in Garden Springs certainly worked hard, but their "merit" is not worth what the work of upper-class, predominantly white student population is worth. If individual students have high disposable incomes (regardless of whether or not the HOPE scholarship has a direct relationship to this argument), then they can expect the market to meet their consumption preferences, whether that be in high-end student housing or other amenities. The expansion of luxury student housing attests to that power. But because students can demand such high-cost living, those that cannot end up being pushed farther and farther out from areas that are no longer affordable. This class conflict needs exploration.

5.3.2 Studentification and Class Conflict

Again, the competition for highly valued urban land in ACC is an example of class conflict and ethnic conflict. Garden Springs was close to transit and services – it was a on a bus-line, near the Department of Family and Child Services, a family health center, the Department of Labor, and an elementary school. But the things that made it attractive for those low-income

families – namely the location – also made it attractive to students who want to be close to downtown and the university. The source of conflict emerges from property owners and city managers that would rather see a student population moving in and bringing their buying power to bear on the community. City governments benefit from this "highly resourceful student body" because the students stimulate the economy by increasing land values through development of new housing, by spending money in town, and bringing in higher tax rates from these high income generating rental properties. Student housing may be objectionable in certain parts of Athens, but if it replaces a community that is even more objectionable – a "trailer park" – then ultimately ACC benefits through higher property values. This is what Harvey (2005) calls "accumulation by dispossession", or the stripping away of universal rights, social housing in this case, by exposing that universal right to privatization, to markets. Studentification is good for the city of Athens in that respect. On the other hand, what does ACC gain from a "trailer park" full of "illegals"? The perception of parks, which I will discuss in more detail later, is that these communities drain services but don't pay much back into the city coffers through taxes. The parks are seen to be hubs of crime and their appearance is a blight on the landscape.

So when studentification occurs in lower-class neighborhoods, it is acceptable because it changes the landscape from one of disinvestment to one of reinvestment; it is an indicator that the market is functioning properly. However, as I have demonstrated, when studentification occurs in wealthier, single-family neighborhoods, it threatens the "quality of life" of those neighborhoods. Simply praising studentification as an economic boon to the community ignores that fact that 500 people seriously had their "quality of life" affected by these changes. A nuanced understanding of studentification in ACC, then, must demonstrate that this process means different things to different people. When studentification turned Five Points into "a war

zone" and changed the face of that neighborhood, residents mobilized and resisted those changes by pushing for zoning changes and restrictive ordinances. The case of Garden Springs was quite different; because the residents didn't own the land, they literally had no right to stay there and had no legal recourse to turn to, unlike the people of Five Points. All that they could do was protest *after* their community had already been erased from the landscape. There is clearly a class-based hierarchy that shapes housing development in ACC: wealthier, politically engaged property owners are able to resist the perceived *devaluation* of their community that studentification brings. In turn, the poorer, less politically engaged, minority non-property owners in Garden Springs had only direct action protesting to resist the *revaluation* and subsequent displacement that occurred via studentification. Therefore, studentification means two completely different things depending on where it is able to take place.

According to government staffer #1, as developers shift their attention from "big tract…Campus Lodge kinds of projects" to redeveloping single-family lots in places like East Athens and the Hancock Corridor, the same developers that have done big apartment complexes are now interested in going into places like East Athens and

> "…buying houses, assembling parcels and then marketing to student's parents… They're not too interested in whether the little lady down the street can get a mortgage to buy one of those houses. They'd just as soon see her run out so that can buy it. Put some blue paint on it, yellow shutters and sell it to some mom and dad!"

Whether or not these changes in historically black areas of Athens will benefit the long-term residents of those areas remains to be seen. More research needs to be done to empirically gauge the perceptions that people have about studentification in those communities. The evolution of studentification in Athens will provide opportunities for interesting future research.

If studentification and sprawl-reduction policies combined to focus a cross-hairs on urban communities with high potential value like Garden Springs, there is one other element to understanding why this community was so unstable: the ownership structure of manufactured housing communities. The next section will round out my analysis of my first research question by focusing on the issue of slumlordism as being a key component to gentrification.

5.4 Slumlords and Private Property Rights

Some of the people that I interviewed did not think that the 1999 Comprehensive Plan had much, if anything, to do with why Garden Springs closed. One planner with seventeen years experience in ACC, planner # 2, explained to me that it was a sewage issue that caused Garden Springs to be closed. Because the homes were all on septic tanks and many of the homes were overcrowded with people, the septic tanks tended to fill up rather quickly. She described talking to the building inspectors who went out to Garden Springs to try and fix the septic issue:

> "But I've worked here for a long time and seen them go out and come back. They were shaken by how bad it was…If I remember right they [building inspectors] were throwing away their clothes. I've never seen them do anything like that. It was pretty bad. It was the sort of thing where they were worrying about lives being lost. It's a safety thing. For them to be so concerned, the way I saw them it must have been gross. Yet that's not affordable housing, that's endangering people".

The fact that the septic system was in disrepair and in violation of city code was certainly one of the reasons that the park owner decided to sell it and walk away. It would have cost $100,000, according to one interview participant, to fix the problem. So for the owner, it was really an easy decision to get rid of an asset that had become costly.

However, arguing that the septic system failure was what really led Garden Springs to close ignores the fact that it is the landlord's job to do maintenance on his property. If you invest

in something and take all the profits out of it and put nothing back into maintenance, eventually that asset will stop producing a profit. Factories don't just produce commodities and create surplus value, they also require inputs to keep them functioning. It is the same with a neighborhood or a home. Neal Holland was collecting $17,000 a month in rent ($165 a month individually) from the tenants of Garden Springs and then he evicted them when the maintenance that he completely neglected to do became a problem. The problem is that Neal Holland, according to the activists involved with negotiating with his attorneys, had always intended to "flip" Garden Springs. In other words, Garden Springs, to him, was a "cash cow". The people who owned the property prior to Neal Holland had apparently maintained it relatively well and it only started to go downhill after he purchased it in 1998.

Prior to 1998, most of the units in the park had been rentals. When Holland purchased the property, he began to sell most of them to individuals and families, many of whom put thousands of dollars into units in order to keep them up to code only to learn that they would have to leave their homes behind when they were evicted (Stroer, Athens Banner-Herald, 6/17/01). Because an ACC ordinance prohibited mobile homes built before 1976 to be moved at all and also required homes built between 1976 and 1995 to pass an inspection, only 15-20 of the mobile homes were eligible to be moved out of Garden Springs (ibid). To completely add insult to injury, as people started to move out after the eviction notices, activist #1 told me that Holland sold those vacant units to Mexican laborers. These people may or may not have known what they were doing in purchasing homes they could not keep and were taken advantage of by the slumlord. So, even as people were leaving the park, the owner was still looking for new tenants that he could prey on before the final closing date. The more people that bought homes from him, the less he had to pay to take those homes to the dump. Once the homes were sold, it was

the responsibility of the owner to pay for any moving costs. Again, the political and financial literacy of these immigrant laborers may have put them at a special disadvantage to the type of predatory practices exhibited by Holland.

Allowing a property to deteriorate while still collecting rent from the tenants is the same 'milking' process that Harvey and other scholars have written about, a process covered in chapter 2. Yet Holland was perfectly within his legal rights as a property owner to do what he did. There is no ordinance or law in ACC that requires that an owner to maintain a rental property. Government staffer #1 summed up this experience as

> "kinda despicable and unethical but not illegal…in this community and this state, property rights are number one. It's just because of the property rights issues that we have here. Forcing people to maintain rentals is just impossible".

When I asked why cooperatively owned parks seemed to be successful in places like New Hampshire and not Georgia, multiple participants suggested that it was because Georgia resoundingly gives power to landowners over tenants and that private property rights are untouchable. A right of first refusal law, which is in place in many states, offers a landowner a tax break or simply requires them to offer tenants the opportunity to buy a park first when it is being sold. Garden Springs was partly responsible for the creation of a bill that came up in 2003 hoping to create this right of first refusal for park residents in Georgia; it never passed. The president of the Georgia Manufactured Housing Association suggested at a public symposium that the Georgia Board of Real Estate Agents adamantly lobbied against this law because it limited the autonomy of private property owners.

If tenants have no rights in Georgia to demand that their neighborhoods be maintained to a certain standard, then it is no wonder that people view trailer parks as negatively as they do. Trailer parks may indeed become 'trashy', but not necessarily because of the residents. A

landowner has no economic incentive to maintain a park if he can just milk it and then sell it whenever it becomes a burden. A good example of the power that landlords have over park tenants in Georgia was told to me attorney/activist #5. After she had worked with Garden Springs, people from other parks began to call her for help:

> "Attorney/activist #5: someone called and there was someone in a mobile home park who didn't have any water. We did the research to find out who owned the park so we could call and check on the water. *All we did was call and leave a message with the attorney in town who owns the park and he had the family evicted*. The family had to pay $900 to have their home towed to the landfill. Then we found out later that the manager of the park had been taking the water money and stealing it. There's no regulation.
>
> Graham: and there was nothing the tenant could do?
>
> Attorney/activist #5: absolutely no legal rights (emphasis added)".

This kind of relationship is what creates the negative stigma around manufactured housing parks that further destabilizes them and causes more rapid depreciation of the homes value. In parks that are well maintained by both the landowner and the homeowners, the parks serve a much needed role in the continuum of housing needs. They are stable and affordable, and although the structures have a shorter life-span than stick-built homes, as they deteriorate they become accessible to an even lower income bracket. If they are well-maintained, these used mobile homes can be a safe and affordable form of housing for people. Trailers and trailer parks are not going to go away – they serve a purpose – but clearly the laws and ownership structure of these parks puts residents in an extremely vulnerable position. Again, this is not an inherent characteristic of parks but is rather a result of policy and neglect.

To conclude, there were three forces that I identified as most important in understanding why Garden Springs was gentrified. First, land use restrictions and zoning limited the area of land available for development, focusing it on certain in-town neighborhoods. Second, if the

high demand for student housing was going to be met, it would only be socially acceptable in low-income minority areas close to the downtown and the university. This benefited both students, who desired the proximity to school and amenities, and residents in single family zones who were concerned about their quality of life. Third, because Garden Springs was owned by a slumlord, the community was rapidly devalued, further expanding the rent gap and presenting the owner with an incredible opportunity to make a profit. This also exacerbated the hardships that the residents of Garden Springs had to endure because they had no legal recourse to protect themselves.

The remainder of the chapter will explain how the residents of Garden Springs were able to collectively organize into a social movement organization that sought to address their situation by creating a resident-owned community land trust park in Georgia. I will begin by explaining some of the experiences that those residents went through from the time of their eviction notices to the day the last trailer was moved out. This discussion of the importance of community will provide the context for understanding why this PoH project is so important to these residents. This account will deal with the role of both activists (residents, students, and others) as well as the role that the government played in supporting (or not supporting) the efforts of this social movement. The chapter will conclude by examining and analyzing the successes and failures of the PoH project.

5.5 The Value of Community

Garden Springs as a community had a wealth of social and emotional value to the people who lived there. The sense of community and friendship were incredibly important to the residents and it is that set of intangible social relations that binds the PoH together as they work toward their goal of owning their own community. I would like to explore these notions of

community further, but it is important not to essentialize "poor people" as a homogenous group. By describing certain values possessed by the residents of Garden Springs, I am by no means intending to separate "them" from "us" and make a sweeping generalization about low-income communities and how they are different from "the norm". Like any random slice of American society, Garden Springs represents a myriad of social relations and life stories that have more similarity to the whole of society than they do differences. With that said, I intend only to speak about Garden Springs as a *particular* community with its own set of social relations and circumstances, and to describe how these circumstances manifested in social movement organization. In reality, a low-income community like Garden Springs does face different challenges than other communities face, but this does not demand an "othering" of their experiences.

In talking with some of the activists who worked closely with the residents of Garden Springs, a narrative emerged that was in many ways represented the American dream of a place with "thick" social relations, a place that possessed a village-like quality. PoH member #1, a housing counselor who works with the PoH full time, described Garden Springs as a "real neighborhood, like in the old sense". She elaborated:

> "They were friends and they relied on each other, even though they had different backgrounds and cultural differences, like immigrants, African Americans, and white people. Knowing the families I know, they have basic shared things such as you know, they are families. They have children. Most of them don't have good income, they all work all day, so all those things are shared in common. It brings them together…And they all live in the same place and many of them have the same jobs. The same health problems, no health insurance or are underserved. There is an empathy that brings them together".

The importance of having a safe and fun place for their children to live seemed to be a major uniting quality among the residents. Activist #1, who led several rallies in ACC for Garden Springs, said that he spent nearly every day there for about six months just hanging out with the

children and meeting the families. He touched on some of the qualities that made Garden Springs appealing to him:

> "Yeah the kids played together and it had a nice feel. Like a nice common space…Garden Springs had that village feel. I went there everyday because I thought it was a cool community vibe. That's the other thing maybe that people miss the experience of ya know, of our housing structure. I went there because I liked it. I didn't grow up like that but I wish I did in some ways. It felt good".

In examining this narrative of life in Garden Springs, I think it is safe to say that what was valued about the community was not the autonomy that comes with owning property and maximizing its utility, but rather what was valued was the interdependency and stability of the neighborhood. Knowing your neighbors was important. The fact that people needed help with transportation or child care or health care was not a sign of weakness - it was a fact of life that people dealt with on a daily basis. Attorney/activist #5 told me how she had remarked to her husband that when Garden Springs closed, she thought at least one person would die within a year because each person had their own "little bubble and interdependency within that community". She told me an amazingly sad story about what happened when the park closed:

> "I said to my husband 'some people will not make it without that community'. I want to say that fall [2002], the police called my office number and they had found someone dead in their apartment and they had a piece of paper that said my name and had my number on it and they [the police] thought they were calling a relative. And that was the community member that died within a year. It was interesting to see everyone at the funeral and knowing that the only reason that person had been able to make it was because of that community".

Whether or not there is a direct relationship between this persons death and the closing of Garden Springs can never be known. What is important to understand is that an old man who lived in Garden Springs absolutely depended on the other people that lived there to help him go about his daily life.

5.6 "A Movement to Be Reckoned With"

When the news broke on June 16th 2001 that Garden Springs had been sold and that the residents would be evicted, it became a major political issue. There were well over a dozen articles and editorials written in the Athens Banner-Herald, the Red and Black, and Flagpole magazine between June of 2001 and March of 2002 alone. The Athens Banner-Herald listed Garden Springs as the fourth biggest news story of 2002 (the number one story being, of course, the UGA football team winning the SEC…) (Gurr, Athens Banner-Herald 12/30/02). In an interesting twist, the Athens Banner-Herald listed attorney/activist #5 that I spoke with as the legal representative of the residents in their June 17th article, even though she was not. But she received so many calls from residents that she had to hold a meeting with them to tell them she was not their lawyer. 400 residents attended that meeting. After trying to find someone to represent the roughly ninety families who had organized, she decided that she was the best person for the job. The residents themselves became a somewhat cohesive group and a few leaders emerged among them. The papers reported on several frantic meetings that took place at Garden Springs in the days following the eviction notice.

Activist #1, who had just by luck been hanging around Garden Springs as all of this started going on, was able to organize a group called Students for Garden Springs, which consisted of other ecology graduate students that he knew, as well as students from social work and other students who were interested. The activist #3 was one of the social work students who became involved and her and activist #1 teamed up with the attorney/activist #5 and the residents and began organizing some formal protests that took place in early July. These large groups of students, church groups, and residents stood downtown holding signs and lighting off fireworks. The protests drew an incredible amount of attention from the local news media.

A fascinating tension emerged from these early protests, a tension that gets to the heart of the relationship between radical politics and more formalized negotiation. Activist #1 and activist #4, another early organizer that I spoke with, said that initially they were very radical; they intended to fight for the residents to be able to stay in Garden Springs. They told me how they had "fantasized" about different ways to draw attention, like setting up a tent city in Garden Springs to prevent it from being bulldozed. They organized rallies downtown and directed their energy towards activism, and they were successful in putting affordable housing in the spotlight. The tension came when the student activists realized that they could either fight to stay or they could fight to find a new home for the residents. It became clear that the residents would in fact be evicted, because, according to activist #1, "as bad as it is, its this guys personal property" and he had the law on his side. Activist #3 agreed that their activism needed a focus: "standing on the street corner and stuff is nice but not really all that useful".

Activist #1 and the other more radical activists decided that what really mattered was what the residents wanted. He told me "if you focus on staying, then people are going to end up homeless just because you are going to get your fun student activism kick on...it was really stressful for me and obviously for my ego". Another issue that confronted the social movement was addressing exactly who they were helping. According to activist #2, the landscape architect who helped with relocating families, by November of 2001, about twenty residents had already moved out on their own and those who hadn't, sadly, were "either mentally ill, physically ill, or incapable of accepting that they had to move. Some were just befuddled about getting funds and help". To make matters worse, Holland sold the now vacant homes to a new group of Mexican tenants. Unfortunately, these people ended up buying homes from Holland and putting money into them, but they may not have been aware that they would not be able to move those homes.

But not all of the vacant homes were filled, and activist #2 told me that between November and March, Garden Springs had become a "very scary and depressing place". She told me that drug addicts began squatting in vacant homes and getting high and that "predators" would literally drive through the neighborhood looking for things to steal:

> "People would roll up their aluminum underpinning getting ready to move and people would come steal it during the night because it was scrap metal. That cost a lot of money to those families. Daily, people were driving through looking for scrap metal, hot water heaters, washing machines. There was this constant stuff going on. The park became creepier and creepier".

Not only was there a dangerous element that had crept into the park, the sewage issue worsened to the point that there was literally raw sewage in the streets of the increasingly abandoned Garden Springs. The problem for the activists, as #1 told me, was that if they were going to fight to stay, who would be staying and for what? Many people had moved out and the "community dynamics were already eroded. This change had already happened and it wasn't going back". It became clear at that point that the neighborhood was already partly lost and that energy needed to be directed towards a different solution.

When attorney/activist #5 distributed an article from a New Hampshire-based housing group called Equity Trust about community land trusts, the residents jumped on the idea and wanted to bring that model to the South. As a more formal plan emerged from this cross-pollination of ideas, the activism took on a better focus. Since they were unable to buy Garden Springs back and the community had already changed so much, they moved towards establishing their own park, which I will discuss in detail at the end of this chapter. So, by September of 2001, Barbara and her legal team had managed to extend the eviction date to March of 2002, while the church groups, residents, and students continued their protests and engaged with the city council. Commissioner John Barrow was the politician most favorable to Garden Springs

and he proposed a moratorium on all large-scale, multi-housing developments, citing the new zoning approved by the Comprehensive Plan as part of the problem. Barrow defended his moratorium in an editorial (08/12/01):

> "…government has contributed to the problem: First we insist that these homes be brought up to safety codes (a decision I supported), and *then we turn around and increase the development value of the property* (a decision I opposed). You [Athens Banner-Herald] also argue that a moratorium on building any such development will not guarantee that the tenants will not still be kicked out. *True, but just as our new land use plan gave the developers a powerful new incentive to kick these people out*, a moratorium would give the developers a powerful incentive to keep on collecting rent while we work on this problem" (emphasis added).

This was one only two public comments that I uncovered that connected the issue of the Comprehensive Plan to Garden Springs, but for the most part these subtleties were never adequately addressed. The moratorium was put down in October of 2001 by a vote of 7-2, with Barrow and Sheats being it's only supporters. Opponents highlighted the negative effects such a moratorium might have had on the local construction industry (Gallentine, Athens Banner-Herald, 10/02/01).

The major successes of this social movement organization were that they extended the eviction deadline and later received about $80,000 in emergency relocation money from the Human and Economic Development department. These funds, along with funds raised by various religious organizations, helped those residents who were able to move their homes pay for the costs of inspecting and physically moving them. ACC was very helpful in identifying things that needed to be brought up to code in order to move – a cracked window for example – but they didn't actually require these things to be fixed until thirty days *after* the home had been moved to its new location. Activist #2 told me that the government temporarily waving these requirements was "unheard of". Attorney/activist #5's team was also successful in convincing

Neal Holland to allow those who could not move their trailers to leave them instead of paying for them to be trashed. Later, when the PoH was established and looking for support in their community building efforts, the fervor and emotional response that the collective activism had elicited played a major role in getting that project off the ground. As activism #3 told me, Garden Springs had become "a movement to be reckoned with". This movement had a wider impact on the political climate as well, particularly because 2002 was an election year in Athens.

5.6.1 Garden Springs as a Political Tool

The interesting dynamic between pursuing either direct-action protesting or more formal engagement with decision-making bodies is that in many ways, the direct-action forced the door open for moderates to come in and negotiate for support through conventional channels. Although protesting and organizing may have seemed futile, it actually did put pressure on the city council and Neal Holland to address the issues at hand. One of the leveraging tools that the protesting created was that activists could offer a sense of order to politicians and to the land owner in exchange for some concessions and support. Activist #1 described his activism as a learning process:

> "I learned that the more established people counted on our activism. You learn about the dynamics of politics. I didn't really think about that before. The fact that we were out there doing all these things gave the more moderate people some power that they wouldn't have had. It might be obvious, but I didn't really get to understand that. So what we were doing, it was a little radical or whatever but it was still important".

Not only did activism create support for the future PoH, the social movement that came out of Garden Springs elicited a major response from the government and was one of several issues that swept out Mayor Doc Eldridge and brought in new Mayor Heidi Davison and a few new commissioners. It was such a catalyst for change that in the primary elections for Mayor in

August of 2002, each of the candidates was asked to address the issues of affordable housing raised by the Garden Springs eviction (Reid, Athens Banner-Herald, 08/11/02). Activism had taken the issue of affordable housing from the streets directly into the political arena.

The visibility of the movement was such that politicians wanted to get behind it and make it a campaign issue; attorney/activist #5 told me how two different candidates running for office called her on the same day asking her to host a 'meet the candidate' session. She declined their offer, but the fact that Garden Springs was forcing politicians to talk about affordable housing demonstrates the power of collective action. This power can be a double-edged sword, however. On the one hand, gaining support from political figures can generate policy changes that create real benefits to those activists; on the other hand, the residents can become, in attorney/activist #5's words, "a sort of flag people wave to say 'we're for low income communities'". Before she was even a candidate for office, Heidi Davison had helped residents find emergency housing through her synagogue. She even drove one of the Garden Springs residents to Augusta for a medical appointment. When she ran for office in 2002, attorney/activist #5 said "she came and gave a stump talk to the community and they were bonded with her". Mayor Davison was able to legitimately say that she supported affordable housing and protecting low-income residents, but somewhat ironically her main platform was pushing for "green" legislation with teeth that could really enforce the density requirements of the greenbelt. Whether or not these two issues may have been at odds was rarely discussed[11]. The point of this discussion is to emphasize that

[11] In all of the archival material that I went through, former Commissioner Alvin Sheats was one of two politicians (the other being John Barrow) that made the connection between the greenbelt and potential impacts on affordable housing, and he lost his office because of he didn't support the plan. Sheats was the deciding vote that overrode former Mayor Eldridge's veto of the weak greenbelt legislation that would have allowed suburban development in the AR zone; Eldridge was under severe pressure from environmentalists who said "the consensus is that Doc Eldridge is done in this town if he doesn't veto" (Gallentine, Athens Banner-Herald 12/13/00). Eldridge did veto the legislation that the environmentalists wanted him to, but Sheats cast the vote that overrode that veto because "he believes it [the zoning ordinance] will drive housing prices out of the reach of lower-income families (Gallentine,

social movement organization made political in-roads via radical tactics, which then translated into support for more formal policy negotiations. Aside from impacting local politics and elections, this social movement matured and was able to create a tangible plan for the residents that is still in the works today. The next section will deal with the evolution of the Garden Springs protests into a formal organization that works within established channels to achieve its goals.

5.7 Translating Activism into Policy: The People of Hope Project

Inspired by the success of resident-owned community land trust parks in New Hampshire and other states, about forty of the former Garden Springs residents decided that they wanted to bring this model to the South. They began looking for a piece of property that was suitable for their new community, but once again class politics played a major role. PoH, which began in 2002, but only officially obtained non-profit status in the fall of 2004, identified a plot of land on Freeman Drive, just about a mile north of where Garden Springs was. The plot, however, was zoned as single-family and this posed a problem. In June of 2003, Commissioner Kathy Hoard introduced a moratorium proposal on using manufactured housing as in-fill development in neighborhoods that were zoned as single-family. The legislation stemmed from a mobile home that was placed in the Berkley Hills subdivision off Timothy Road. When the neighborhood was built, it had a twenty-year covenant that forbade the placement of manufactured housing, but that requirement expired and an individual mobile home was moved in. According to the Athens Banner-Herald, the residents there opposed the placement of the home because they "fear their property values and quality of life will suffer if additional mobile homes are allowed into their

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Athens Banner-Herald 12/19/00)". Eldridge did in fact lose his office, in large part because he was unable to lower the density requirements in the AR zone.

neighborhood (Reid, 06/18/2003)". Activist #3 told me that "the neighborhood totally freaked out" because the mobile home was at the entrance to the neighborhood and that a plot of woods was cleared to make space for it. Hoard's moratorium was originally a 30-day ban on manufactured housing in-fill, but it later became permanent legislation. Activist #2 explained to me that the legislation was "a knee-jerk reaction" to that house in Berkley Hills. She elaborated on why this mobile home caused such a stir:

> "This lot had been wooded and they came and cleared the lot, and dropped down [the mobile home], didn't put any landscaping around it…if anybody came in and dropped any kind of house and didn't put anything around it, people would be upset…the whole neighborhood used that lot as a play area. You drop something there with no landscaping, everyone is going to be upset. Because it was a mobile home, across the board nobody could use mobile homes as infill".

This legislation impacted the PoH because it required that mobile homes could only be used as in-fill in neighborhoods that already consisted of 60% or more manufactured housing. Prior to this, mobile homes could go into single-family areas as long as they were placed on a permanent foundation, provided the neighborhood itself did not have a covenant preventing them. Now, mobile homes can only go into already existing parks, which only have a 1% vacancy rate (People of Hope, Myths about Manufactured Housing). "I don't think that the commission feels that there isn't a place in Clarke County where manufactured housing is appropriate; we are just really grappling with where that appropriate place is," Hoard was quoted as saying in the Athens Banner-Herald (Floyd, 11/25/03).

This moratorium went against the grain of the city commission, which was at the exact same time being very favorable to the PoH plan. But because mobile homes have such a stigma, middle-class voters in Athens wanted to restrict their placement. In the same way that voters in Five Points rejected student rental housing in their neighborhoods based on "quality of life" issues, home-owners across Athens chose to keep mobile homes out of stick-built subdivisions.

What is in conflict is the desires of property owners who want to protect their investments – their homes – and the needs of the county's poor to find affordable housing. Once again, there emerges a class-based hierarchy that determines the production of space in ACC. Middle-class NIMBY attitudes towards manufactured housing *and* student housing manifest themselves politically in the form of seemingly benign zoning ordinances that restrict the type and placement of housing. The local government, therefore, played a curious and sometimes contradictory role. In order to support low-income housing, local politicians supported the dramatic and emotional plea that Garden Springs residents had made to build a new cooperatively-owned neighborhood; on the other hand, these same politicians were pulled in a different direction by those who did not want that type of development in their backyard.

Hoard's moratorium was one of the first of many obstacles that PoH has faced. During that very same legislative period in late 2003, the planning commission had voted 5-4 to reject the PoH plan to rezone an area along Freeman Drive from single-family to a mixed-use planned development, despite the fact that not one person from the Freeman Drive neighborhood showed up to protest the project (Floyd, Athens Banner-Herald 11/09/03). PoH needed the zoning change in order to build a new mobile home community there, but the planning commission rejected it because they felt that that type of development went against the Comprehensive Plan's goals of development. Reflecting on the commissions decision, chairman Paul Dellaria was quoted as saying that their decision to reject was "not a question of economics, it's a question of zoning (ibid)". This is a surprisingly preposterous comment coming from a planning expert. Precisely because mobile homes are only allowed in areas zoned for apartments, where land is some of the most expensive, building mobile home parks becomes extremely cost prohibitive. In

other words, zoning directly impacts the value of land through supply and demand, so trying to separate zoning issues from economic issues in this case is impossible and very short-sighted.

The fact that the planning commission voted against the PoH project based on the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan indicates that it was the mobile homes that were the issue, not the zoning change. Activist #2 told me "it's the style of the housing people that people are biased against, not the people, not the project. The problems with some mobile home parks in Athens - some that are poorly managed – are haunting this project". Mobile home parks may be affordable, but most are not beautiful, which often has more to do with who owns the park rather than who lives in it. What creates a conflict is that a major part of the land use plan was to make ACC aesthetically pleasing. What it comes down to is looking at a map of ACC and seeing zoning blocs and greenspace, not people. One planning commissioner, Gene Sapp, noted that the land use plan was not written in stone and reminded other Commissioners that "we are dealing with human beings; we are dealing with human lives (ibid)". Again, there is a clash of values that breaks down along class lines/racial lines. The majority of home-owners and property owners want to maximize their portfolio's value by adopting a land use plan that emphasizes aesthetics. They want things to be pretty. Then there is another segment of the population that is not worried about their portfolio of investments but is more concerned with basic survival – things like finding an affordable house that is close to transportation and services. Unfortunately, these class divisions are hidden by using terms like "zoning" and "greenspace", when the real conflict comes from NIMBY attitudes that restrict where the poor can exist. The rules of ownership under capitalism are such that if you own property, you actually want to limit the availability of that commodity so that you get the most value out of it. Once you are secure in your investment, you can demand to have a pleasant environment. Since

mobile home parks do not fit into middle-class conceptions of what a pleasant environment is, their placement is restricted or prohibited.

The planning commission is made up of government staff members, not elected officials, therefore their decision on the PoH project was not final. Once again, about sixty Garden Springs/PoH activists took to the streets on November 20th, 2003 to persuade the county commissioners to defy the planning commission and approve their Freeman Drive project (Floyd, Athens Banner-Herald, 11/21/03). This particular protest took the form of a candle light vigil and it was successful – ACC approved the PoH plan in December of 2003. ACC had already committed over $200,000 to the project to buy the plot of land on Freeman Drive and pay PoH administrative costs, so the decision to approve the plan had some initial backing. Between 2003 and today, PoH has been struggling to raise the $1.6 million needed to fully realize their plan. Their funding sources have been numerous – local government has played a major role, providing over $300,000 in federal CDBG and HOME monies (CAPER). Local churches and foundations have raised over $200,000, PoH members have raised $34,218, and the Arizona-based Hispanic civil-rights group La Raza has kicked in $400,000 in revolving loans. The Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta added an additional $450,000. An HED administrator told me that PoH needs about $150,000 to be able to complete this development. Acquiring these monies has not been an easy task and they have had to fight against convention as well as bias in order to get where they are. The struggle for funding provides some interesting insights into the relationship between politics, policy, and social movement organization.

5.7.1 Mobilizing Resources: An Uphill Battle

The Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta rejected the PoH application for a loan five years in a row. In Boston, the FHLB distributes affordable housing money to cooperatively managed manufactured housing parks, but the member bank in Atlanta had always rejected these kinds of applications. Attorney/activist #5, who also serves on the board of the Georgia Community Loan Fund, worked diligently on persuading the FHLB of Atlanta to set a precedent for the South by supporting the POH project. She told me how difficult it was to "change the system" and get that FHLB loan:

> "Boston has been using their program to do the co-op manufactured housing in New Hampshire and the Midwest does it to. But Atlanta was totally against it, wouldn't even consider it. They were quoting technicalities and regs [sic] against it that didn't hold water but created obstacles. After four applications and a five year battle we just got an affordable housing program grant which means that not only that this park is going to be built – it's a $450,000 grant- but it also sets precedent for other southern states. That is about changing the system and really sticking to it. There are a million people in Georgia who live in manufactured housing and you have to deal with it".

Changing the system at the federal level was a matter of persistence and of slowly building allies who recognized the need for change. Not only was this good for the PoH, it was good for the entire region to be able to get federal lenders interested in manufactured housing and interested in cooperatively owned parks. The need clearly exists, but the South simply does not have the mechanisms in place that other regions have to make these programs happen. In Boston, the FHLB works with community loan funds and less conventional lenders that have an established relationship with working-class communities. The South is only beginning to build this kind of financial infrastructure and the PoH is certainly part of that building process.

At the local level, ACC has purchased the land on Freeman Drive for PoH, provided their operating costs, and paid for the sewer lift station so that the park would be hooked up to the

necessary infrastructure. All of these monies were distributed by the county commissioners *against* the recommendations of the HED staff, however. In the expert opinion of the staff, the finances simply do not work. With the land and all the amenities proposed for this park – a daycare facility, a Laundromat, a community center, and a playground – the costs per pad comes to about $70,000 each, which is quite expensive for a mobile home. Harold explained that from a financial perspective, the PoH project is a bad deal because it hasn't reached a point where it is at least breaking even, where lenders can see a return on their investment. ACC has given all of the federal money that it is going to give, and private lenders are skeptical of investing in a mobile home park. On top of all that, the recent mortgage crisis decreases the likelihood that people will invest in projects that are even the slightest bit risky. The reason that the project has gone this far against staff recommendations, in government staffer #1's opinion, is because of the fervor created by the PoH as a social movement. Some of the county commissioners, and to some extent the Mayor, have invested political capital in the PoH and they are committed to it:

> "Aspects of the political process play heavily into budget decisions. And that was a very visible project, with supporters who had the ear of several commissioners. So they overrode our recommendations and allocated the money and here we are several years later with a project that has still not moved forward… I don't think it's realistic. But it's emotional. When the mayor and commission approved it, a lot of that was based on emotion… They really weren't realistic about this project and they let emotion sway them".

Government staffers #1 and #2 see the PoH project as taking funds away from other affordable housing programs that have been proven to work, like Habitat for Humanity and the Athens Land Trust. These programs show returns on the monies invested and they put people in affordable houses. In their eyes, every dollar that has gone to the PoH is a dollar that could have gone to building a conventional stick-built house under another program. Again, there is a clear bias against manufactured housing; it is almost as if some of the government staff that I spoke with

wished these parks just did not exist. However, this is a fantasy, and not everyone in Georgia can afford to live in stick-built housing. This form of housing is not going to simply disappear, and it needs a new policy model to follow. The PoH model has simply not been tested in Georgia, but this does not preclude its failure.

In the South, a cooperatively owned mobile home park *can* work but it is swimming against all of the biases about manufactured housing. In addition,there is a lack of financial infrastructure to deal with these types of investments. In states where these parks exist, there are financial institutions in place that work very closely with residents to provide housing counseling and strategies to maintain the park. The New Hampshire Community Loan Fund is able to maintain a steady stream of revolving loans to parks and park residents that helps people get into their homes as well as helping them maintain the property and the unit. Because they do have a shorter life span than stick-built homes, manufactured homes need constant maintenance in order to retain any value. When I asked government staffer #1 why these parks were successful in some places and not in Georgia, his response was indicative of the larger problem in establishing a land trust park. He suggested that there was some sort of cultural problem that feeds into the economic status of parks being bad investments: "its really our culture here. It doesn't seem to be a culture of care and maintenance on a lot of these properties". He then went on to explain why social mixing was the answer as opposed to the poverty concentration he saw being proposed by PoH:

> "What we've found when we group low income people in one area, concentrate that poverty, we get a lot of attendant problems with that. If folks were spread out in the community and saw different role models and opportunities, a lot of the social problems wouldn't occur, at least not at the scale they occur when you concentrate poverty. People of Hope is the same thing, it's just a trailer park instead of an apartment complex. Its still gonna be low and very low income people barely making it. And then you expect them to make management decisions about their community too?"

Based on the interviews that I conducted, the concentration of low-income folks in Garden Springs was actually one of the *benefits* of the park, not a problem. Poverty concentration, in that instance, did not come with as many "attendant problems" but actually created a real community of mutual support and aid. Attorney/activist #5 also suggested that the closeness and commonalities between the residents was actually what gave them so much political power. That close bond of community is precisely what these residents are struggling to regain, so suggesting that "concentrating" them in one place is a bad thing completely misses the point of the PoH. I believe that in this case study, poverty deconcentration falls short as an explanation for why the project will fail.

The kind of progressive institutions that make these parks possible in California and New England are only beginning to appear in Georgia, and it may take years to fundamentally change the financial housing infrastructure to support something that is cooperatively owned and that does not create a large return on an investment The fiscal viability of PoH park may rightly be called into question, partly because the PoH may have overestimated the groundswell of financial support that they thought they would receive. They are essentially depending on having every aspect of this development subsidized, which means that the residents and PoH as a whole will be under tremendous pressure to pay back their investors, provided they receive the additional monies that they need and the project finally gets off the ground. The residents will need budget counseling and the park will need to generate enough capital to maintain itself and pay back their loans. If they are able to give their investors a return on their investment and maintain the park, the PoH will be a success and all of the mobile home communities in Georgia that are plagued by slumlords will have a model for change and empowerment. If the park is unable to find more resources or if they are unable to keep the park affordable while paying back

their investors, progressive housing programs in the state of Georgia will suffer a setback. Obviously, the ramifications of the success or failure of the PoH will be felt far beyond ACC.

My analysis of the financial viability of the PoH project is that its critics miss the point entirely – is it better to spend tremendous subsidies on creating a new resident-owned park, which may or may not work, or is it better to continue to allow the market to create and recreate this cycle of disinvestment, reinvestment, and displacement that created the situation in the first place? The government, whether federal, state, or local, can continue to clean up the mess that the free market creates when housing becomes a purely economic vehicle. Neal Holland is not alone in ACC for doing what he did – seven smaller parks have closed under stunningly similar conditions. Every time, ACC will come in and come up with emergency money to help those people who are affected, but the problem is not fixed! So the question is not how much does a new park cost in terms of subsidies, but how much does the free market actually cost our low income residents, not only in economic terms, but in terms of human rights?

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This case study of Garden Springs is about the intersection of several socio-spatial processes that fundamentally result from class conflict. Wacquant's (2008) recent insistence that the working-class is largely invisible in gentrification and policy studies that celebrate the revival of cities as middle and upper-class playgrounds is particularly relevant to this study because it gets to the heart of the issue: the return of capital to the city and the beautification of the landscape that it entails often does not benefit the working-class, but rather jeopardizes their ability to claim any right to valuable inner-city space. Promoting growth and preserving greenspace, in this case, has come at the expense of those who do not own property and are unable to make any legal claims to the neighborhoods that form the social and economic backbone of ACC. Garden Springs was caught right in the middle of several structural forces that were largely beyond their control.

To summarize, class-based political decisions, in the form of land use plans and zoning ordinances, determined the location and types of development that would be acceptable in ACC. Student housing, which predominantly drives the type of high-density development that was recommended, was restricted in its placement by NIMBY attitudes steeped in middle-class, protectionist values about property. Supply restrictions on one side, backed by ideas about environmental protection and aesthetic value, were compounded by restrictions on *where* demand for highly lucrative student housing could be met. Garden Springs residents were caught in between these two forces, as they were located within the targeted development area, close to downtown and the university, had the right zoning, and consisted of an ethnically

marginalized population without any legal means of resistance. This working class community was effectively rendered invisible because removing their community satisfied the requirements of the Comprehensive Plan; it satisfied developers and the landowner who stood to make tremendous profits; it satisfied students who wanted to their needs catered to; and it satisfied local government because it brought more capital and higher property values into the community. The only people who were not satisfied were those people who valued the sense of place that their community engendered, regardless of its appearance or exchange value. Luckily, those people refused to remain invisible.

While the working families who lived in Garden Springs may not have had much economic power, they certainly possessed a collective political power. Their highly visible direct-action protest campaign stimulated a widespread debate about affordable housing within the community, a debate that continues on today in the form of organizations like The Partners for a Prosperous Athens that are addressing some of the poverty issues raised back in 2001. The evolution of their social movement, from a protest organization struggling to protect their community to a formal non-profit organization working to stabilize an entire regional population of mobile home consumers, provides some important lessons on the dynamics of collective action. Had the residents pursued the radical notion of squatting on their land and refusing to leave, they may have all ended up homeless. However, the threat of causing such chaos over development was what allowed the residents to make in-roads into the political arena. They may not have been able to preserve Garden Springs as it was, but they were able to soften the blow of displacement through earning concessions from the local government and landowner. For the forty or so people who have held the People of Hope together for these last six years, which is in itself an amazing feet when you consider that these are working people with families, the

attachment to community is what holds them together. But even more than that, the PoH recognize that what they hope to do will benefit communities beyond themselves. Many of the PoH members will not be moving into the new Garden Springs once it is built because they have already settled elsewhere, but they stay committed to the project because they do not want others to go through the types of hardship that many of them have dealt with more than once. Whether the wider political and financial climate of the South is ready for the type of progressive housing institution that they are proposing remains to be seen. Regardless of whether or not the resources will be found to match the vision of the PoH, the fact remains that the need for more just housing policy exists, especially with regard to manufactured housing.

I would like to conclude by engaging with recent debates over the relevance of critical scholarship on gentrification and its relationship with policy studies. The recent issue of the International journal of Urban and Regional Research (2008) contains debates between a critical camp of scholars, headed up by Tom Slater, Neil Smith, and Loic Wacquant, that advocate for a highly political and theoretical critique of gentrification's impacts on the working-class, and scholars like Lance Freeman that seek to empirically engage with the 'nuanced' effects of gentrification and offer policy suggestions. While my research into Garden Springs certainly gives me reason to be critical of gentrification on the whole, particularly because of its often invisible impacts on the working-classes, I do not agree with those 'critical' scholars who dismiss any research that seeks policy relevance as somehow being apologetic on gentrification's behalf. Understandably, a funding structure in the UK that encourages gentrification scholars to be less than critical because they will only be rewarded for less-critical, 'policy relevant' research deserves harsh criticism. However, arguing that any research that has policy relevance is somehow automatically less than critical of the process of gentrification obfuscates what is

really important about critical scholarship: that it should somehow actually benefit those who are most negatively affected by gentrification. I entirely agree with arguments that gentrification scholarship should "revive and revise class analysis" (Wacquant 2008, 203), foregrounding "the invisible urban poor" (ibid) and critiquing the role of the neoliberal state that leaves poor renters to fend for themselves in a crunch between a "hyper-inflated property market, on the one hand, and a chronic lack of affordable/social housing on the other" (Slater 2008, 217). These critiques are the foundation of my theoretical lens. My argument, however, is that not *all* policy relevant research is somehow pro-gentrification and intended to only "manage the process" (Freeman 2006, 186).

As I have demonstrated, the PoH is pursuing policy strategies, like a right of first refusal law and community-owned mobile home parks, specifically as *anti-gentrification policies.* Critical scholarship should not have to rely solely on heady critiques of capitalism that dismiss anything that is short of revolution. Even Neil Smith seems to support this false dichotomy between research that is critical and research that is policy-relevant: "many young researchers have found the path of least career resistance to be paved by more and more policy-relevant case studies that hold the larger issues out of focus" (2008, 196). My research here has attempted to avoid losing that larger focus by walking a fine line between capturing the larger structural issues at play that encourage gentrification in the local context *and* identifying grass-roots strategies that are being employed to resist those changes. Policy relevance does not somehow automatically make my approach non-critical. It is possible to simultaneously critically theorize about gentrification and avoid policy suggestions that fall into the "post-political" trap (Swyngedouw 2008) i.e. consensus based politics that avoid revolutionary ideas. I have made a scathing criticism of the logic of capitalism that makes gentrification such a 'natural' outcome in

the urban housing structure, and ultimately I would like to see some sort of democratic or socialist revolution emerge out of that critique. But in the very immediate sense of thinking about people in ACC becoming homeless while waiting for geography scholars to initiate such a revolution, it becomes more productive to chip away at the system via policy changes and alternative housing structures than to demand socialist housing become an instant reality. Going back to activist #1, who wondered whether the displaced residents would actually benefit from him "getting his activist kick on" or if maybe some other less radical but more immediately productive strategy might actually benefit them more, is it actually productive for gentrification scholars to call themselves radical if that means they dismiss policy strategies simply because they are not wholesale changes to the capitalist order? I could not have imagined telling the PoH director that I did not support their land trust idea because it represented some conformity to the "post-political" mainstream and was not radical enough. Resistance to the inequalities of gentrification is achieved through incremental battles, like the one that the Garden Springs residents are fighting. Resistance should be informed by radical thought, and scholarship should continue to be radical in support of resistance. Hopefully, this narrative on the effects of gentrification and one communities struggle against it will inform both radical scholarship and radical activism in a mutually beneficial way.

This research project has opened up several potentially fruitful areas for future research. First, and perhaps most pressing, there is a need to investigate the shifting demographic influx of Hispanic/Latino/a populations into the South, particularly with regard to these populations inhabiting mobile home parks. More research is needed into the understanding how the potential political and cultural differences of this population feed into the exploitative living arrangements in mobile home parks owned by predatory landlords. A qualitative investigation that engages

with immigrant's experiences with finding and maintaining housing could inform a deeper understanding of affordable housing issues at both an activist and policy level. Quantitative data on demographic shifts within manufactured housing consumers would further support this research. A second line of inquiry that needs exploration is the issue of the HOPE scholarship. Tracing the economic geography of this scholarship money, from lottery tickets to college tuition to students disposable income, would be a fascinating, as well as a much needed, investigation of the multiple geographic scales that this program operates within. Following along those same lines, American geographers have not been engaging with 'studentification' to the extent that our UK counterparts have. The American college town is quite distinct from the British educational system and experience, and more investigation into the student habitus needs to be done. College towns like Athens have specific economies, and a regional or national study of gentrification in college towns would be useful in identifying trends or key characteristics. Finally, gentrification in ACC seems to have shifted into East Athens and the Hancock Corridor, two predominantly African American communities that have been the focus of government subsidies. Research needs to explore the racial implications of these changes, as well as the role of the state in serving as a primer for gentrification in these neighborhoods.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: List of research participants (no overlap) and guide to quotations.

- 2 employees of People of Hope (PoH member #1 and #2)
- 3 affordable housing experts at the University of Georgia (UGA professor #1-3)
- 2 ACC planners (ACC planner #1 and #2)
- 2 ACC government staff members (government staffer #1 and #2)
- 1 landscape architect/Garden Springs activist (activist #2)
- 1 local land trust expert (land trust expert)
- 1 affordable housing non-profit director/Garden Springs activist (activist #3)
- 1 affordable housing non-profit housing counselor (counselor)
- 1 loan fund specialist/activist (activist #1)
- 1 attorney/activist (attorney/activist #5)
- 1 affordable housing non-profit director (non-profit director)
- 1 environmental activist/land trust expert/Garden Springs activist (activist #4)
- 1 director of state run housing agency (bureaucrat)

Appendix B: Interview questions about manufactured housing and the political economy of housing

1) What was your response to the closing of Garden Springs?

2) Is there anything about manufactured housing communities that makes them especially prone to being razed?

3) How and why was the decision to rezone the land that Garden Springs sat on from single-family to multi-family use made?

4) Why are manufactured homes taxed and financed as personal property when most of them are never moved?

5) Is a right of first refusal law something that needs to be passed in Georgia? Does this type of law stand in the way of private property rights? Is preventing low-income communities from displacement a priority or does private property rights trump the social need for housing?

6) How is manufactured housing perceived within housing policy circles? Is it perceived as a potential benefit to the stock of affordable housing or is it a detriment to property values?

7) Is there a NIMBY factor associated with manufactured housing and if so, what effect does NIMBY have on policy and zoning?

8) Is there a comprehensive growth plan for either ACC or UGA and if so, can you describe this plan?

9) What is the relationship like between ACC and UGA? What is good about this relationship and what is bad? More specifically, do students effect non-students in terms of cost of living? If so, what are some ways negative effects can be minimized?

10) Should more student housing be built on campus in order to ease some of the stress on the affordable housing market caused by an influx of higher income student renters?

11) What are the trends in the private housing market in terms of style of development and location?

12) Why is affordable housing not being built despite the large numbers of low-income residents who are overburdened with the cost of housing in ACC?

13) How are subsidies for low-income housing distributed and what populations do these serve? Who benefits from these contracts and who decides who will build affordable housing? Is there any way to create incentives for affordable housing construction?

Appendix C: Interview questions for the POH, Athens Land Trust, and parties involved in manufactured housing and affordable housing provisioning.

1) What was your response to the closing of Garden Springs?

2) Is there anything about manufactured housing communities that makes them especially prone to being razed?

3) What is a community land trust and how does it work? What are the terms of the contract for the new development orchestrated by the POH and ALT?

4) What has the process of competing for subsidies and funding for the construction of this new community been like? Where have your grants and funds come from?

5) Is there much support for this new type of development within the larger political structures in the county and state? Is more manufactured housing frowned upon?

6) How can perceptions of manufactured housing be changed? What creates them and sustains them?

7) Why are manufactured homes taxed and financed as personal property when most of them are never moved?

8) Is a right of first refusal law something that needs to be passed in Georgia? Does this type of law stand in the way of private property rights? Is preventing low-income communities from displacement a priority or does private property rights trump the social need for housing?

9) How is manufactured housing perceived within housing policy circles? Is it perceived as a potential benefit to the stock of affordable housing or is it a detriment to property values?

10) What are the trends in the private housing market in terms of style of development and location?

11) Why is affordable housing not being built despite the large numbers of low-income residents who are overburdened with the cost of housing in ACC?

12) Does the POH view the demands for student housing as detrimental to the cause of building affordable housing? What is the relationship like between affordable housing and student housing?

13) Is a land trust community a revolutionary or anti-capitalist idea? Is it perceived in this way or is it simply a strategy for producing affordable housing?