

The Factors Inhibiting Gentrification in Areas with Little Non-market Housing: Policy Lessons from the Toronto Experience

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Abstract

This paper examines the factors that have limited gentrification in two Toronto neighbourhoods which have below-average proportions of public housing and which have traditionally acted as immigrant reception areas. The first failed to gentrify despite the existence of gentrification nearby, whereas gentrification stalled in the second in the early 1980s. Analysis of the historical reasons behind this suggests ways in which policy could intervene to limit the spread of gentrification in the absence of support for local affordable housing. These include the maintenance of areas of working-class employment, different approaches to nuisance uses and environmental externalities, a housing stock not amenable to gentrifiers' tastes and state encouragement of non-market and ethnic sources of housing finance. However, the Toronto experience also highlights the importance of policy in a negative way, as changes in municipal policy which run counter to these prescriptions are now resulting in the gentrification of these two neighbourhoods.

There is a sizeable literature concerning the potentially negative effects of gentrification on inner-city communities. The most prominent of these are the displacement of existing low-income residents and the loss of affordable housing in neighbourhoods traditionally acting as reception areas for in-migrants (Hartman *et al.*, 1982; Legates

and Hartman, 1986; Smith, 1996). In addition, declining population bases and their effects on demand for local public services (including schools), heightened community conflict and crime, increasing segregation levels and ethnic or racial discrimination, declining levels of community cohesion, the marginalisation of existing community networks and the growth

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of a 'tectonic' social structure all feature as potential detrimental impacts (Atkinson, 2004; Legates and Hartman, 1986; Robson and Butler, 2001; Slater, 2004; Wyly and Hammel, 2004). While in his systematic review of the literature, Atkinson (2004) does pinpoint some potential benefits (such as increased property values, services and revenues), such benefits mostly accrue to gentrifiers and not to existing low-income residents. Gentrification is thus a process in which the needs and rights of existing residents often come second to those of wealthier in-movers (Hartman, 1984; Newman and Wyly, 2006) and can be understood as "the production of urban space for progressively more affluent users" (Hackworth, 2002, p. 815).

Gentrification presents a policy problem regarding how to maintain low-income communities in the inner city, where the social services that such communities depend upon are typically concentrated. Yet, very little research since Hartman's early work (1974, 1984; Hartman *et al.*, 1982) has been concerned with public actions to limit the spread of gentrification and "to date the impact of gentrification on urban policy and of urban policy on gentrification has not been a research priority" (Lees, 2003, p. 571). What literature exists on this topic points to the primary role of high levels of non-market forms of housing as a key bulwark against displacement and other negative effects of gentrification (Shaw, 2005a). As the study reported on by Ley and Dobson in this Special Issue suggests, keeping this housing off the market and controlled by the state allows disadvantaged communities to remain in the neighbourhood. However, many inner-city neighbourhoods are not blessed with high concentrations of existing non-market housing and, as Ley and Dobson also note, substantial new state interventions in the social housing sector appear unlikely in the foreseeable future (at least in most Anglo-

American countries). Is there anything that can be done to slow or prevent gentrification in neighbourhoods not containing significant concentrations of non-market forms of housing, apart from new investments in affordable units? This is the question posed in this article.

This article traces the histories of two neighbourhoods within Toronto, roughly equidistant from the CBD, where gentrification remained limited (until very recently), despite predictions to the contrary and evidence of extensive reinvestment and gentrification in nearby areas. The reasons why these two neighbourhoods did not gentrify are interrogated and the lessons of this history for policy-makers are drawn out. In doing so, this article builds upon the work of Shaw (2005a) who has sought to establish a framework for understanding the factors preventing gentrification and in turn inform a new urban policy oriented to social justice. The policy implications of this research are discussed in the final section and a number of potential interventions to restrain the spread of gentrification, complementary to interventions in the housing market, are offered. Unfortunately, this research also confirms the centrality of policy in a negative way, as recent trends in these two neighbourhoods reveal that, when policies running counter to these prescriptions are implemented, gentrification once again flourishes.

Gentrification and Urban Policy

The process of gentrification has been evident in many cities of the developed world for up to 40 years now. Public policy has been an important facilitator of the process since its inception (Hackworth and Smith, 2001). In the first wave, which lasted until the late 1970s, the state actively intervened in the future of many neighbourhoods by demolishing structures and funding costly urban renewal

schemes with the hope of releasing the underlying exchange value of accessible lands near the CBD. A second wave marked by the 'roll-back' of state investment (see Peck and Tickell, 2002), largely occurred over the 1980s and was implemented in uneven fashion across and within nations, particularly in Canada where vastly different approaches were adopted among the 10 provincial governments and where municipalities often sponsored neighbourhood improvement programmes that enhanced the attractiveness of the inner city to gentrifiers (see Caulfield, 1994; Germain and Rose, 2000; Ley, 1996; Rose, 1996). The third wave (1990s to the present) is characterised by the neo-liberal state in its more recent guise. Instead of directly becoming involved in redevelopment, the state instead encouraged the private sector to drive the process through new 'roll-out' regulatory systems and by making selective investments in key public amenities, often in the name of attracting the 'creative class' (see also Peck, 2005). In Canada, while remaining uneven across provincial and municipal jurisdictions, this third phase is often associated with increasing municipal 'management' and selective encouragement of gentrification through special district legislation, the roll-back of tenant protections and policy shifts in the hopes of attracting both families and 'creative class' professionals and of fostering 'social mix' (August, 2008; Slater, 2004; Rose, 2004; Whitzman and Slater, 2006).

The effects of roll-out neo-liberalism and municipally managed gentrification have been negative for inner-city communities when they have been applied and have often reinvigorated displacement (Hackworth and Smith, 2001; Lees *et al.*, 2007; Slater, 2004; Wyly and Hammel, 2004, 2005). However, Shaw (2005a, p. 169) argues that it also provides an opening for those wishing to influence public policy at a crucial time in the evolution of the inner city. With the

active re-entry of the state in third-wave gentrification, "the problem is no longer whether to intervene, but in whose interests?". There still remain significant concentrations of low-income populations within most inner cities, as well as left-leaning middle-class populations (many of whom are themselves gentrifiers), who can be expected to vote for a political agenda focused on social justice (Caulfield, 1994; Ley, 1996; Shaw, 2005b; Walks, 2004, 2006). Many city planners and policy-makers remain progressive and well-meaning, even though they are forced to operate within the current neo-liberal context. As Larner and Craig (2005) note, many of the contradictions of the neo-liberal state are felt at the local scale. This produces tensions and requirements for innovation in local modes of urban governance and in turn opens up a space where planners might negotiate progressive reforms. Thus, if gentrification research can produce some concrete proposals and policy recommendations for maintaining low-income communities and preventing displacement, the academic community still has the potential to influence urban policy agendas (Lees, 2003).

Of course, gentrification is a complex process and does not touch down the same way in each neighbourhood. There is thus nothing inevitable about gentrification. In some neighbourhoods, gentrification has traversed past all of the stages in the 'stage model' to a point of 'super-gentrification' (Butler and Lees, 2006), while in other places it would seem never to have progressed past a middle state of incomplete or 'marginal gentrification' (Rose, 1996; van Criekingen and Decroly, 2003). The position of a city within the global hierarchy and the proportion of the high-end workforce employed downtown are clearly factors delimiting the scope for real estate valuation and demand for gentrified space (Butler and Lees, 2006; Rose, 1996; Smith, 2002). Yet this would appear to have only minor predictive power for determining

which neighbourhoods are gentrified in a given metropolitan area (however, see Rose, 1996, for a discussion of factors producing variation in gentrification within Montreal). Thus, if the factors that have encouraged or deterred gentrification in any given place can be delineated, this could be used to influence public policies in such places to protect low-income communities who remain in the inner city.

This is the strategy followed by Shaw (2005a), who demonstrates that neighbourhoods able to avoid most, if not all, of the negative effects of gentrification exhibited at least two of the following attributes: security of tenure, either in state-subsidised housing or undesirable high-density market apartments; a housing stock not conducive to gentrification; an embedded local community, by which she mostly means a community able to mobilise political capital in the fight against redevelopment; and, progressive local government which will intervene on the side of low-income communities. While few similar studies exist in the literature, there have been attempts to ascertain the attributes of gentrifying neighbourhoods, which inadvertently also provide information on areas not experiencing gentrification. For example, in Canadian cities, Ley (1986) found that early gentrification occurred near universities and hospitals, beaches and parks, in highly accessible neighbourhoods with older housing close to downtown and near areas of high amenity more generally. Interestingly, Ley also noted that gentrification tended to avoid areas of heavy industry, ports and 'Chinatowns', although Ley did not apply these findings to any prescriptive policy recommendations at the time. Rose (1996) similarly discusses some of the factors accelerating and slowing gentrification in Montreal.

For Shaw (and Ley and Dobson in this Special Issue), the protection and expansion of non-market forms of housing and

interventions which encourage the production of low-cost affordable private housing, are the most important policies that might be implemented in order to reduce wholesale gentrification of the neighbourhood and avoid displacement. Shaw argues that such interventions must occur in the early stages, as this will retain more progressive middle-class fractions who will help to produce the kind of inclusive politics necessary to keep pressure on the state for equitable policies, in turn somewhat insulating the neighbourhood against further gentrification.

Shaw is clearly correct in highlighting the primary role that protection and encouragement of secure affordable housing provide in limiting gentrification. However, many inner-city neighbourhoods do not contain large stocks of social and/or high-density housing to protect and urban advocates for social justice may not want to wait for significant new investments in state-sponsored affordable housing given the current neo-liberal climate (which of course, is not hegemonic and varies depending on the context). Might there be other strategies or policies that planners and governments could utilise to preserve low-income communities and deter gentrification? This question is particularly pertinent as gentrification proceeds through many ethnic neighbourhoods that, by virtue of language and lack of integration with the host community, have difficulty mobilising significant levels of political capital to sway mainstream policy-makers. Gentrification may displace working-class ethnic residents while leaving ethnic business and retail strips to be enjoyed by gentrifiers (Hackworth and Rekers, 2005). Policies that could be applied to maintain such ethnic communities might thus complement those already fashioned to preserve affordable housing. This issue is particularly relevant in emerging global metropolises with high levels of immigration (of which Toronto is a good example).

Research Design and Case Studies

A case study approach is adopted here. Two neighbourhoods where gentrification was either absent or where it had stalled are identified. In order to be able to say something about the factors that might deter gentrification even in the absence of significant non-market housing, neighbourhoods were chosen that have below-average proportions of social housing compared with both the old inner city and the larger post-amalgamation City of Toronto (Table 1). As well, we selected neighbourhoods containing large ethnic and immigrant communities, allowing us to comment on the factors that might prevent gentrification in immigrant-reception neighbourhoods. Data come from an extensive search of archival records, newspaper articles and City of Toronto planning documents, as well as from the Census of Canada.

The two case studies selected are the Brockton and South Riverdale neighbourhoods. Brockton failed to gentrify over the 30-year study period, even though large areas to the east and west have been transformed by the process, and it has largely remained an

immigrant-reception area housing a low-income community. Brockton shares with its neighbour, Palmerston-Little Italy, a legacy of similar housing and was part of the same planning district. However, unlike Brockton, Little Italy began (and continued) gentrifying. South Riverdale, the other neighbourhood under study, witnessed incipient gentrification early on (in the 1970s), but this momentum stalled in subsequent years, leaving the neighbourhood only partially gentrified and still a site of affordable rental housing. As suggested by its name, South Riverdale lies directly south of its (now almost fully) gentrified comparator, North Riverdale. Figure 1 maps Brockton and South Riverdale within the context of the gentrifying inner-city landscape in Toronto.

Each neighbourhood's historical experience with urban and social development is interrogated, and contrasted with its adjoining comparator, which in both cases gentrified steadily (to a much more gentrified state in North Riverdale and to an significant but still incomplete state in Palmerston-Little Italy).¹ From this analysis, a number of factors affecting gentrification in each area

Table 1. Social housing units as a proportion of the total, selected Toronto neighbourhoods, 1999

<i>Neighbourhood</i>	<i>Total dwellings</i>	<i>Social housing^a</i>	
	<i>(Number)</i>	<i>(Number)</i>	<i>(Percentage)</i>
Brockton	4 815	236	4.9
Palmerston-Little Italy (comparator)	6 680	264	4.0
South Riverdale	5 740	609	10.6
North Riverdale (comparator)	5 045	113	2.2
All inner-city municipalities ^b	402 625	47 763	11.9
Inner city south of Bloor/ Danforth ^c	164 505	29 257	17.8

^a Social housing units include those paying market rates in rent-geared-to-income projects.

^b Inner-city municipalities include the old cities of Toronto and York, and the old Borough of East York.

^c The area south of Bloor-Danforth is the oldest portion of Toronto's inner city and is the district in which the case study neighbourhoods are located.

Source: Data provided by the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC). Data are as of 1999 (few very units have been added since this date).

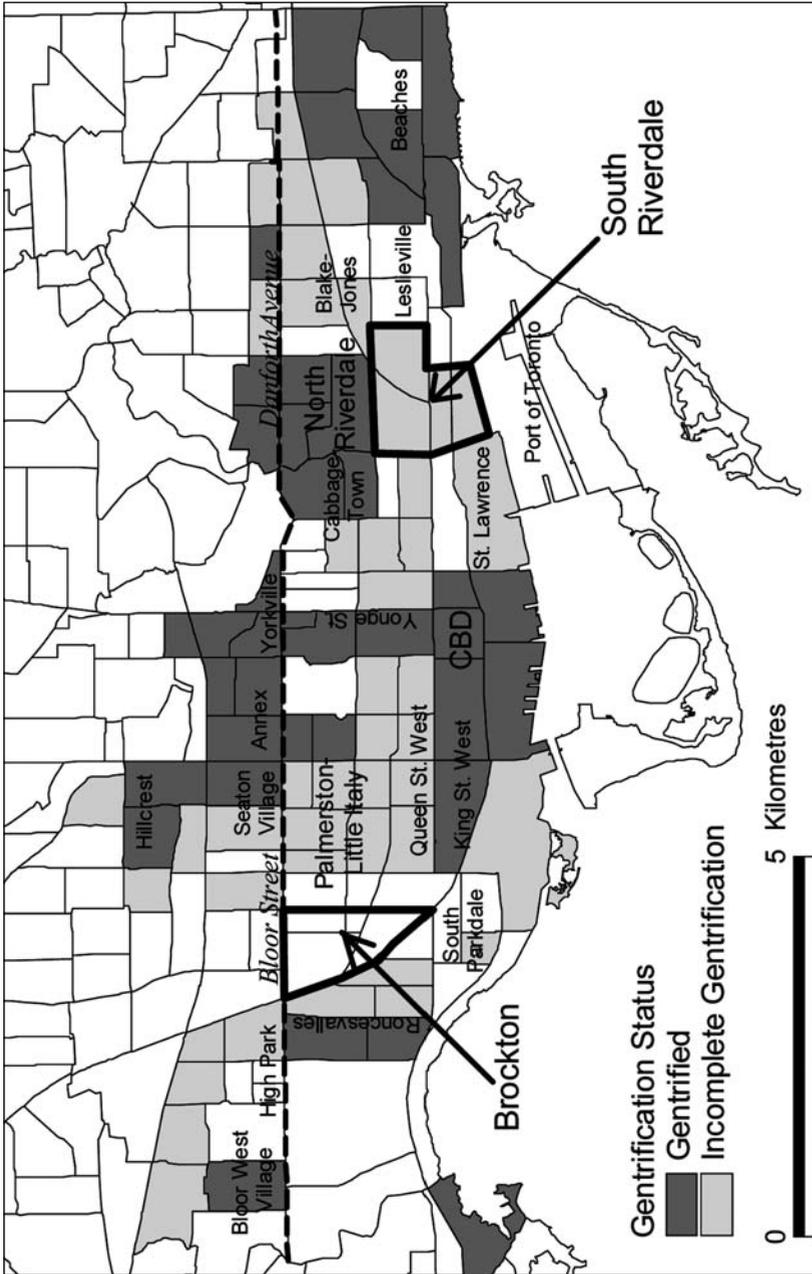


Figure 1. Case study neighbourhoods in the context of the gentrifying inner-city landscape of Toronto

Notes: See Walks and Maaranen (2008a) for details regarding the multivariate methods used to detect gentrification and produce this classification. Gentrifying census tracts are considered 'gentrified' if their average individual income rose to a position above the metropolitan average by 2001. If, on the other hand, a gentrifying tract still revealed an average income below the metropolitan-wide average in 2001, it is classified here as an instance of 'incomplete' gentrification. Census tracts without shading indicate other trends—namely, either areas that always housed middle-class populations, or lower-income neighbourhoods that remained stable or witnessed decline.

Sources: Created by the authors (summarised from nine-category base maps published in Walks and Maaranen, 2008a).

are distilled from the historical record and evaluated against the four factors identified by Shaw (2005a) as relevant to potentially slowing gentrification. An additional three factors pertinent to deterring gentrification in our two case studies are then identified and discussed. The policy implications of this research, and the policy recommendations that flow from this, are discussed in the final section.

Brockton—Overlooked by Gentrification

Brockton became an incorporated village in 1880 with a population of over 750 and an early economic base founded on rope factories and two abattoirs attracted by the early laying of rail spurs during the 1850s and 1860s (Patterson *et al.*, 1986, p. 8). Brockton amalgamated with the City of Toronto in 1884 and by 1910 a series of new factories had been attracted to the area.² Much of the housing in Brockton was built for the blue-collar workers taking up jobs in Brockton's emerging industrial core near the Dufferin Riding and Driving Park race track, much of it self-built (Patterson *et al.*, 1986, pp. 15 and 19; *Goad's Atlas*, 1910). At the end of the 1920s, the area was completely built up, with houses lining every street (City of Toronto Planning Board, 1971, p. 5).

Brockton was influenced by the significant demographic changes stemming from rapid immigration after the Second World War. West-central Toronto became known as the predominant immigrant-receiving area within proximity of the downtown core. In the 1950s and 1960s, Italians replaced the British as the largest immigrant group in Toronto and became concentrated in the west end where they made up approximately 15 per cent of the total population, establishing 'Little Italy' districts centred first at College and Grace and later at St Clair and Dufferin (Lemon, 1985, p. 115). In the mid 1960s, Portuguese immigrants

began entering Canada in large numbers at the same time that the Portuguese community started moving west from the first settlement area in Kensington market. By the 1970s, the Portuguese had established a residential concentration and 'core community' encompassing the entire Brockton study area as well as parts of Trinity-Bellwoods to the south-east and Little Italy to the east (Teixeira, 2000, p. 210). Little Portugal, as the larger area came to be called, developed into an 'institutionally complete' community (see Breton, 1964), offering an integrated range of Portuguese language services and amenities "from grocery stores, bakeries, travel agencies, and real estate agencies, to furniture stores and restaurants", with the Catholic Church as the "pole of attraction" shaping Portuguese settlement in the area (Teixeira, 2000, p. 216). The Portuguese living here remained disproportionately in manufacturing and other blue-collar occupations, and with low levels of university education. They supplemented their income by sub-dividing their properties for multifamily use, often renting out their main floors.

Despite its reputation for housing a low-income immigrant population, Brockton managed to avoid the destabilising effects of slum clearance and urban renewal that affected or were planned for similar nearby neighbourhoods. For instance, a number of blocks directly to the east in Little Italy were designated as a 'high-density residential area' and planned for urban renewal in the 1968 City of Toronto Official Plan. Subsequent battles were waged between developers, the city and local residents in these areas over high-rise developments, many of which were built, until the 1972 election of the reform council led by Mayor David Crombie put a stop to the urban renewal programme in the city (see Magnusson, 1983, for an overview of reform politics in Toronto at this time). Brockton, however, flew under the radar, avoiding both speculation and redevelopment, while city

planners supported maintaining its traditional form.³

Brockton was not only overlooked by urban renewal, but also by gentrification. Unlike Palmerston-Little Italy to its east, or the Roncesvalles/High Park area to the west, Brockton continued as a stable working-class community. Even as incipient gentrification gained a toe-hold in what appeared then (in the 1980s) to be much less likely locales such as Parkdale to the south (where a large rooming-house population, higher crime rates and concentrations of declining high-density rental apartments kept gentrification at bay until recently; see Slater, 2004), local commentators marvelled at how Brockton continued to be left alone by speculative activity (Varangu, 1984). Data from the census confirm such observations. Both average rent levels (Figure 2) and dwelling values (Figure 3) remained remarkably stable between 1971

and 2001, with both measures ending the period at the same below-average level (approximately 80 per cent of the average for the entire Toronto CMA) as in 1971 (they dipped even further in the 1970s, as did most of the inner city, but returned to historical levels by 1991). This is in stark contrast to the adjoining Palmerston-Little Italy neighbourhood that makes up the other half of the Bloor-Dufferin planning district. In the latter area (an example of persistent, although still incomplete, gentrification), both rents and house prices took off in the 1980s and revealed levels far above the average by 2001. A similar pattern is evident when the average personal income of residents is examined (Figure 4). From virtually identical starting positions, the two neighbourhoods diverge starting in the 1980s, at about the same time that levels of manufacturing employment start to diverge (discussed later).

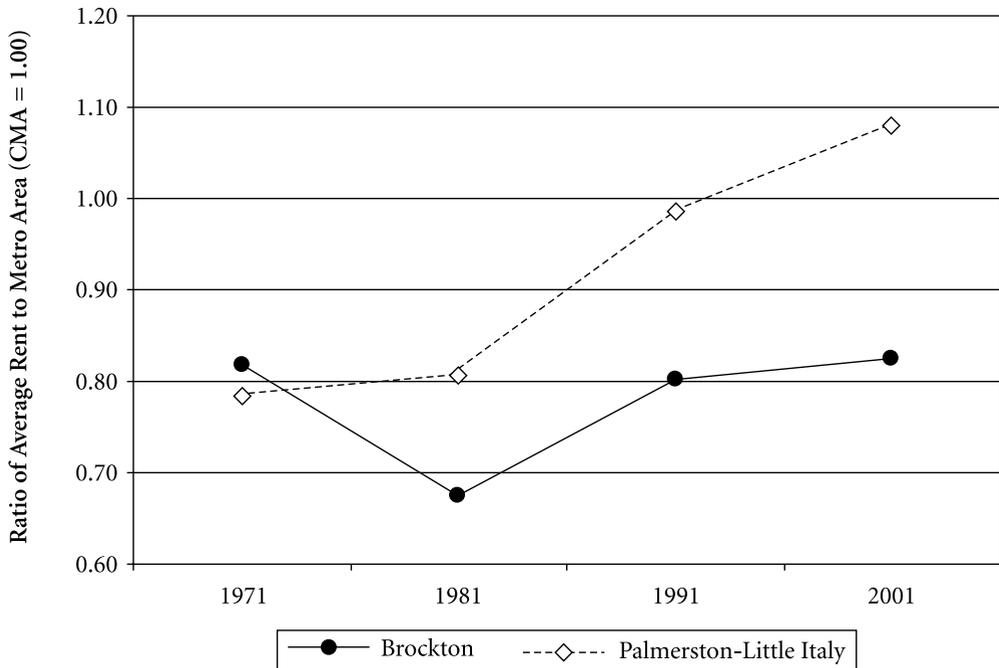


Figure 2. Ratio of average monthly rent to metropolitan average, Brockton and Palmerston-Little Italy, 1971–2001

Source: Calculated by the authors from Census of Canada (various years).

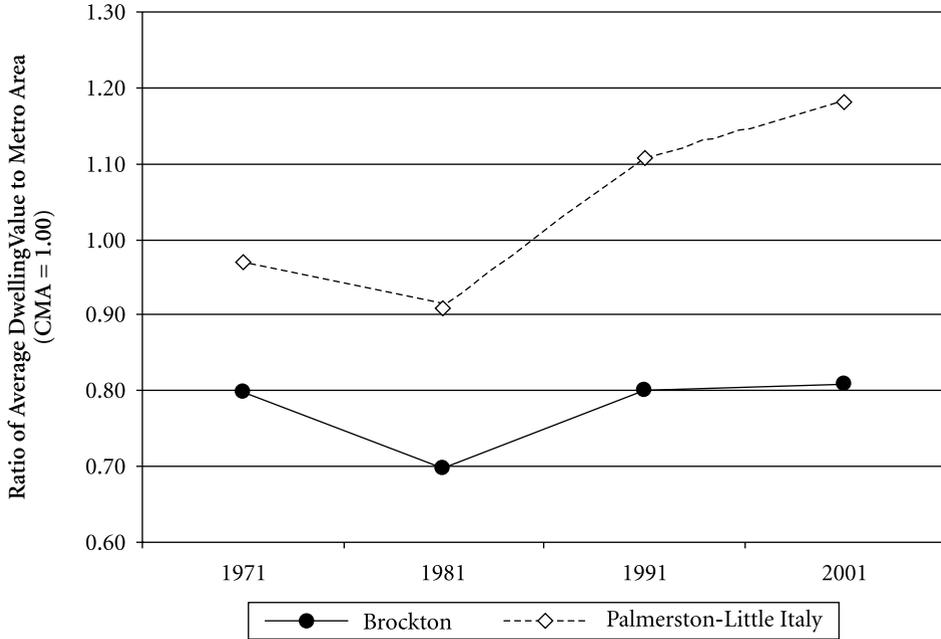


Figure 3. Ratio of average dwelling value to metropolitan average, Brockton and Palmerston-Little Italy, 1971–2001

Source: Calculated by the authors from Census of Canada (various years).

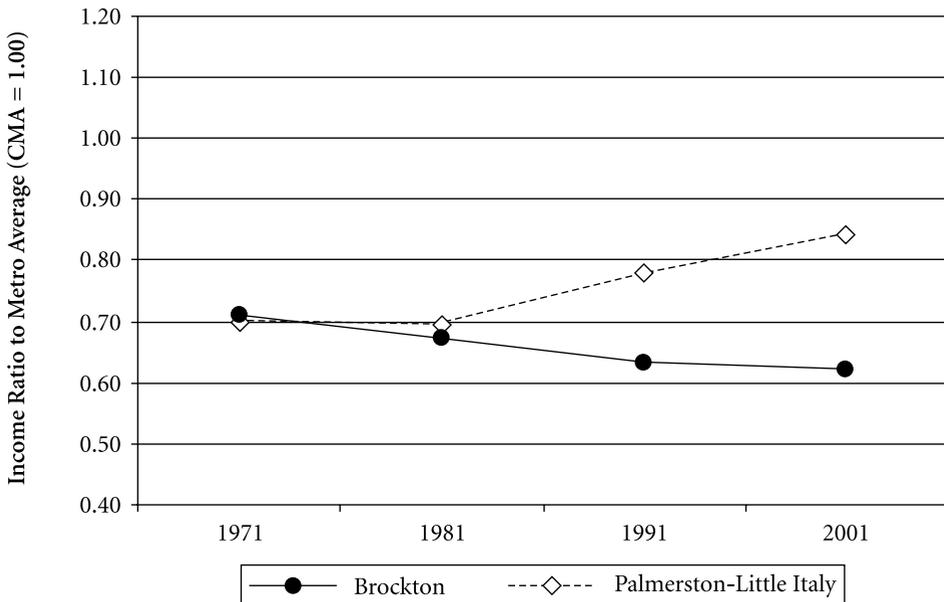


Figure 4. Ratio of average personal income to the metropolitan average, Brockton and Palmerston-Little Italy, 1971–2001

Source: Calculated by the authors from Census of Canada (various years).

That gentrification was largely absent from Brockton as late as 2001 is all the more surprising considering its similarities with Palmerston-Little Italy to its east. They both emerged as the cores of ethnic communities originating from southern Europe, their housing is mostly of similar vintage (although mostly smaller in Brockton), they both contain quaint walkable retail districts and they are located right next to one another and with good access to public transit. However, as we will see, there are key differences that did make a difference in Brockton's neighbourhood trajectory.

South Riverdale—Gentrification Stalled

In 1974 and 1975, a 'renovator speculator' bought up 40 houses on three streets in the centre of the South Riverdale neighbourhood, then upgraded and sold them for a sizeable profit, igniting a process of incipient gentrification (City of Toronto Planning Board, 1977, p. 22).⁴ Spillover from escalating house prices just across the bridge in the rapidly gentrifying Don Vale (Cabbagetown) neighbourhood was causing speculative house-price inflation across the Don River in Riverdale, which by the late 1970s was being called 'Cabbagetown II' in the local press due to its similar stocks of gabled Victorian houses (City of Toronto Planning Board, 1977, p. 22; see also Dantas, 1988). Yet, despite the gentrification of a small number of South Riverdale's streets during the 1970s, the area as a whole did not witness the kind of continued gentrification that engulfed North Riverdale.

This lack of subsequent gentrification ran counter to the wisdom of real estate analysts, local businesses and journalists alike, who would continue to predict that South Riverdale would soon join its neighbour (Dimanno, 1986; Foster, 1986; Varangu, 1984). Boosterist prophecies produced a remarkably consistent media discourse about South Riverdale

being the "latest trendy neighbourhood" (Ring, 1993), constantly verging on "re-birth" to a better future of "upsale boutiques and restaurants" (Todd, 1986). Premonitions of the neighbourhood's transformation were accompanied by the insistence that the remaining working-class residents were mere 'vestiges', the 'last remnants' of the old neighbourhood. Importantly, the working-class residents of the area were rarely considered a part of South Riverdale's future in this discourse, except in relation to the inevitable social conflicts that were predicted to transpire, and most media accounts referred to the still-numerically dominant working-class population with condescension.⁵ In the mid 1980s, significant house price inflation put pressure on North Riverdale's housing stock and South Riverdale businesses promoted the latter as an alternative. Business owners on Queen Street created the Queen Broadview Village strip, installing new cobblestone and inlaid brick sidewalks, and planters on the curbs (Todd, 1986). Assisted with federal and municipal grants, the improvements included the chemical cleansing of 40 historical facades on Queen Street (Todd, 1986).

Yet, as the census data reveal, gentrification largely stalled in South Riverdale between 1981 and 2001. The 1970s saw average rents grow in equal measure in both North and South Riverdale, suggesting a similarity to their respective trajectories and the potential for traversing the various stages of gentrification in subsequent years. However, on this measure they have clearly diverged since 1981, with South Riverdale actually becoming a more affordable place to rent with each passing decade (Figure 5). As a result, there was virtually zero house-price inflation in South Riverdale in the 30 years preceding the 2001 census, which contrasts sharply with housing market trends in North Riverdale (Figure 6). Likewise, while residents' average incomes in both areas grew in tandem during the 1970s, they diverged in later years, with those in South

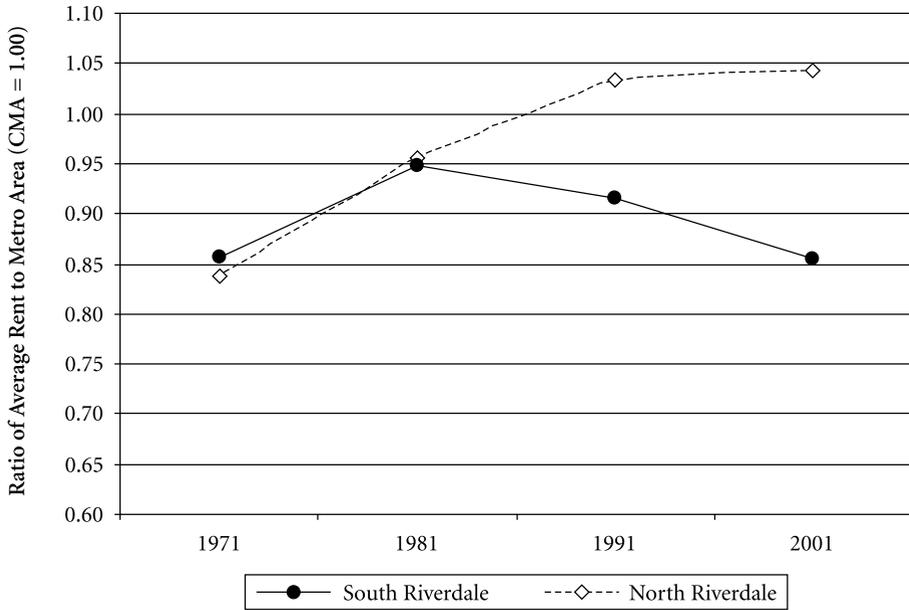


Figure 5. Ratio of average monthly rent to metropolitan average, South and North Riverdale, 1971–2001

Source: Calculated by the authors from Census of Canada (various years).

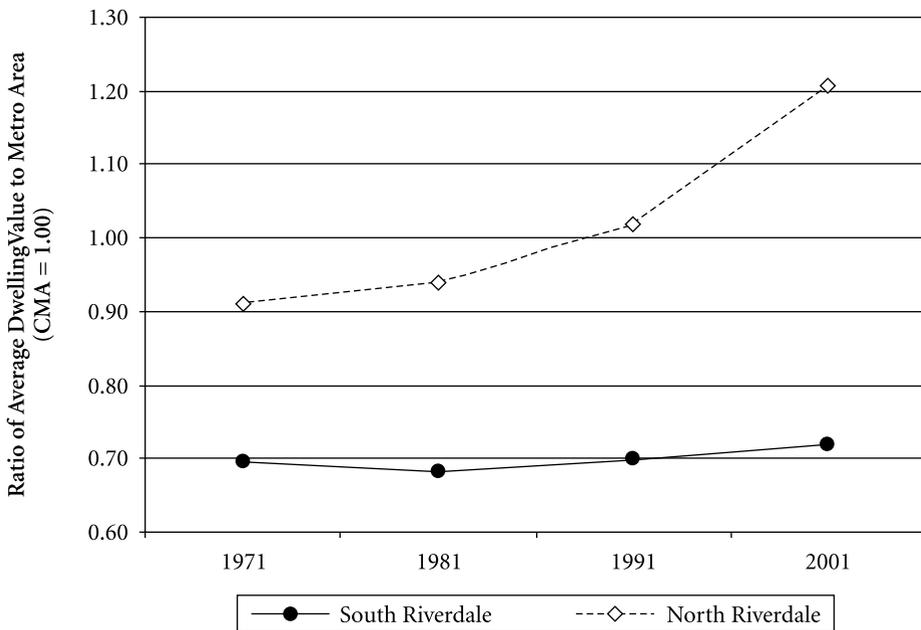


Figure 6. Ratio of average dwelling value to metropolitan average, South and North Riverdale, 1971–2001

Source: Calculated by the authors from Census of Canada (various years).

Riverdale remaining unchanged since 1981 (Figure 7). The misplaced media prophesies of inevitable gentrification are all the more surprising, considering South Riverdale's peculiar history over the study period.

South Riverdale—An Uneven History

Before it was annexed to the City of Toronto in 1884, the entire Riverdale area east of the Don River had seen very limited investment. The only significant building at the time was the infamous Don Jail, which was completed in the 1860s and has given Riverdale a reputation for criminality ever since. A classic 'streetcar suburb' tied to the extension of the rail system, most of South Riverdale was developed by 1903 (City of Toronto Planning Board, 1977, p. 7). Heavy industry became concentrated in the eastern- and southern-most areas close to the river—areas with proximity to the port facilities. In the absence of land use controls (which did not follow until

the late 1920s), industrial areas became interspersed with new houses.⁶ While residential development in North Riverdale catered more to middle- and upper-income families, South Riverdale largely housed a working-class population tied to the new industries. By 1923, South Riverdale was virtually built-out with a mix of Victorian-era housing and significant amounts of light and heavy industry.

Contrary to many other areas in Toronto, the industrial districts of South Riverdale continued to attract industry in the post-war era, but very little new residential or commercial investment. The result is that South Riverdale from 1945 to 1970 remained very much the same as it had been in the early days of its development. According to the City of Toronto Development Department (1976, p. 4) South Riverdale was then still characterised by "small, low rise detached and semi-detached houses and non-conforming industrial uses". The houses were mostly

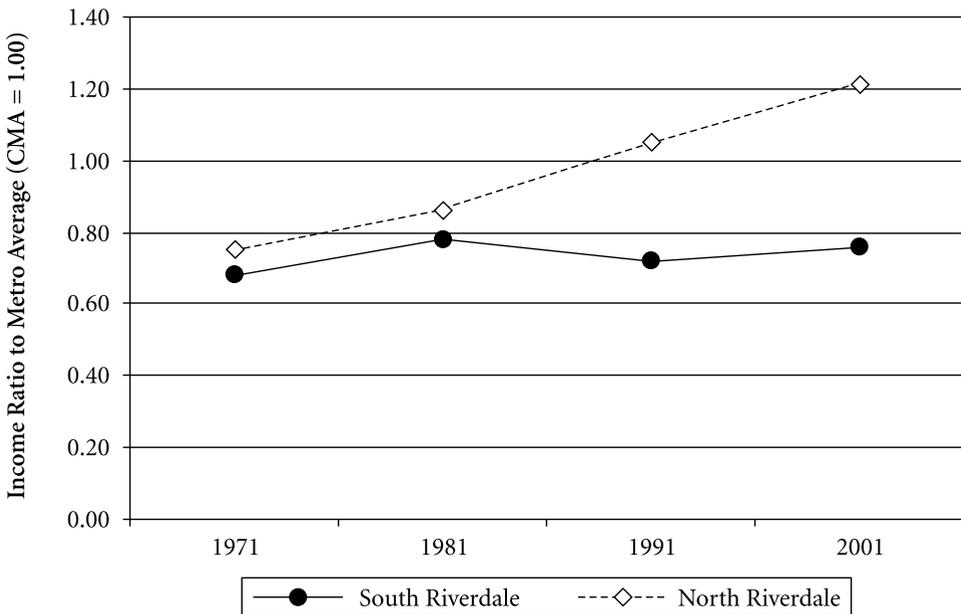


Figure 7. Ratio of personal income to the metropolitan average, South and North Riverdale, 1971–2001

Source: Calculated by the authors from Census of Canada (various years).

“small and of low-cost construction, and intended for industrial workers” (p. 4). Residents of South Riverdale had lower incomes and a higher unemployment rate, and a majority of workers (54 per cent in 1971) were employed in skilled or semi-skilled occupations (City of Toronto Development Department, 1976, p. 4; City of Toronto Planning Board 1977, p. 18). It continued to house a stable, low-income, working-class population and, unlike other low-income neighbourhoods elsewhere in the city (such as Brockton and Palmerston-Little Italy), the population was mostly of Anglo-Saxon ethnicity (those tracing their origins to the British Isles). For an area with such a strong working-class character, South Riverdale had disproportionately high levels of homeownership (City of Toronto Planning Board 1977, p. 21). The City’s Development Department (1976, p. 4) noted that people in the area “have tended to own the home they live in and live at the same address for a long time”.

South Riverdale did not completely escape slum clearance and urban renewal in the 1960s. Cast as a ‘slum’, the area was an early and frequent subject of planning reports and studies, and a number of urban renewal projects were proposed.⁷ The first to be built was the Don Mount Court housing project, begun in 1965 and isolated at the most westerly portion of the neighbourhood, near the exit of a well-used lowered freeway. In 1968 a similar future was envisioned for the rest of Riverdale, with plans to demolish 800 homes, build 10 000 high-rise units and expand the (elevated) Gardiner expressway under the city’s “20-year facelifting program” (*Toronto Telegraph*, 1968). The late timing of these plans ensured that they did not happen, as the federal government terminated its commitments to the urban renewal programme in 1969, while the reform council elected in 1972 cancelled the City’s own programme.

South Riverdale became an early focal point for the politics of neighbourhood-

based planning. Residents in South Riverdale formed the East Don Urban Coalition, which later morphed into the Riverdale Community Organisation (RCO), to fight further ‘slum clearance’ in their neighbourhood. Although these organisations eventually disbanded, they left a legacy of about 200 neighbourhood improvements and provided a new sense of empowerment to the working-class people in South Riverdale (Keating, 1975, p. 235). This allowed the momentum of this early political organising to continue through the 1970s and 1980s as new challenges arose and gave local resident organisations the political capital to influence city policy toward neighbourhood protection, particularly after the reform majority took over council in 1972.

In turn, the city identified the “White-painters”⁸ who had been arriving over the previous four years as one of the “pressures” threatening the ability of the working class to remain in the neighbourhood (Keating, 1975, p. 41). Of course, the City of Toronto had an extra incentive to retain the working-class population, outside purely moral considerations, as the neighbourhood contained one of the largest concentrations of heavy industry left in the City. Two main goals identified for South Riverdale in a subsequent report were to “strengthen the residential character of the area” and “to protect the industrial function of the area” (City of Toronto Planning Board, 1977, p. 1). Retaining the working-class population in South Riverdale, and slowing gentrification, was thus very much in line with the city’s goal to preserve the industrial character of South Riverdale, since a group of middle-class in-movers would have been likely to oppose vocally the environmental externalities and hazards associated with adjacent industries and threaten their main labour shed (this is part of the ‘dialectic’ relationship between a city’s gentrification and the transformation of its urban and industrial form; see Filion, 1991).

However, it is doubtful that city policies for protecting the character of South Riverdale would have been successful on their own, were it not for a number of transitions and destabilising events that together would leave their mark on the neighbourhood. First among these is a termite infestation which affected the local housing market from the mid 1970s until at least the early 1990s. Located directly north of the Port of Toronto, South Riverdale was one of the first residential neighbourhoods to become infested with colonies of the Eastern Subterranean Termite (*Reticulitermes flavipes*), but the extent of infestation was not fully ascertained until the late 1960s (Grady, 1997; Jaffri, 1983). The termite problem was not significantly controlled in South Riverdale until the early 1990s, after the soil had been repeatedly treated with pesticides. As might be expected, mortgage financiers were wary of lending for the purchase of termite-infested property and it became more difficult to attain house insurance, deterring speculators and risk-averse gentrifiers from moving into the neighbourhood and reducing the pressure on dwelling values (although South Riverdale was not alone in this; by the 1980s, termites had spread across a number of neighbourhoods within the inner city).

Secondly, around the same time that the first gentrifiers started to arrive, a new population of Chinese residents also began to settle in the area (Monsebraaten, 1984). In 1968, a few Chinese businesses were established in the north-west corner of the neighbourhood and, over the next few decades, this district grew briskly as a lower-priced alternative to the original Chinatown in downtown Toronto. Early immigrants from Hong Kong were followed by ethnic Chinese leaving Vietnam (in the late 1970s and early 1980s) and then immigrants from the Chinese mainland (Chan, 2006). According to the news media, many of the new Chinese residents purchased their homes without recourse to an institutional

mortgage (purchases were most likely to be financed privately via family networks and community brokers; see Murdie, 1986, 1991) and thus were less sensitive to the presence of termites and the difficulties in attaining insurance. As in Brockton, a number of houses were converted to multifamily use over this time, with the additional units rented to other Chinese residents. The arrival of this new ethnic population did not go unnoticed in South Riverdale, an area described as “a very Anglo-Saxon place” at least until 1971 (City of Toronto Development Department, 1976, p.4). By the mid 1970s, an intercultural committee had been formed to aid “the integration” of new arrivals into the community (City of Toronto Planning Board, 1977, p. 12), partly in response to reports of “increasing racial incidents in the neighbourhood” (Serge, 1980). The Chinese community continued to grow to the point that it represented over one-quarter of South Riverdale’s population (according to the Census of Canada, 2001). As the Chinese community established its dominance in sections of South Riverdale, it became embedded in the social fabric of the neighbourhood, controlling a significant proportion of the local housing stock and setting up Chinese-language institutions.

The third event affecting South Riverdale’s development trajectory throughout the 1980s and beyond concerns air pollution from heavy industry and the discovery of lead soil contamination. Pollution was the primary issue in media reporting on South Riverdale over the 1980s and had a large impact on the perceived desirability of the neighbourhood, particularly as a place to raise a family.⁹ The issue turned serious with the publication of a study finding that the Canada Metal Company, one of the factories located at the southern edge of the district, had exceeded provincial lead limits by 29 times (Dineen, 1980). In 1982, the City began testing almost 2000 people living in the southern portion and in 1984 found abnormally high or unsafe

levels in children (Pigg, 1984; Ferguson, 1985). Between 1985 and 1988, a large series of newspaper articles dealt with various aspects of “the lead menace” and it became common to hear that “South Riverdale ... is probably the most contaminated in the city because of industry” (Kerr, 1986). As might be expected, a number of community organisations were formed to push for soil remediation and, in June 1988, the provincial government finally agreed to clean up the contaminated soil. Yet, the good news was partly overshadowed by a public battle against a new garbage incinerator that the city then announced it would build in the district. A second incinerator was also proposed in late 1988, which would burn infectious hospital waste (Sarick, 1988). The new incinerator plans were finally quashed in 1989, welcoming the 1990s with a big victory for residents over industry in South Riverdale. However, the lingering effects of such events would continue through the 1990s until many of the remaining industrial plants had been decommissioned.

The Factors Inhibiting Gentrification

A number of factors can be identified as playing a role in inhibiting gentrification in Brockton and South Riverdale. First to be considered here are those four originally established by Shaw (2005a): security of tenure; community embeddedness; unappealing housing stock; and, progressive local government. However, these four cannot fully explain the limited or stalled gentrification evident in our two case studies. Thus, in addition to these four explanations, we propose the following: the maintenance of significant industrial employment lands; neglect on behalf of city officials towards nuisance uses and environmental externalities; and, reliance on alternative/ethnic forms of housing finance capital. Each of these is detailed next with respect to their importance to our two case studies, followed

by the policy implications that flow from this analysis.

Security of Tenure

Both Shaw (2005a) and Ley and Dobson (in this Special Issue) confirm the presence of significant levels of state-supported non-market forms of housing as providing security of tenure and acting as a significant deterrent to the spread of gentrification. However, as we have seen, our two case study neighbourhoods have low levels of such housing (Table 1). Furthermore, almost half (232 units) of South Riverdale’s stock of social housing is located in a single project (Don Mount Court), isolated in the far western portion of the neighbourhood and separated from the rest of the neighbourhood by a major arterial, thus having minimal impact on the rest of the district.

Shaw (2005a) also suggests that high levels of homeownership can provide security of tenure. Homeownership allows the working class to establish themselves within the community, resist overtures from real estate speculators and remain in the neighbourhood. However, although homeownership at the beginning of the study period was relatively high considering that both Brockton and South Riverdale are primarily working-class neighbourhoods, they were within range of the City-wide average and not dissimilar to their comparators that began gentrifying during this time (Figures 8 and 9). Indeed, both of these neighbourhoods have shifted towards increasing rental tenure over the study period and, in 2001, contained a tenure mix virtually identical to their neighbours that did gentrify. Security of tenure, at least in the conventional sense, would not appear to have put a significant brake on gentrification in Brockton and South Riverdale.

Community Activism and Embeddedness

The degree to which an embedded community functions to deter gentrification depends on

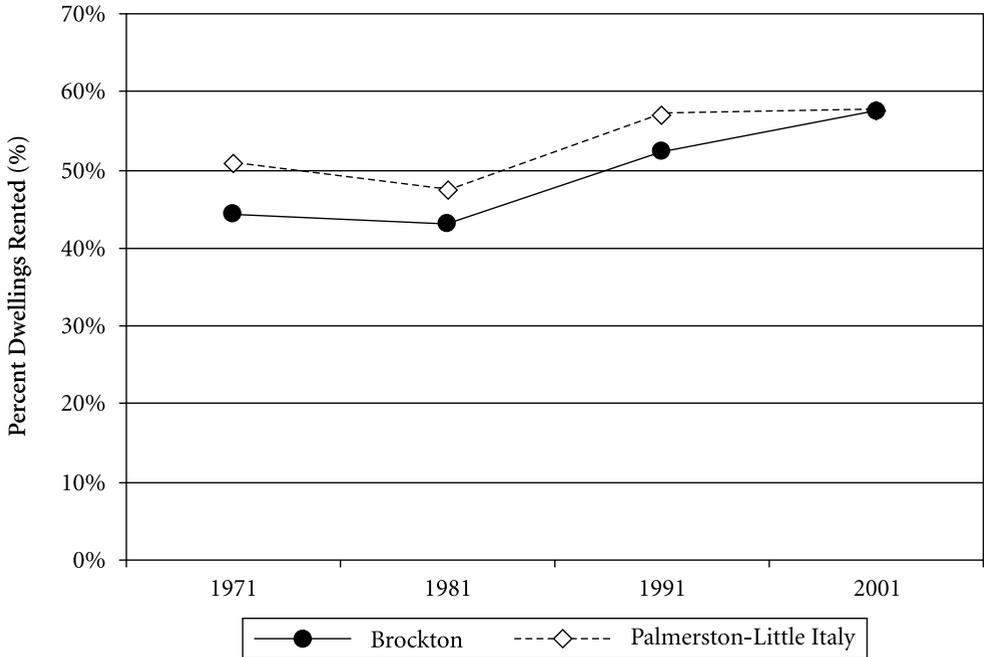


Figure 8. Percentage of dwellings rented, Brockton and Palmerston-Little Italy, 1971–2001
 Source: Census of Canada (various years).

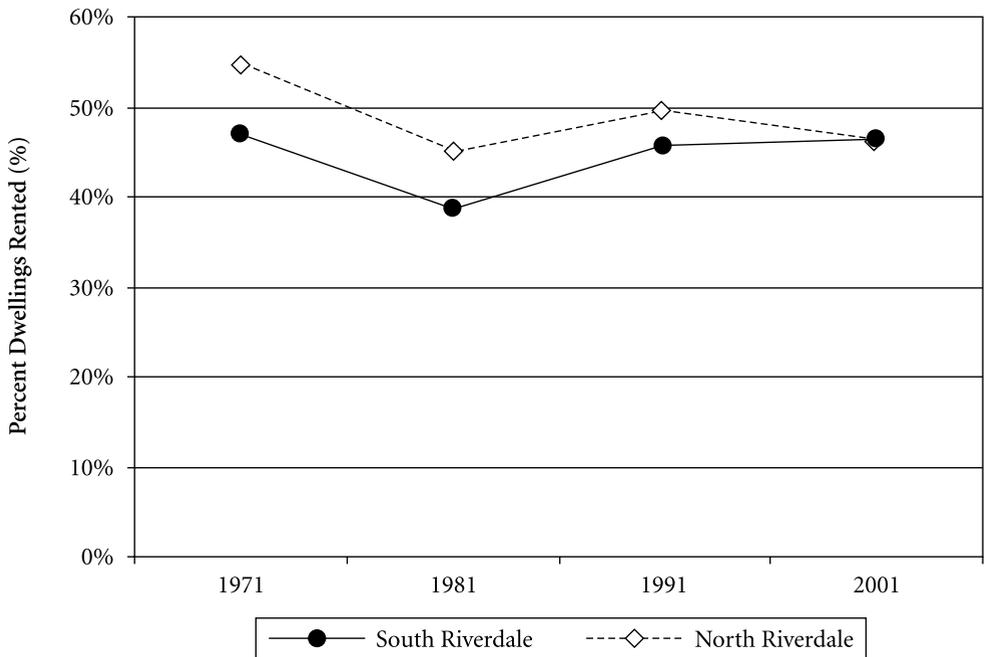


Figure 9. Percentage of dwellings rented, South and North Riverdale, 1971–2001
 Source: Census of Canada (various years).

two very different factors. Shaw (2005a, pp. 177–179) highlights the efficacy of local political capital and “a culture of resistance” as among the main factors impeding gentrification. While there is little evidence of activism or political struggle in Brockton, the history of South Riverdale does suggest the ability to summon long-standing forms of political capital in face of a series of threats to the neighbourhood. This is displayed in its battles against the City’s urban renewal programme in the late 1960s, community organising and fundraising in the early 1970s, participation in the planning process through the late 1970s and successful struggles against the siting of two incinerators and in favour of soil remediation and government action on lead pollution in the 1980s. Yet, while this may have galvanised the community to protect its interests, in the case of South Riverdale, much of this effort was targeted against state actions that should have reduced, rather than increased, local pressures for gentrification (such as the siting of large amounts of social housing and continued soil contamination). NIMBY-like activism can be present in working-class communities, even when it would appear in retrospect to work against working-class interests (Milbourne, 1997). It is thus unclear whether the culture of resistance displayed in South Riverdale had a large effect in slowing the spread of gentrification through the neighbourhood.

However, community embeddedness would appear to have significantly reduced the ability of gentrification to spread through our two case study areas in a different way. This involves not so much the political but the social capital contained within the emerging presence of institutionally complete ethnic communities in both Brockton (Portuguese) and South Riverdale (Chinese). These are communities for whom the neighbourhood was not merely a stepping-stone to a better future elsewhere. Instead, they sought to put down roots and, in turn, reveal below-average levels of turn-

over and out-migration. Teixeira (2007, p. 7) demonstrates that many Portuguese wish to remain in the neighbourhood for these reasons, even in the face of high house prices that would let them sell at augmented prices. The Portuguese clearly dominated the Brockton neighbourhood since 1981 when they became the majority, although their share has dipped lately as their children have suburbanised (Teixeira, 2007), while in South Riverdale the Chinese community grew to one-quarter of the population by 1991 from a very small base (Figures 10 and 11).

There are a number of reasons why the presence of these distinct ethnic communities deterred gentrification in these neighbourhoods. First of all, both of these communities developed only limited proficiency in English and thus conducted the majority of their business in their mother tongue. Secondly, institutional completeness meant that both ethnic communities were able to continue traditional commercial and cultural practices, including those that challenged the tastes of incoming gentrifiers. The result is that the retail strips along Dundas in Brockton and along Gerrard and Broadview in South Riverdale, and many of the local institutions (churches, real estate agencies, restaurants, etc.) remained less accessible to English speakers than in other neighbourhoods across the city. For instance, in Brockton, the wealthier, non-Portuguese residents reportedly were offended by smoke from local sausage houses and bakeries, and by the noise of Portuguese processions and parades (Teixeira, 2007). In South Riverdale, the Chinese presence is said to have led to “racial friction between Chinese merchants and the White community” (McInnes, 1993). While ostensibly about rodents, traffic, commercial development and the “smell of old garbage”, local councillor Peter Tabuns was told that “the reason we have difficulty with Chinatown is because of the Chinese community” (McInnes, 1993), which, it was felt, did not make sufficient

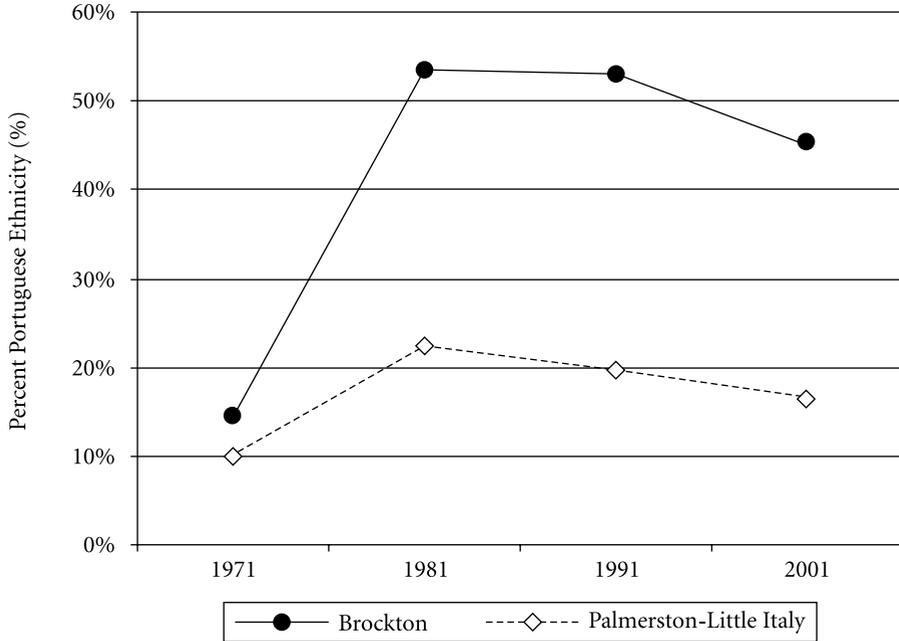


Figure 10. Percentage having Portuguese ethnicity, Brockton and Palmerston-Little Italy, 1971–2001
Notes: 1971 data are for the percentage with Portuguese as their mother tongue.
Source: Census of Canada (various years).

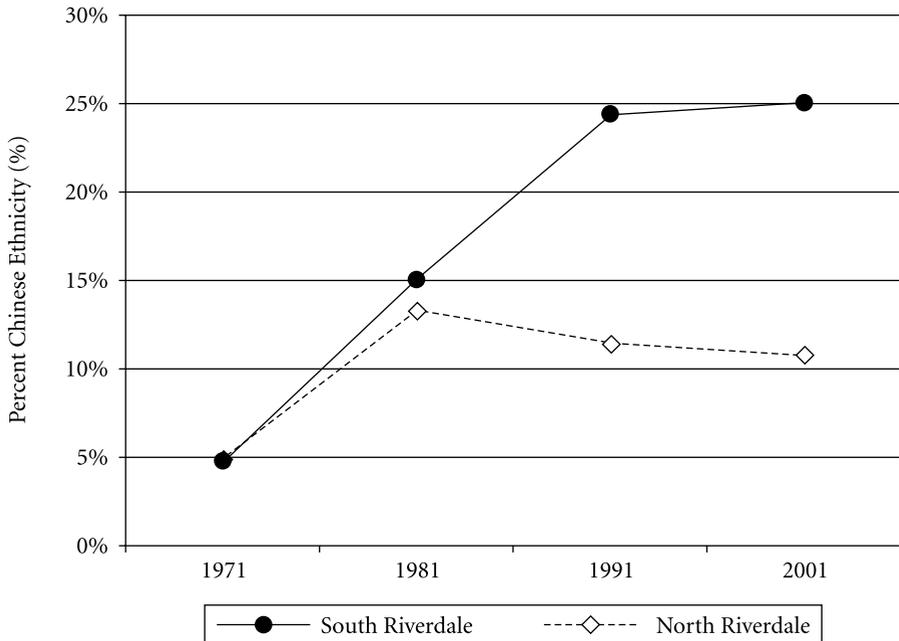


Figure 11. Percentage having Chinese ethnicity, South and North Riverdale, 1971–2001
Source: Census of Canada (various years).

effort to communicate with local non-Chinese residents.

Perhaps the most important reason why the embeddedness of the Portuguese and Chinese communities factors large in inhibiting gentrification is their control over a significant proportion of the housing stock and dominance in the local real estate sector. In both cases, houses purchased within the community tended to stay in the community and were often converted for multifamily use using their own or bartered labour.¹⁰ In most cases, tenants were sought from within the community, as proficiency in English remained marginal at best (Teixeira, 1998, 2000; Chan, 2006). Also, as discussed in the next section, many in this community effectively kept this housing from being offered on the market outside the community. This is one of the ways that “entrenched” communities, such as the Chinese and Portuguese, are able effectively to deter “rapid middle class resettlement” in their neighbourhoods (Caulfield, 1994, p. 30).

Housing Stock not Conducive to Gentrification

This is a factor that clearly distinguishes Brockton and South Riverdale, and helps to explain why South Riverdale began gentrifying while Brockton was overlooked in the 1970s. Built at roughly the same time as its counterpart to the north, South Riverdale

still holds significant amounts of the three-storey gabled Victorian houses that appeal to gentrifiers (Caulfield, 1994). South Riverdale’s offerings are and were less consistent and sizeable than those in Cabbagetown or North Riverdale, with more semi-detached houses (Figure 12). South Riverdale also saw a small but significant amount of self-building and the resulting cottages, unadorned infill houses and poorly built homes fragment the neighbourhood to a degree. In South Riverdale, it is likely that the presence of less attractive housing did play some role in reducing the number of potential dwellings available for gentrification, although the overall effect would have been minor.

In contrast, the qualities of the housing stock in Brockton have clearly had a significant impact in containing the neighbourhood’s appeal for gentrification. First of all, many houses in the area are modestly built, often close together on small lots, with some even lacking foundations. With the proximity of the railway and industry, the local stock has always housed working-class populations and would not have been meant to be ostentatious. The style of housing in the area is mostly not the type that appeals to middle-class gentrifiers. While the area is dotted with occasional three-storey gabled Victorian houses that many gentrifiers prefer, there are many more houses with flat (rather than peaked) roofs and limited



Figure 12. Gentrified and/or gentrifiable housing in South Riverdale

Source: Photos by Martine August.

architectural embellishments; and many cheaply constructed unadorned infill houses disrupt continuity in the streetscape. Thus, although the housing stock remained in very good shape since the Great Depression (City of Toronto Planning Board, 1971, p. 5), it did not have the same architectural appeal as in other neighbourhoods of the same vintage. Also, largely absent in Brockton were the “grander old houses” which were often converted into rooming-houses and blamed for creating a “sense of instability [which] made the community” in places like Palmerston-Little Italy on the other side of the Bloor-Dufferin planning district “receptive to the offers of developers” (Patterson *et al.*, 1986, p. 32).

Perhaps even more important was the way that a significant proportion of the housing stock was renovated by the incoming southern European communities in west-central Toronto. The ‘mediterraneanised’ restyling of the facades that accompanied Portuguese customisation has already been noted as affronting the aesthetic preferences of the English-heritage middle-class gentrifiers in Toronto.¹¹ The extent of dislike for such mediterraneanised facades is revealed by gentrifiers’ attempts to ban the use of ‘angel brick’ under the rubric of heritage preservation (Caulfield, 1994, pp. 204–207). Not

only does this form of renovation alter the original historical details and thus offend the artistic gaze of those looking to revalue the old (Ley, 2003), but it instantly marks an area as both ethnic and working-class (Caulfield, 1994). In the Brockton area, the large number of houses that have been externally ‘mediterraneanised’ in this fashion provided a strong deterrent to gentrification (Figure 13). However, as Little Italy also contained a significant (although proportionately fewer) concentration of mediterraneanised properties, this remains only part of the explanation.

Progressive Local Government

The presence of progressive local government, particularly one that is willing to intervene to protect low-income housing, is identified as the fourth factor that contributes to the slowing of gentrification (Shaw, 2005a). As we have seen, city planning policies adopted in the 1970s, and largely remaining in place until the mid 1990s, sought to preserve the working-class character and, in the case of Brockton, immigrant-reception function, of our study neighbourhoods. While in Brockton this did not much change the way the city had approached the neighbourhood (although it did mean Palmerston-Little Italy



Figure 13. ‘Mediterraneanised’ houses in Brockton

Source: Photos by Martine August.

directly to its east was spared further intensification), in South Riverdale it represented a significant change from the major urban renewal that had been proposed in the early post-war period. By opening up the planning process to local participation during the 1970s—that is, before gentrification could make much of a dent in the local social fabric—city government provided existing residents with some (small) measure of self-determination in fashioning the neighbourhood in their own interests (which obviously included preventing their own displacement).

It is instructive that in South Riverdale the city council specifically adopted policies to prevent ‘white-painting’ in the neighbourhood and protect affordable housing. While short-lived (from 1974 until 1977), a municipal ‘speculation tax’ was implemented across the city and the City’s non-profit housing corporation (City Home) was instructed to acquire selected apartment units and houses as a complement to its stock of projects and limited equity co-operatives (City of Toronto Planning Board, 1977, pp. 22, 50). Although the number of houses acquired in this way in South Riverdale was small (55 units), it was a disproportionately high share compared with the rest of the inner city and sent an important signal to the development industry that the city intended to protect low-income housing in the area. While neighbourhood preservation policies implemented during the 1970s usually had the effect of stimulating gentrification and displacement (Caulfield, 1994; Ley, 1996), the city’s policies seemed sincerely devoted to protecting low-income residents from displacement and tenants in particular were identified in planning reports as a population that was “most vulnerable” (City of Toronto Planning Board, 1977, p. 42).

It is likely that the direct impact of such policies was marginal, particularly as they were only in place for a short time. However,

when juxtaposed against recent shifts in policy, which are largely intended to draw new investment and jump-start redevelopment, they appear in retrospect as proactive in protecting local residents. Recent changes include the removal of zoning on many industrial employment lands within the inner city in the mid 1990s, which has made those sites ripe for high-end residential redevelopment, the (provincial) removal of rent controls on vacated properties, which encourages landlords to evict long-range low-income tenants, and a series of limits on the ability to convert houses into rooming houses, secondary suites, ‘bachelorettes’ (single-room occupancy with kitchenettes) and tenanted rentals that in turn have reduced the stock of affordable market-rate housing and have partly contributed to growing homelessness in Toronto (Keil, 2002; Slater, 2004). The implications of these recent policy shifts are dealt with in the next sections.

Other Factors—The Maintenance of Industrial Employment Lands

The analysis of our two case studies highlights three additional important factors responsible for slowing the spread of gentrification in our case study neighbourhoods. First among these is the maintenance of industrial lands within the neighbourhood. Brockton and South Riverdale are both located along the main east and west spurs of the Grand Trunk Railway lines that at the turn of the century provided transport services to most industries in the city. It is here that many of Toronto’s medium-to-heavy industries were located and, despite their delayed deindustrialisation over the 1990s, a number of sites were still operating in the year 2000. Sustained local demand for blue-collar labour was clearly a factor in maintaining a core working-class population in such neighbourhoods. Indeed, while the proportion of the labour force employed in manufacturing declined steadily throughout the inner city over the study period, and

drastically in gentrifying neighbourhoods, it actually *increased* during the 1970s in both Brockton and South Riverdale (Table 2). Delayed deindustrialisation, and the continued presence of industries such as abattoirs, meant more truck traffic, night-time loadings and noise, smoke and soot, and unpleasant fumes. These attributes of South Riverdale's industrial district, it was claimed, were important for "giving potential buyers of real estate second thoughts" (Slinger, 1992).

The importance of these employment lands in slowing gentrification can be further appreciated when contrasted with the recent history (mostly post-2001) of renewed gentrification in South Riverdale as many older factories, encouraged by recent City policies, are closed and renovated into 'authentic' residential lofts. By 2006, there were at least seven new loft developments completed or under construction, representing upwards of 500 new housing units.¹² As well, the Don Mount Court social housing project is being redeveloped into a mixed-income 'new urbanist' neighbourhood which will intersperse subsidised tenants with households paying market rates (including homeowners). News media accounts of such developments suggest that it is the infusion of capital and new residents in such developments that are now starting to affect turnover and

speculation within the older housing stock (and not necessarily the other way around). The implication is that, had these properties been maintained as employment lands, there would have been little space available for the new wealthy in-movers who prefer "more luxurious surroundings" than traditionally available in the neighbourhood (Fantauzzi, 2004; see also Lind, 2004; van der Ven, 2003).

Tellingly, now that gentrification has picked up again in South Riverdale, a collection of residents has applied (in 2005) to the City to protect with heritage legislation those same three streets first touched by gentrification in 1974 (City of Toronto, 2005). A similar conversion of decommissioned factories and warehouses into lofts has also recently started in Brockton, and the area is now seeing its first signs of gentrification (Teixeira, 2007). The residentialisation of employment lands in these two areas is an example of 'new-build' gentrification (see Davidson and Lees, 2005; Davidson, 2007; Lees *et al.*, 2007, p. 141).

Nuisance Uses and Environmental Externalities

Related to this discussion are the actions taken by government officials and the local media towards local nuisances and environmental externalities created by employment lands. While termite infestation, soil contamination

Table 2. Percentage of the labour force employed in manufacturing occupations, 1971–2001

	1971	1981	1991	2001
<i>Manufacturing</i>				
Brockton	21.5	26.2	14.2	13.2
Palmerston-Little Italy	20.8	20.6	10.6	2.7
South Riverdale	16.5	16.8	12.4	10.4
North Riverdale	15.9	11.1	4.8	3.6
All inner city municipalities ^a	14.2	13.1	7.7	5.5
Inner city south of Bloor/ Danforth	15.2	14.2	8.0	5.5

^aInner-city municipalities include the old cities of Toronto and York, and the old Borough of East York. Source: Census of Canada (various years).

and air pollution would and should never be wished on any community, and the City and provincial governments were clearly negligent in delaying the environmental clean-up, South Riverdale's experiences in these areas still offer a number of lessons with implications for policy with wider applicability. Importantly, negative press and off-putting odours appear to have played a significant role in highlighting health concerns and keeping real estate speculation at bay. The effect of bad press on local real estate in South Riverdale was addressed in a number of news articles about local pollution and contaminated properties.¹³ Similarly, the smell of "rotting dog food" from the Darling rendering and meat packing plant on Commissioner's Street, as well as sewer gases from the East End sewage plant, were cited as deterring those with choice from selecting the neighbourhood through the 1980s (Simpson, 1990; Swainson, 1991).

The response of city officials is also implicated in this story. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, South Riverdale was represented by councillor Beavis, who had gained "virtual icon status of how the development industry controls city hall" (Valpy, 1988). Both Beavis and official city policy during this time favoured retaining the industrial character of South Riverdale and were thus less inclined to listen to resident complaints and proposals that would restrict industrial activities and practices. The initial city response to the termite infestation was minimal, and mostly inaccessible to the residents of places like South Riverdale, while many demands for restrictions on unpleasant odours were ignored or met with minimal action. While neglectful of health and quality of life in the neighbourhood, city actions at this time ensured that industrial employment remained available and viable nearby, and worked to make prospective gentrifiers look elsewhere. All of this changed, however, after the incumbent Beavis was defeated

in the 1988 municipal election by Marilyn Churley of the New Democratic Party (NDP, Canada's social democratic party), who shortly later moved to provincial politics. Churley's role was to be central in having the two proposed incinerators cancelled, convincing city council not to renew the lease of the Darling meat packing plant in 1990 and forcing costly odour control equipment to be installed on the East End sewage plant in 1992 (Simpson, 1990; Swainson, 1991). Hailing from the 'new left' fraction of the NDP, Churley primarily advocated for the environment, a position then as now aligned with the notion of progressive local governance. The unintended effect of environmental action in South Riverdale, however, was to hasten the deindustrialisation of the district that began at the end of the 1980s, and thus help to set the stage for the loft conversions that would follow after 2001 when many of the factories had closed for good. This is the sort of political dynamic predicted by Filion (1991).

Reliance on Ethnic Housing Finance Capital

A final factor responsible for slowing gentrification in both of our study neighbourhoods is directly related to the institutional and cultural practices of the embedded ethnic communities, as well as to security of tenure, discussed earlier. However, it is singled out here as it has wider policy significance beyond those related to ethnic institutional completeness or conventional sources of tenure security. As already noted, many immigrant communities, like the Portuguese in Brockton and the Chinese in South Riverdale, finance their housing purchases through family connections and their renovations via sweat equity (Murdie, 1986, 1991). This meant that the ethnic communities were able to raise capital during a period in which inner-city housing as a whole, and these neighbourhoods in particular, were devalued (and/or

considered too risky to insure) by institutionalised finance capital. The influx of ethnic capital, and the conversion of many properties to multifamily use, had the positive effect of limiting devaluation and thus the rent gap in the face of *de facto* redlining, therefore reducing incentives for demolition and redevelopment (Smith, 1996). Much of the increase in rental in both neighbourhoods can be attributed to the conversion of properties to multifamily by ethnic owners and much of this housing was rented to tenants from within the community as many were uncomfortable having to deal with tenants in English (Teixeira, 2007; Chan, 2006). Likewise, ethnic contacts are often sought out first when properties are put up for sale (Murdie, 1991) and, considering that demand for housing from within both the ethnic communities remained strong well into the 1990s, this would have meant that a significant portion of the housing stock was effectively removed from the capitalist property market available to gentrifiers (although it would still have been available to ethnic speculators). While the number of housing units affected, and the extent to which this hindered opportunities for gentrification in our two study areas, remain unknown, it is likely that in combination with other factors discussed earlier it played a role in reducing speculative real estate activity and potential in-migration of the Anglo middle class. Obviously, this question remains ripe for future academic study, but it cannot be overlooked and it has policy implications.

Discussion and Implications for Policy

This analysis shows that gentrification has been slowed, if not completely halted, in the two case study neighbourhoods, even without recourse to housing programmes or legislation protecting existing low-income

housing, although the latter clearly would be highly efficacious. In both Brockton and South Riverdale, conventional sources of security of tenure, while real for working-class homeowners, were not a significant factor in restraining gentrification's effects. A housing stock not amenable to middle-class tastes was significant in Brockton, but hardly in South Riverdale where, to the contrary, gentrifiers were drawn early to the Victorian houses resembling those in nearby gentrified areas. On the other hand, the existence of institutionally complete and embedded *ethnic* communities is a factor in both case study areas, particularly as these communities continued to function in their mother tongues and were able to control a significant proportion of the housing stock. This is further related to the reliance on ethnic sources of housing finance, which effectively removed key housing from the market open to gentrifiers. The presence of significant industrial employment lands, and the environmental externalities (and bad press) that flowed from this, also played an important role in inhibiting the pace of gentrification. While the maintenance of these manufacturing districts was official city policy during the 1970s and 1980s, it was not so much progressive local government, but benign (and potentially not so benign) neglect on behalf of both city and provincial government officials towards dirty industries and air pollution that gave the industrial areas a bad press and, in turn, a reputation among real estate speculators and would-be gentrifiers.

These stories regarding the development trajectories of Brockton and South Riverdale offer insight for those policy-makers potentially searching for ways to prevent further gentrification in the current context of restricted funding for social housing in cities like Toronto. First of all, urban policy can support the establishment and maintenance of institutionally complete ethnic communities

that conduct their business in their mother tongue. Such policies could include support for cultural organisations, job placement, retraining and housing search services, as well as food banks, shelters and school programmes offered in the home language. In doing so, it is important to ensure that resources and democratic spaces are provided to facilitate a measure of political capital and control on behalf of ethnic communities over planning decisions based in their neighbourhoods. This will allow ethnic communities to work with governments in fashioning local policies in their own best interests and thus in turn will help to reinforce the political environment against incursions of gentrification and allow the community to remain in the neighbourhood if they so choose.¹⁴ Secondly, policy-makers can revisit heritage legislation and aesthetic controls on inner-city housing and encourage working-class ethnic communities to customise their living environments to their own tastes and to renovate properties they own for multifamily use. Of course, care should be taken that such policies do not exacerbate intraethnic class exploitation through unregulated landlord–tenant relations.

While the establishment of institutionally complete ethnic communities is not sufficient in and of itself to act as a barrier to gentrification (the experiences of the Greek and Italian communities in Toronto attest to this), it appears to have been a necessary condition within both Brockton and South Riverdale. In both cases, the reliance on ethnic sources of housing finance capital and labour appears to have played a distinct role in maintaining a measure of ethnic control over a section of the housing stock, which acted as a complementary stabilising force for the community at a key time in its evolution. Thus, a third policy recommendation would be to support the usage of ethnic and/or non-market or non-profit sources of housing finance and/or non-market programmes that

can match vacant properties to new residents, thus largely bypassing the traditional housing market and in turn reducing, if not preventing, speculative real estate activity and gentrifiers' access to key properties. Such a policy need not be targeted at ethnic communities—embattled working-class communities could also benefit from such a system. Of course, it would be important to build into such programmes measures to avoid dispossession through non-market means and to prevent intra-ethnic class exploitation through usurious interest rates and patron–client relationships. There would not yet appear to be an exemplary model for this (although related community development models based on community currencies and non-market networks are starting to show some promise, see for example, Richey, 2007). Of course, the extent of the phenomenon (of ethnic housing finance) and its precise effects in obstructing gentrification in our two case studies remains somewhat of an unknown. This is an area that clearly warrants further empirical exploration by gentrification researchers.

Fourthly, public policy could support the maintenance of areas of working-class employment and manufacturing industries within the inner city. While urban policy has been moving in the opposite direction in an attempt to attract and appease the 'creative class' (Peck, 2005), it could be reoriented towards the protection and promotion of industrial lands. As Scott (1982) demonstrated, under capitalism industries are likely to remain in the inner city if their productive processes remain necessarily labour-intensive, which provides the added benefit of maintaining significant numbers of secure jobs for nearby low-skilled workers. This of course runs counter to globalisation trends which see labour-intensive industries moving to developing nations and so would require co-ordinated policy support at national/federal as well as local levels of government. Benign

neglect of minor environmental externalities related to industrial lands that are relatively harmless (including unpleasant odours) can make the area less attractive to potential in-movers whose employment base is elsewhere in the city, and in turn reduce localised speculative real estate activity. Decisions regarding the appropriate trade-off between the level of such externalities and local quality of life should be made by and in consultation with local working-class populations, who have the greatest interest in simultaneously improving both public health outcomes and local employment opportunities while minimising their displacement.

Above all, it is important to limit the retrofitting and redevelopment of employment lands into residential spaces that are offered on the capitalist real estate market (as opposed to non-market housing). It is tempting for municipalities to look at such areas as potential sources of heightened revenue and for planners to see themselves as reinvigorating and intensifying older neighbourhoods, often in the name of promoting 'social mix' (August, 2008; Lees *et al.*, 2007). However, such actions often lead to gentrification, directly as a form of 'new-build' gentrification and/or indirectly by stimulating investment in surrounding areas (Davidson and Lees, 2005; Lees *et al.*, 2007). This is particularly true in globalising cities like Toronto, where there is high demand for gentrified space (Smith, 2002). The evidence from Canadian cities suggests that, instead of increasing social mix, gentrification leads to the opposite (Walks and Maaranen, 2008b).

These policy lessons are also borne out by Toronto's recent history, but in a negative way. In 1996, the City of Toronto changed its approach towards employment lands and adopted a simplified zoning system (similar to that favoured by the Thatcher government in the 1980s; see Allmendinger, 1997) which allowed as-of-right any land use and configuration of the internal space (and density)

as long as part of the building façade is maintained. Initially applied in two older warehouse districts near the CBD, its success in attracting significant redevelopment capital influenced the decision to expand such zoning to all inner-city employment lands in the new Official Plan (adopted by council in 2002) under the rubric of 'smart growth' (Bunce, 2004). This occurred just after the provincial government led then by premier Mike Harris radically restructured rent control legislation, allowing landlords to charge whatever the market would bear once a unit was vacated. This encouraged landlords to evict long-term tenants right at the time that new 'authentic' lofts and condominiums were being built in/on the old factory sites. Significant real estate speculation, catering to middle-class "urbane hipsters", ensued (Fantauzzi, 2004). The result in many Toronto neighbourhoods like South Riverdale and Brockton has been renewed gentrification.¹⁵

These policy lessons will not be appropriate in every situation, in every metropolitan area and certainly not in every gentrifying neighbourhood. They should be considered as *complementary* to the primary aims of supporting investment in non-market and affordable housing for low-income households, and political mobilisation of working-class communities. Nonetheless, these policy prescriptions would appear particularly amenable to application in globalising cities, since the latter contain large and growing low-income immigrant communities who are increasingly pushed into less accessible and poorly serviced neighbourhoods as gentrification reduces the relative ethnic diversity and immigrant reception function of the inner city (see Walks and Maaranen, 2008b), as well as to cities with significant brownfield employment lands within range of inner-city residential areas, which themselves are under constant threat from displacement due to globalisation.

Notes

1. Gentrification is considered incomplete if the neighbourhood's average income has remained below the metropolitan average. This could occur if only part of the neighbourhood gentrified, if gentrification stalled at some point or if gentrification has taken place only slowly. In each case, if the gentrification trends continue (or resume), it is conceivable that the neighbourhood will eventually join the ranks of 'gentrified' neighbourhoods, which have above-average incomes and indices of social status (for more information on these definitions, see Walks and Maaranen, 2008a).
2. New industries established by 1910 included a planing mill, the Canadian Wire Mattress Company, Campbell flour mills, the Dodge Wood Split Pulley Company and the Nordheimer Piano Company.
3. Planning reports produced by the City of Toronto in the early 1970s merely noted that the "main problem" for Brockton was its "poor vehicle and pedestrian circulation pattern resulting from a lack of east-west streets" (City of Toronto Planning Board, 1972, p. 38). The area contained the three longest blocks in the city without through-streets and the planning department's recommendation, arrived at with significant resident input, was a system of pedestrian paths to provide better circulation. The other recommendation was to retain the neighbourhood as a "stable low-density residence area" (pp. 39-40). The Bloor-Dufferin study determined that the planning district's primary "role is that of providing low cost, essentially family housing ... [and to] continue to be an immigrant receiving area" (City of Toronto Planning Board, 1971, p. 7). The city concluded that, "therefore any reduction in the present family housing stock should be prevented" (p. 21).
4. It is worth mentioning that only seven years earlier, this same area had been identified by the Metro Social Planning Council as not worth rehabilitating—with housing that was too old and in need of major repairs and replacements (*Toronto Star*, 1970).
5. For instance, writing in *Toronto Life* magazine, Brown (1986, p. 98) observes that, after 90 years as a working-class neighbourhood, "now ... lawyers and their like are reclaiming Grant Street's high ground from the east end rabble". Brown highlights potential social tensions by contrasting the styles of the existing poorer residents, represented by the Groves family (a "second generation welfare family" with "gap-toothed smiles" and the "last vestige of anti-bourgeois vitality on Grant Street") and the in-coming gentrifiers who divide the street into "us" and "them". "Us", according to one new resident, includes "people on the street who like each other and talk to each other". "We care. We care not only about property values, but about pleasantness and the visual, the aesthetics" (Brown, 1986, p. 98). Brown also details how one resident named John had the city remove public benches at the foot of Grant Street, so that "drunks" who might rest on them would no longer "create an eyesore that might have devalued everyone's property" (p. 100; see also Gillmore, 1999).
6. Industries included the Gooderham and Worts Brewery yards, the Consumer Gas Company, the A. R. Clarke Tannery, Sunlight and later Lever soap, a carriage works and numerous printers, plumbers and carpentry shops. By 1923, the southern and eastern portions were heavily developed with industrial land.
7. The streets ('slums') of South Riverdale were notorious enough to earn a full chapter in the 1970 book *The Underside of Toronto* (Crysdale, 1970).
8. "White-painters" is an early term for gentrifiers. In the 1970s, early gentrifiers would often paint the well-worn and often soot-covered brick facades of houses they occupied with white paint, hence the term (see Lees *et al.*, 2007; Ley, 1996)
9. News reports detail "bothersome odors in the area ... they range from rank flesh odor, like that of a dead animal, to an extremely rosy perfume smell" (Wintrob, 1984). Local residents gathered signatures to petition smelly industries, including tanning and rendering factories, that were producing odours akin to "rancid onions" (Polanyi, 1984).
10. Often employed in the construction trades and with a tradition of 'mutual help and

support, Portuguese and Italian homeowners maintained and improved their houses with bartered labour. In Brockton, residents are said to have worked together and with their neighbours to renovate their homes—building extra units, adding kitchens and bathrooms, finishing the basement, fixing wiring and plumbing, and painting the exterior bright colours (Teixeira, 2000, p. 214).

11. Mediterraneanisation, according to Caulfield

denotes a style of incumbent upgrading popular among the city's Italian and Portuguese homeowners that features angel brick facades, porches with grillwork rails and brick arches, and aluminum fascia and window-trim; [while contrastingly] middle-class upgraders prefer restored brick facades, either no porch or a wooden one that replicates the original design, and refurbished fascia and trim (Caulfield, 1994, pp. 20–21).

12. Among those in South Riverdale are the Queen's Common townhouse development (on the site of the former Colgate factory), the Wrigley Chewing Gum Factory lofts, the "I-Zone" Artists Lofts (on the site of the former Coca-Cola factory), the Drug Factory lofts, the Stone Manor development, the Print Factory Lofts and the Garment Factory Lofts.

13. One debate concerned whether or not contaminated properties should be registered publicly (Dimanno, 1986). Notably, alderman Fred Beavis believed that there should be a registry, so that prospective buyers "would know what they were getting into". Working-class residents agreed to the registry, despite the effect on their property values. However, Councillor Beavis also publicly worried about the prospect of "an exodus in a hurry" from South Riverdale if prospective buyers were to have full access to contamination information (Dimano, 1986).

14. This does not imply a static and homogeneous conception of ethnic communities and we realise that such policy prescriptions may enable greater mobility (both occupational and spatial) on behalf of the children born into these immigrant communities and we do not have any problem with this. The

problem is when they desire to remain, but are instead forced to leave by the displacing effects of gentrification. Providing better and more democratic access to resources enhances the ability of such communities to remain in the neighbourhood if they choose.

15. Qualitative and journalistic accounts of recent gentrification in these neighbourhoods (Teixeira, 2007; van der Ven, 2003) are confirmed by the initial release of the 2006 census data which show that 235 new dwellings (either condominiums or loft conversions) have been developed in South Riverdale since 2001, while 245 new dwellings have been built (or converted from non-residential use) in Brockton. In turn, affected tracts in Brockton saw their average individual income jump significantly from approximately 67 per cent of the CMA average in 2001 to 75 per cent in 2006. Likewise, the three census tracts that make up the west and south of South Riverdale all saw their average incomes shoot up from 57 per cent, 74 per cent and 87 per cent in 2001, to 89 per cent, 82 per cent and 93 per cent of the CMA average in 2006.

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