What's in Store for the Neighborhood?:
Neighborhoods Then, There and in the Future

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I come to our subject as an anthropologist with experience in urban settings in several cultures. From that perspective, I see Cleveland and its neighborhoods as particular cases which can be illuminated through consideration of certain generalities and comparisons with other local realities. We will look at local particulars in Cleveland and move out and up to wider realities and other cases and then return to the particulars. By this hermeneutic process I hope to illuminate both levels.

Our focal concern is one illustrious neighborhood, the Avenue, that "linear" Euclid Avenue community of the successful and, later, the fashionable. The name has new meaning now, applied to the walk in Tower City. In Jan Cigliano's paper we see a detailed account of the development of the Avenue. The various internal social ties that bound it together and distinguished it are well documented. John Grabowski's paper, on the other hand, throws up for grabs the notion that Euclid Avenue was a neighborhood. However, after a consideration of the rise and fall of a variety of Cleveland's ethnic communities, he concludes that Euclid was in fact a neighborhood. In my look at the neighborhood presented in the two papers, I shall, by way of hermeneutic interpretation, deconstruct the Avenue and reconstitute it as a cultural, i.e., ethnic neighborhood, much like others in Cleveland and elsewhere. I will also suggest that neighborhoods are better understood as perceptual and experiential categories rather than empirical realities. Let us look at some of the features of neighborhoods.

Physical Markers of the Neighborhood

The Avenue rose from a tree-lined path to a major thoroughfare, a central axis for a developing city. But its later function as axis no doubt reduced the desirability that originally led to its development. The use of Euclid as a thoroughfare over time also meant the increasing presence in the neighborhood of many who were in transit. These people, though in the neighborhood, could hardly have been said to be of it. Cigliano shows that barriers, in the form of iron fences, served to indicate to people on the thoroughfare that they should remain there. And, the lack of borders or boundaries on the house side of the residences symbolized lateral inclusion; the equality of those of the thoroughfare. We note also that there were differences between northern and southern sides of the Avenue, differences also voiced by the location of the fences between home and street. Symbolically stated by this community's boundaries are notions of inclusion and exclusion; those of the neighborhood were together but distinct from those of the street.

In terms of boundaries, one might consider the contrast provided by home construction in the Mediterranean tradition. In the time of Imperial Rome, and much before in Greece, patrician homes were built with encircling walls and an interior courtyard. (The poor could not afford, but aspired to, the pattern) (e.g., Allsopp et al. 1966). It is a pattern found widely in the Mediterranean today whether East, West, South, or North. This pattern also is found today in Latin America and in the Spanish-influenced areas of the U.S. such as the Southwest. The Spanish architectural tradition is itself greatly influenced by North African architecture. In this tradition in the New and Old Worlds, walls are built first, the house is built afterward. Not a few poorer people run out of funds before starting the house, as I've seen often in Mexico. Over the years, a temporary dwelling is replaced by a more permanent house. Today in countries of the Mediterranean tradition, the view of the interior of a home from the street is, as a general rule, completely blocked by walls or shutters.

In Strasbourg, France, I had the opportunity to see this tradition in practice and to learn something of neighborhoods there (Gaines 1978, 1985). In an experiment, I left open the curtains and shutters of my room to see how pedestrians would react. I found that people generally assumed that the unblocked window was more or less an invitation to observe the interior at length. Some people actually
stopped and leaned into the apartment through the open window. My presence did not inhibit their leisurely observations.

A very different tradition can be seen in The Netherlands, part of the Northern Germanic Protestant tradition (for which see Gaines 1978). There, the interior of the home is purposely made visible from the streets. It is expected that the passersby could observe the family at morning, afternoon or evening meals. It is assumed, however, that outsiders will not stare into the home. The cultural understanding of such behavior is that the family and the home are examples for others to see.

Comparing the two patterns allows us to see the low wrought iron fence in a new light. The exclusivity of the fence on Euclid, compared with barriers in the Mediterranean tradition, appears more symbolic than real. The social exclusion intended was clearly not as extreme as one might find expressed in the Mediterranean cultural tradition. The houses were indeed showplaces, examples and models. This is our first clue concerning ethnicity; the Euclid Avenue people were European, but clearly not Mediterranean.

Topography and Geography of Neighborhoods

A number of instances of "natural" boundaries are given to us in Grabowski's paper. There is evidence presented that Cleveland neighborhood were determined by such natural markers. But Euclid is not one of these. Its terminus is, in fact, human-made; the circle in which today is found CWRU and other institutions.

Neighborhoods with "natural" boundaries also change and these changes may disregard the seemingly self-evident boundaries. One neighborhood in San Francisco, in which I directed some research on alcohol, is called the OMI (Oceanview Ingleside Merced). It has physical boundaries, major boulevards on the West, East, and South, and hills to the North. But earlier, this natural neighborhood of predominantly black homeowner had been three distinct neighborhoods. Those three original neighborhoods lacked distinct physical boundaries. The "natural" boundaries of the neighborhood, then, appeared only with the creation of the OMI as a single neighborhood (Borker et al. 1980).

Like neighborhoods in the U.S, neighborhoods in Strasbourg are often bounded by particular streets; but as often they are not. The street boundaries are not necessarily self-evident. Some border streets are quite small and insignificant while others are large boulevards. Some neighborhoods have flexible boundaries; they are social, not geographic units. The neighborhood extends to any adjacent area in which particular sorts of people lived and whose neighborhood it was said to be. The central varieties of people in Strasbourg are Alsatian and French Jews, Catholics and Protestants. Some areas of the city are religiously and or economically mixed while others are not. That is, there is a rich Catholic neighborhood as well as Jewish and Protestant ones. But well-to-do members of all three of these "high societies," as they were called in Strasbourg, also live in other, religiously and or economically mixed neighborhoods.

Religion and Change in the Neighborhood

Key organizational principles there are religion and social status, the latter often unrelated to economic wherewithal. Religious affiliation of neighborhoods often entails proximity to places of worship. That is, Catholics live near their Churches, Jews near Temples and Protestants near their Churches and Temples (Protestant Churches at the time of the Reformation, an event having major impact in Strasbourg were called Temples; some in Strasbourg still are [Gaines 1978]). But the boundaries of a neighborhoods shift with the movement of residents. If Protestants move further out from St. Thomas, a Protestant neighborhood, the neighborhood boundaries move with them. Such changes have occurred throughout the history of this city.

It appears that the Cleveland's Avenue was constantly changing too. As more residences appeared, the neighborhood got longer; it incorporated a social space that was ever-changing on the
physical plane as it moved East over a half-century to University Circle. We also note that not all possible religious edifices were to be found on the Avenue; there is no mention of Temples or Catholic Churches in the early days of the Avenue. This suggests a religious identity, Protestant.

Changes affecting another neighborhood in San Francisco, the Fillmore, saw the community redefined. This neighborhood, the ‘traditional’ African-American area of the city, began some radical changes some 15 years ago. A number of houses and apartments were bought and renovated in a brief time period. This area has many of the wood frame Victorian structures for which the city is famous. New owners concerned themselves with often complicated, aesthetic paint schemes for the structures. They commonly consulted original architectural drawings to restore their home to their original structural state. (The complicated, multicolored and shaded paint schemes are due to improvements in paints which allowed the production of salt resistant paints in all colors.) These changes were seen by African-American residents as an assault by Anglo yuppies on their neighborhood. The neighborhood was defined by the contiguous areas in which appreciable numbers of African-Americans lived. It never had fixed geographical boundary upon which all residents could agree.

Research showed that the majority of new residents in the area were themselves African-American. But, these newcomers were yuppies (educated professionals, no children). Even so, the residents of the Fillmore perceived what was happening as “Whites replacing Blacks,” in the social terms of the time. This was an example of a community thought to have real physical boundaries, but was actually defined in both ethnic and economic terms (Borker et al. 1980).

Geography also changes. The Fillmore’s northern edge abuts Pacific Heights, the city’s most expensive area. The southern portion of Pacific Heights is actually at a somewhat lower altitude. This area is now called "Lower Pacific Heights”; it was once "Upper Fillmore." The side of the Fillmore closest to the downtown area has also been renamed. For this area, a very old name was resurrected, "The Western Addition." This name stemmed from its original perception as that part of town to the West of the old center which was added as the city expanded. While old inhabitants refuse to use the name, "Western Addition," newcomers regularly use it as do the municipal and political authorities. In this instance, one area has two names and two very different conceptions (and realities). On the one hand, it is a part of a low-income, Black neighborhood. On the other, it is a newly developing area with excellent potential (now realized) and great charm (those Victorians again). And, it is close to work in the downtown area, an area that is not a central concern of the long-term residents. These examples suggest the impact of change on the neighborhood. Before taking a closer look at this temporal dimension, the shape of neighborhoods deserves a glance.

The Shape of the Neighborhood

Commentators have noted that the Avenue was a linear neighborhood. It is suggested that this does not mean it is not a neighborhood. Embedded in this suggestion is the implication of usual and customary configurations deserving of the name “neighborhood.” But this and other cases suggest that shape is not a critical factor. Neighborhoods can be of any shape or configuration; here whole, there bifurcated. And, as noted above with regard to the Fillmore, the same space may be perceived differently by different residents. As regards the shape of the Avenue, it can be pointed out that there are linear cities as well as linear neighborhoods (and non-neighborhoods). A well-known example of a linear city is Honolulu, stretched out along the southern coast of the island of Oahu.

Temporal Dimensions of the Neighborhood

Not only might we ask what is a neighborhood, we might also ask when is a neighborhood. The temporal dimension of neighborhoods is important to consider. We saw this with reference to the Fillmore, above. In the development of the Avenue, something appears to have been created out of nothing. In fact, the area that became Euclid was doubtless a "place" before the European and non-Mediterranean Euro-Americans "created" it. Was it a good hunting area, a place for gathering particularly fragrant flowers or ripe berries? I speak of what the area was to the original inhabitants, the Native Americans. Just as it is rather difficult to comprehend how Columbus "discovered" a land
that had been occupied for 30,000 years (and which he could never understand was not the Far East), it is difficult to overlook the bias of the perception of "unused countryside" that became Euclid. The elites' mental construction of the notion of an undeveloped area derives from their perception of that area in contrast to the area of industrial-commercial development in the East along the river.

The area, recreated as Euclid Avenue, was then "a place," probably named and previously occupied in past times. In short, it was a neighborhood, perhaps several hundred of them, down through history. Clearly, the neighborhoods of the area were of a different sort, but typicality is less typically a feature of neighborhoods than one might surmise.

Rituals and Identity in the Neighborhood

As they constructed the city, the residents of the Avenue constructed and deconstructed their own neighborhood. Euclid's developmental period witnessed the rise of fashion and the installation of calendrical and informal rituals (of dining, picnicking, clubbing and weddings). A social function of these rituals is clearly the establishment of internal bonds and external boundaries. A key conception of people is clearly stated as "sterling worth" vs. inherited "royal blood," achieved status over ascribed status. We should not forget that these two forms of social status, achieved and ascribed, are still distinct. Then as now, there are frequent attempts to combine them; wealthy families send sons and daughters to Europe for school and for travel, to be sure, but also to meet royalty with a view toward marriage.

We also learn that notions of style, art, etc. among those of the Avenue were derived from European models. And a passing reference to food in our papers suggests ethnic origins. We see salt fish, grains and dairy products, the foods of the Northern European Germanic tradition and the basis of English cuisine (such as it is). The cuisine also seems to exhibit a little help from Native America. (The Mediterranean tradition is based on vegetable oils, lighter grains and wines.) The dominant languages (Germanic) are also from one part of Western European.

The valuation of achieved over ascribed status suggests ethnicity as well. It implicates the new ethos of Scotland and England after the rise of Protestantism following the Reformation. The Mediterranean traditions (Latin, Islamic, Orthodox) still emphasize hierarchy and one's fixed place in social space. Max Weber's (1978) work has given us much to think about in terms of the influence of European Protestantism on the development of Capitalism and its dynamic and acquisitive ethos (see also Gaines 1978). This ethos had enormous consequences for society and for the Avenue neighborhood; it could be created, but need not be permanent. Indeed, the Avenue's life was officially 100 years, but effectively much less, declining after 1910. In general, in this ethos the idea of change becomes a good in and of itself. Hence, there is less a sense of preservation of the neighborhood than would be the case in the context of other cultural ethos. This is especially true since the Euclid residents saw themselves as pioneers, creators in a city, rather than those whose task it was to maintain a neighborhood tradition.

In terms of the social life of neighborhoods, intermarriage commonly helps form neighborhood bonds as do clubs or bars. This is true in wealthy and poor neighborhoods. But let us consider more closely some of the rituals. Many specifically mentioned by our historians appear to be rituals of reversal, as anthropologists call ritualized forms of symbolic reversal (Babcock 1978). There is a "Cake Walk Party" mentioned. In that context we hear not of "mother hubbards with red bandanas in black face," as stated, but rather the utilization of a racist "mammy" stereotype of female "coloreds" (so-called because of their universal mixed ancestry). Recall that Cake Walks were the finale of minstrel shows, roving theatrical forums of racist propaganda in antebellum America (Jones 1963) used to justify the continuation of forms of slavery and the denial of civil rights after emancipation. This party can be construed as a ritual symbolic inversion on a multiplicity of levels including putative race. Other levels which appear to be expressed are geography (North vs South), social standing (elite master vs stigmatized minority servant), residence (urban industrial vs. rural/agricultural) and occupation (owner/director vs. lowly servant).
Ms. Bolton's Dickens Party (1889) with one hundred of Cleveland's most prominent and well-known but disguised individuals in attendance, presents symbolic reversals in terms of continental identity, social status, economic level and social recognition. And the Baby Party reversed conceptions of maturity, independence, and age. These events then, are rituals of community and identity. They are also rituals of exclusion. Exclusivity was also shown by the architectural arrangements mentioned earlier. Anthropology recognizes boundaries (Barth 1970) and rituals (Turner 1967) as the stuff of identity. Something of who they are is expressed by the symbolic construction of opposites. These symbolic expression reveal that much more is involved in residence on the Avenue than simple economics, i.e., "race," occupation, residence, age and so on. With regard to this point, we also note that the most prestigious neighborhoods of U.S. cities are not always the most expensive, as is presented in W. Lloyd Warner's classic, Yankee City (1963).

It is clear that on the Avenue, not all ethnicities were welcomed, even if wealthy. This is still true for many neighborhoods in American cities. Again, the Avenue appears as an ethnic community, in particular, an English-American enclave even with its live-in Irish- and African-American domestic helpers. I might mention that recently a Dallas neighborhood claimed it was "integrated," because Asian-, Latino- and African-Americans could and did live there, as servants.

Policies, Attitudes and the Neighborhood

One thinks of neighborhoods as places where people chose to live. In fact, they were places where, as often as not, people were forced to live. For example, a number of urban U.S. "Indian" neighborhoods did not result from economic choices. A variety of U.S. Government policies moved Native Americans to cities, for example, the "Off Reservation Placement Plan" of the 1960s (Officer 1971). Services for them were also concentrated in a few cities to insure that they stayed in those areas. It was thus not their choice to come to the cities nor to live in particular neighborhoods. Generally, they did not and do not come to be a majority, though a neighborhood may be described as "Indian."

The migration from the South to the North of African-Americans in the last half of the 19th century was occasioned by institutionalized racism and discrimination. As larger numbers of these people who built the South appeared in the North, the promises of the northern land began to fade. As a consequence, they were forced to live in what came to be called ghettos, after the same kind of ethnic concentrations in European cities. Harlem and the Southside (of Chicago) were created by racism and discrimination, not the natural coming together of people (Drake and Cayton 1970; Osofsky 1968). Grabowski shows the same pattern appearing in Cleveland. This resulted in sometimes violent civil strife in the 1960s.

In an English example, we find ethnicity serving as a stimulus of illogical power. In research among West Indians in London I conducted, several neighborhoods were described to me by natives and immigrants as "West Indian" neighborhoods. Upon visiting these areas, however, I found that less than 10% of the residents were West Indian. As in the case with Pakistanis and other South Asian ethnic, it took very few of them for the English to feel that they had come to dominate and thereby redefine a neighborhood. So, I found many mixed neighborhoods redefined by the majority group in terms of a minority group. This we have seen has occurred in the U.S. with Native Americans.

Social Networks: Kinship and Work in the Neighborhood

Our historians showed us that the bonds of marriage solidified the Avenue. But is this unusual for other neighborhoods? In fact, such is quite common; conceptual spaces seem to create a stage on which actors play. The games include those of love and marriage. In her classic study of a working-class neighborhood in London, Elizabeth Bott (1972) showed that members were simultaneously workmates, friends and relatives. Such social networks are called "embedded". We note that the same embedded social networks appeared on the Avenue as it developed. And, Oscar Lewis' work in Mexico found peasants from Tepotzitlán moving to a neighborhood in Mexico City (1970). There, they developed and reinforced existing kin ties. Urbanization occurred without breakdown of the kinship-based world
of the village, contradicting notions of urban anonymity of the Chicago school of urbanologists. Thus the nature of social networks of the Avenue were parallel to working-class communities in other countries.

It is clear that in the neighborhoods of Cleveland, the Irish, the Russian, the Polish, the Ukrainian and others, a sense of ethnic community was important and a key factor in communal living. Religious similarities often reinforced ethnic distinctions. But just as often, distinct ethnic groups in Cleveland had the same religion and sometimes used the same places of worship, e.g., Hungarian, Czech and Italian Catholics.

In past times, in pre-industrial cities, ethnic groups lived in enclaves. These quarters were often occupational quarters as well. That is, particular ethnic groups engaged in particular trades (Sjoberg 1960). The remnants of this occupational/ethnic segregation can be seen in the names of the streets and quarters of the older parts of European and U.S. cities. The Anglo-American Protestant Avenue of owners and managers is not unlike such ethnic/occupational unites. It appears quite at home in the context of ethnic communities with its boundaries, rituals of inclusion and exclusion, and homogeneity of religion, occupation, language and so forth. The Avenue appears as perhaps less unique after the foregoing.

In this brief look at the Avenue and beyond, I have tried to deconstruct its apparent singularity and to then reconstruct it as an ethnic neighborhood like many others in Cleveland. But this is an extinct community. We might well ask what is likely to come from neighborhoods in the future? What will be their characteristics? To conclude, I want to look toward the future of the neighborhood.

Neighborhood Creativity and the Future

As we have seen, new notions of neighborhood and new neighborhoods develop for a variety of reasons, ethnic, religious, economic, occupational, geographic and topographical, and kinship. There is no one cause, nor one character of neighborhoods. They are created and creative categories of experience and perception, not empirically defined physical spaces. Neighborhoods can be spaces of creativity in at least one other sense as well. Here I invoke Weber's notion of cities and neighborhoods as creative social spaces (1958), not the cold, sterile anonymous places of some theoreticians. I would hazard a guess that the conceptual spaces of the U.S. neighborhoods of the future will be more culturally diverse. Such is already the case in Canada because Canadians do not employ the huge range of discriminatory practices found in the U.S. (e.g., in lending, real estate, schools, employment, the law, etc.). The diversity of the neighborhoods will not stem just from Western Europe, but from South Asia, Southeast Asia, China, Japan, Africa, Korea, the Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific.

This ethnic diversity will doubtless lead to greater flux in conceptions and experiences of neighborhoods. As is always the case when people of different backgrounds meet, creative (including novel combinations) forces will be unleashed. New personal and neighborhood identities, new social practices including rituals and cuisines are a few of the things we can expect to develop out of contact. Two examples will serve to suggest that these new multi-cultural processes are now well under way.

First, I will mention that a new cuisine is spreading across America. It is called China-Latina (China is pronounced "Cheena"). It combines Latin and Chinese cuisines. Though it began in New York, I have sampled it in California. Specialties include Mu Shu Puerco! This cuisine is distinct from those elements of American nouvelle cuisine which incorporate elements from Asian and South Asian cooking; it is considered a food for the masses not fashionable restaurants with celebrity chefs.

Another example is a cultural mélange which also started in New York, in the Bronx. That area produced a form of musical and verbal performance called "Rap." Often asserted to be an Afro-American art form, it draws from the dress and speech styles of the local area. The local area's cultural mix is in fact based more on Italian and Puerto Rican immigrants than on that which is identified as African-American (i.e., Southern rural cultural). The dialect used in Rap is not Black dialect, it is Bronx, a relatively new dialect unique to the area (Another dialect of multiple linguistic origins was
the now-defunct Brooklyn dialect of "a Boid on Toiddy Toid" fame. It had elements of Gaelic. I might also mention that the "talking blues," rhymed speech set to blues from which Rap is derived, was invented by a Euro-American, not an African-American (Oliver, Harrison and Bolcom 1986).

One also sees in Los Angeles a version of Rap that derives from the proximity of Afro-Americans and Latinos. It clearly evidences Latin aspects, as does New York's, and does so in the same Bronx dialect. Whereas the dress style of the Bronx derives largely from Italian-Americans, that in Los Angeles, the plaid shirts worn over white undershirts, bandanas and baggy pants, emulate LA's Chicano gangs. LA's Black gangs dress in this same style. The influence is derived from neighborhood proximity and, in some cases overlap. We can expect far more of these novel combinations. I look to LA, and the Mission District of San Francisco, for example, for combinations of African-, Latino- and South East Asian cultural elements (and people too). I need only to point to the near West side as an example of the development of a similar mix, or to the Adams-Morgan area of Washington, D.C., though it is much more international.

I suspect that, given the nature of recent federal administrations, we will see social groupings that are going to be more structured along class lines. But, these groups will be far more ethnically diverse than has been the case heretofore in America. The old social categories of "White, Black, Asian, Latino" will not apply to the new combinations. The neighborhoods, then, are the source of future habits, fashions and trends, for all such things begin in neighborhoods. It is in terms of their great potential for creativity and change, as seen in the Avenue too, that the neighborhoods of the future have much in store for us.
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