UPROOTING URBAN AMERICA

multidisciplinary perspectives on race, class and gentrification

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pollution, as well as toxic diesel air contamination that can exacerbate chronic lung
diseases such as asthma. In September 2013, however, after months of disputes,
Englewood constituents and other community organizations successfully negoti-
ated with Norfolk Southern and the city of Chicago for new green space and toxic
waste reductions.

Push back from Englewood citizens has less to do with averting the process of
revitalization and more with voicing their needs and concerns around their quality
of life and well-being. Residents, both young and old, most definitely wish to be
included in renewal policies that intimately impact the space around them. They
are indeed the experts of their own sociocultural contexts and have fundamentally
different notions on how to equitably improve their lived conditions. The authors
in this section assert that while urban renewal has its advantages for improving
struggling communities, when it is done in ways that are irresponsible to the envi-
ronment and that neglect democratic participation, then we must expose, critically
examine and contest those profit-driven, top-down arrangements that, on the sur-
face, appear as opportunities.

CHAPTER FOUR

Sustainable Urban Development AND
Environmental Gentrification

The Paradox Confronting the U.S.
Environmental Justice Movement

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INTRODUCTION

Sustainable urban redevelopment projects are becoming increasingly prevalent
across the United States and Canada. In fact, sustainability principles are now
commonly integrated into both the vernacular and content of urban policy, plan-
ning and development processes of most major cities (Bunce, 2009, pp. 652–653).
These include energy- and resource-efficient buildings; bike lanes, walking paths
and better mass transportation systems; alternative energy and technology; im-
proved parks and green spaces; antisprawl initiatives; climate mitigation and
adaptation measures; environmental cleanup of the land, air and water; urban gar-
dening and sustainable agriculture; and recycling programs, to name but a few.

At first glance, such urban sustainability initiatives seem to offer an unassailable
public good. However, a number of scholars have raised questions about the distribu-
tional impacts of these efforts. As Curran and Hamilton (2012) noted, “Many visions
of the green city seem to have room only for park space, waterfront cafes, and luxury
LEED-certified buildings, prompting concern that there is no place in the ‘sustainable’
city for industrial uses and the working class" (p. 1027). In fact, the urban sustainabil-
ity initiatives often launched to stimulate private investment in sectors such as high
technology, real estate, energy or finance are explicitly designed to restore or build the
environmental amenities and reputational status thought to attract a highly educated
and skilled workforce (Florida, 2002; Tretter, 2013). In this context, "greening the city" can
be seen as part of a broader neoliberal strategy to remake the urban landscape
to satisfy the lifestyle demands of the middle and professional classes (Bunce, 2009,
pp. 652-654). North America is not unique in this respect. According to Tretter
(2013), "The compatibility between an agenda for sustainable urban development and
the neoliberal economic restructuring of urban space has been observed within cities
in developed countries across the globe" (p. 297).

This treatment of environmental quality as yet another consumer "amenity"
with the potential to fuel economic growth (see Clark, Lloyd, Wong, & Jain, 2002)
has important implications for the affordability and accessibility of the city. Envi-
ronmental quality has long been known to exercise a significant influence over the
price of housing (Boyle & Kiel, 2001). "In short, land values tend to be relatively
higher near [environmental] amenities and relatively lower near [environmental]
disamenities and tend to adjust as those amenities and disamenities change" (Eck-
erd, 2011, p. 34). Therefore, green projects that create open space or otherwise aim
to improve the environmental profile of a neighborhood can trigger increases in
real estate prices, rents and property taxes, leading to the economic displacement
of the existing residents who had endured the deleterious effects of pollution and
ecological degradation (Banzhaf & McCormick, 2012). At the same time, envi-
ronmental upgrading can result in what Marcuse (1986) termed "exclusionary
placement," rendering the sustainable city inaccessible for future residents of
limited economic means. Housing price increases hit the poor—the vast majority
of whom are renters—especially hard. It is typically only landlords and home-
owners who stand to capture the property value gains associated with enhanced
environmental amenities (Banzhaf & McCormick, 2012).

Thus, the risk of environmental gentrification (Sieg, Smith, Banzhaf, & Walsh,
2004) has emerged as a critical concern in the discourse surrounding the prolifer-
ation of urban sustainability programs. Specifically, the extent to which the elim-
ination of environmental disamenities (such as toxic waste sites) and the creation
of environmental amenities (such as parks) can exact a toll on vulnerable resi-
dents, especially poorer people of color, is paramount (Curran & Hamilton, 2012;
evidence to highlight the racial dimension of environmental gentrification, docu-
menting decreases in the local Black and Latino populations after the revitaliza-
tion of land contaminated with toxic chemicals (i.e., "brownfield" redevelopment).
Similarly, as Gould and Lewis (2012) revealed, the restoration of Brooklyn's
Prospect Park in the 1990s led to a significant increase in new construction around

the park and a corresponding decrease in the racial and socioeconomic diversity
of those areas. They concluded that rhetoric around the "greening" of New York is
actually code for the "whitening" of the city's revitalized urban areas.

As such, urban sustainability initiatives, while providing and/or rehabilitating
parks, playgrounds, bicycle paths and waterfront promenades, can also often serve
as a "discursive guise" by which middle- to upper-income people can reinherit (or
gentrify) existing city spaces (Bunce, 2009). As Checker (2011) argued, "environment-
gentrification operates through a discourse of sustainability which simulta-
neously describes a vision of ecological and socially responsible urban planning,
a 'green' lifestyle which appeals to affluent, eco-conscious residents, and a technoc-
cratic, politically neutral approach to solving environmental problems" (p. 212).

It is clear that a failure to adequately address the social justice dimensions of
neoliberal sustainability initiatives can contribute to environmental gentrification
(Dooling, 2009; Gibbs & Krueger, 2007; Pearsall, 2012; Quastel, 2009). Such a
failure is typically grounded in "asymmetrical power relations...[that] continually
influence how and what kinds of 'environmental' issues are addressed" (Tretter,
2013, p. 308). Resolving this tension requires balancing the demands of environ-
mental activists for such ecological benefits as less automobile-dependent cities
and the reduction of urban sprawl, and the concerns of social justice advocates
about the impacts of neoliberal development approaches that magnify income dis-
parities and social dislocation (Tretter, 2013).

While a focus on the inequitable outcomes associated with top-down,
elite-sponsored environmental improvement efforts is crucial, it does not obvi-
ate the need to also examine the consequences of bottom-up, community-driven
struggles by people of color and working-class Whites to advocate for cleaner,
healthier neighborhoods. In poor African American, Latino and Native American
communities all across the country, people who have traditionally been relegated
to the periphery of the environmental movement are challenging the ruination
of their land, water, air and health by corporate polluters and indifferent govern-
mental agencies. Combining elements of civil rights, social justice, the struggle
for land rights and respect for the environment, oppressed peoples of color have
formed environmental justice (EJ) movements to contest the disparate ecological
and economic burdens placed upon their communities. Working-class Whites are
also part of this fight (Faber, 2008). As a result, the federal government and mu-
cipalities are responding to demands by the EJ movement for environmental
restoration and sustainable development. Is it possible that successful efforts by
the EJ movement to force the cleanup of their communities can likewise result in
environmental gentrification?

If the answer is "yes," then the EJ movement could be facing what Checker (2011,
p. 211) called a "pernicious paradox." Her concerns echo the reports of the federal
government's National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC, 2006):
Gentrification has placed populations in urban areas in direct competition for inner city space with relatively powerful and privileged groups. Environmental cleanup of these formerly industrialized, now residential communities can be a powerfully displacing force. Citizens living in urban, poor, and people-of-color communities are currently threatened by gentrification, displacement, and equity loss on a scale unprecedented since the Urban renewal movement of the 1960s. (p. 2)

Are successful EJ struggles by the working class to make their urban environments "greener" likely to yield unintended consequences in the form of the eventual displacement and relocation of these same residents into other (potentially more heavily) polluted communities, where rents and housing prices are cheaper? Indeed, Checker (2011) underscored the vexing nature of this dilemma: Must lower income residents reject environmental amenities in their neighborhood in order to resist gentrification that tends to follow... (p. 211)? This is the essence of the paradox confronting the EJ movement.

ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE AND GENTRIFICATION

While gentrification remains a contested term, most scholars identify it as a predominantly urban process marked by an infusion of capital in particular neighborhood(s); visible changes to the physical, social, cultural and economic landscape; and the displacement of lower-income households by an increasingly affluent resident base (Atkinson, 2003; Brown-Saracino, 2010; Kennedy & Leonard, 2001; Smith, 1996). Key disagreements in the literature center on whether gentrification can best be explained by market forces (Harvey, 1985; Smith, 1996) or the preferences and tastes of consumers (Ley, 1996; Lloyd, 2005), the extent to which the motivations of gentrifiers vary in meaningful ways (Brown-Saracino, 2009; Lloyd, 2005; Spain, 1993; Zukin, 1987), and how to identify, measure and characterize the consequences of gentrification for residents, neighborhoods and cities (Brown-Saracino, 2010; Freeman, 2006; Newman & Wyly, 2006).

The recent attention devoted to the potential for environmental gentrification is based, at least in part, on the recognition that the very environmental injustices that have earned the condemnation of scholars and activists may also make an affected area ripe for future gentrification. Consistent with the argument advanced by some gentrification scholars that decades of economic and political disinvestment created a "rent gap" between current and potential rents that developers and landlords could readily exploit (Smith, 1979), the environmental neglect, pollution and/or willful destruction that plague many neighborhoods likewise depress local housing values and associated rents.

For example, studies reveal that all things being equal, property values tend to be lower near Superfund sites (Eckerd, 2011, 2013; Gayer, Hamilton, & Viscusi, 2000). Likewise, housing prices have been shown to fall coincident with increased pollution levels from larger industrial facilities (Sanders, 2011), water pollution (Legget & Bockstael, 2000) and the opening of new power plants (Davis, 2011; Smith & Desvouges, 1986). In one Minnesota community, a landfill was found to adversely affect home values in the range of 12% at the landfill boundary and 6% at about one mile (Nelson, Genereux, & Genereux, 1992). Housing prices in one Nevada county declined over 15% in response to the discovery of a local cluster of childhood leukemia (Davis, 2004). In fact, the recognized economic impacts are so great that some local policymakers have taken steps to mitigate the potential consequences of environmental hazards. Tompkins County, New York, for example, adopted a program to insure existing residents for any loss of income, decline in property values or other damages due to environmental pollution stemming from a landfill in their neighborhood (Kiel & McClain, 1995).

While the relationship between lower housing values and environmental disamenities is perhaps not surprising—indeed, the classic Tiebout (1956) model would predict such an outcome—the stark reality that in the United States, communities of color and lower-income households overwhelmingly shoulder the burden of these environmental hazards has been a source of continuing concern among environmental justice advocates. Despite the declaration of President Clinton's Executive Order on Environmental Justice in 1994, which mandated federal agencies to incorporate environmental justice into their work and programs, the displacement of ecological problems onto minority neighborhoods persists. In fact, for the first time in history, people of color now comprise the majority of the population living near the nation's commercial hazardous waste facilities. These neighborhoods are 56% people of color (compared to 30% in nonhost areas) and are often economically distressed (Bullard, Mohai, Saha, & Wright, 2007). In Massachusetts, for instance, communities of color average over 48 hazardous waste sites per square mile (psm), a rate that is more than 23 times greater than the average of two sites (psm) in predominantly White communities (Faber & Krieg, 2005).

In general, America's Asian, African American, Hispanic and working-poor populations bear the greatest health risks from pollution traced to various sources, including industrial facilities and transportation infrastructure. For example, Pastor, Morello-Frosch, and Sadd (2005) found significant racial and income disparities in air toxic exposures in California. In December 2005, the Associated Press (AP) released an analysis of a little-known U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) research project revealing that Black Americans are 79% more likely than Whites to live in neighborhoods where industrial pollution is suspected of posing the greatest health danger. Residents of neighborhoods with the highest pollution scores are also poorer, less educated and suffer unemployment rates 20% higher than the national average.
The AP also found that in many states, Blacks, Hispanics and Asians are more than twice as likely as Whites to reside in neighborhoods where air pollution poses the greatest health dangers (Pace, 2005). According to the EPA, 57% of all Whites nationwide live in areas with poor air quality, compared with 80% of all Latinos (Wernette & Nieves, 1992). In Massachusetts, communities of color receive 10 times as many pounds of industrial pollutants per square mile as do predominantly White communities (Faber & Krieg, 2005). Nationwide, 68% of African Americans live within 30 miles of a coal-fired power plant, among the worst air polluters and a major contributor to the formation of smog (Keating & Davis, 2002).

Explanations for the racialized and class-based spatial patterning of environmental hazards are complex and not always clear cut. Some accounts point to the increased likelihood that people of color and poorer households are more likely to move to areas that are already polluted because their limited economic resources restrict their housing choices and force them to privilege low-cost housing over environmental amenities. Banzhaf and McCormick (2012), for example, concluded that “minorities are more likely than whites to ‘come to the nuisance’” (pp. 39–41). Likewise, Been and Gupta (1997) demonstrated that census tracts become poorer and also witness an increase in the proportion of minority residents after a hazardous waste facility is built. A related explanation centers on the mobility patterns of higher income households, suggesting that lower income households are more likely to be “left behind” in areas with hazardous facilities due to the out-migration of more advantaged residents (Banzhaf & Walsh, 2008). Alternative theories focus on the deliberate siting of industrial hazards and other environmental disamenities in poorer communities and communities of color (Pastor, Sadd, & Hipp, 2001), based in part on the belief that such communities lack the social or political capital to mount a successful opposition. Finally, some scholars point to the tendency of firms to zero in on places where land is inexpensive when selecting a site for their facilities, rather than targeting a specific demographic group (Wolverton, 2009, 2012).3

As Banzhaf (2012) noted, developing a clear understanding of the root causes of environmental injustice is critical to crafting appropriate policy solutions that will disrupt wide-scale patterns of inequity in the distribution of environmental amenities. Indeed, if the chief culprits of environmental justice lie in local housing markets, this calls for strategies that are quite different than those that would be necessary if the practices of the private business sector are primarily to blame. In the meantime, there have been numerous efforts across the United States to address immediately the proximate health hazards that plague many disadvantaged communities. Billions of pounds of highly toxic chemicals, including mercury, dioxin, PCBs, arsenic, lead and heavy metals such as chromium, have been dumped or left behind in thousands of unsuspecting neighborhoods. These “brownfield” sites poison the land, contaminate drinking water and potentially cause cancer, birth defects, nerve and liver damage and other illnesses (Becerra, 2013). There are an estimated 450,000 brownfields in the United States, a disparate proportion of which are located in or near poorer working-class neighborhoods and communities of color (EPA, 2013). For example, since its inception, the EPA's Brownfields program has successfully leveraged more than $14 billion in cleanup and redevelopment funding from the private and public sectors to clean up contaminated or potentially contaminated properties (Pearsall, 2010). Local municipalities, including New York City, which has plans to remediate over 7,000 acres of contaminated former industrial sites by 2030, are also increasingly likely to pursue brownfield redevelopment (Pearsall, 2010).

These and other efforts to clean up dirty, unhealthy neighborhoods are often (and understandably) celebrated for rectifying the wrongs suffered by existing residents for far too long and striving to dramatically improve the overall quality of life in the affected area. By doing so, cleanup campaigns hold the potential to increase what Logan and Molotch (1987), in their urban sociology classic Urban Fortunes, termed the “use value” of residents’ homes. Unfortunately, however, many residents are unable to enjoy the benefits of their rehabilitated neighborhoods, as “cleaning up the environment may increase housing costs for the poor by more than their willingness (or ability) to pay” (Sieg et al., 2004, p. 77).

In an extensive review of the literature, Banzhaf and McCormick (2012) concludes that although there are exceptions, “the evidence seems clear that in most cases improvements in local environmental conditions do trigger increases in property prices” (pp. 39–41). For example, numerous studies have found that the cleanup of Superfund and other brownfield sites—and in some cases, even the anticipation of future remediation—results in rising land values, housing values and/or rents (see, e.g., Bryson, 2012; Dale & Newman, 2009; Gamper-Rabindran & Timmins, 2013; Gayer et al., 2000; McCluskey & Rauser, 2003; Pearsall, 2010).

In this way, the redevelopment of environmentally blighted areas, and related initiatives undertaken in the name of urban sustainability, increase not only the “use value” of affected homes by rendering them more livable, but also (and more notably), their “exchange value,” or financial worth in the market (Logan & Molotch, 1987). While these two values always exist in some degree of tension, the pursuit of exchange value by landlords, developers and planners eager to capitalize on revitalized “green” urban spaces can price vulnerable residents—that is, low-income tenants—out of the market, effectively limiting their ability to enjoy the long-term benefits of the now healthier environment. Thus, as Dillon (2013, p. 3) argued, “Brownfield redevelopment, rather than representing a clean break with an industrial past, often reproduces the social relations of an older, industrial economy—particularly those related to racial and health injustices.”
Pearsall's (2010) analysis of brownfield redevelopment and vulnerability to gentrification in New York City provided a pointed illustration. Drawing on interviews with residents in affected neighborhoods, Pearsall demonstrated that “elderly, low-income, and minority populations were particularly sensitive to rapid increases in the cost of living” (p. 879). Across neighborhoods in several boroughs,

renters were less fortunate in that they had fewer options stemming from the inflated housing market than the homeowners. Long-time renters found the informal landlord-tenant agreement of a stable rent that varies little from year to year to be forgotten with increasing frequency. More and more landlords sought to realize the full potential of their rental units—during the housing boom—and increased the rents to the same level as other offers in the neighborhood. (Pearsall, 2010, p. 880)

Indeed, while there are important exceptions (see, e.g., Eckerd, 2011), the literature suggests that, left unchecked, it would be reasonable to expect some degree of residential turnover as a result of local environmental improvements. However, even in those cases where existing households are not physically displaced, potential changes to the economic, social and cultural landscape in the wake of environmental remediation may be cause for concern. In particular, when such efforts are undertaken as part of broader urban sustainability initiatives, the “greening” of urban spaces is often accompanied by new retail stores, restaurants, and amenities explicitly targeted toward middle- and upper-class residents (Bryson, 2012; Dale & Newman, 2009). This remaking of the commercial and social aspects of neighborhoods can serve to alienate or marginalize lower-income residents and especially the homeless (Dooling, 2009, 2012), not only because participation is cost-prohibitive to those with limited means but also because it serves to reinforce class-based symbolic and social boundaries within the community (Lamont & Molnar, 2002).

**ACHIEVING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE WITHOUT GENTRIFICATION: POLICY APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES**

While debates about neighborhood gentrification occasionally feature philosophical arguments about whether “urban development” is inherently good or bad, most scholars and activists maintain that the more germane question is whether development initiatives are equitable in their approaches and outcomes (see PolicyLink.org for more on the concept of equitable development). Similarly, the pressing issue concerning the remediation of environmental injustices is not whether cleaning up hazardous sites or building healthy urban spaces represents, on balance, a positive or negative thing, but rather the extent to which the decisions undertaken to accomplish those efforts, and the consequences that stem from them, are fair and equitable. This necessitates ensuring that certain groups do not reap most or all of the rewards of environmental cleanup initiatives and urban sustainability programs, while others disproportionately suffer the costs (or are excluded from sharing in the benefits altogether). Again, as with broader discussions of gentrification, opinions regarding what must be done in order to prevent environmental gentrification or to mitigate its damaging consequences vary considerably, reflecting a wide range of beliefs about the root causes of the problem, the feasibility or appropriateness of different tactics and the specific urban institutions implicated. In the following section, we briefly review a few of the general policy approaches featured in the literature. While this sampling is by no means exhaustive, it is intended to illustrate a range of strategies embraced by those concerned about environmental gentrification in the United States.

**MARKET-BASED APPROACHES: FOCUSING ON THE CONSUMER**

As economists such as Banzhaf (2008) and others argue, environmental gentrification is fundamentally about markets. Classic economic models (Coase, 1960; Tiebout, 1956) would predict adverse consequences for lower-income households as a result of environmental cleanup, either because the improvements rendered translate into higher-priced housing that lower-income people can no longer afford or because they reduce the compensation that firms pay to neighborhoods in order to pollute, thus depleting public funds that can be utilized for other urban institutions and infrastructures (Banzhaf, 2008). From this vantage point, the root problem is poverty and how it constrains the choices and bargaining power of individuals and households; gentrification is merely a manifestation or symptom of that poverty. Thus, solutions focus on recognizing poor people as consumers in the urban marketplace and providing them with the resources needed to expand their choice set and “compete” in a changing residential market. Banzhaf (2008) maintained the following:

If public policy intends to address inequality, it would do better to attack poverty directly through transfer policies or by targeting its causes. This would give more people the ability to “purchase” environmental quality through markets (or to use their resources in other ways they see fit). In addition, policies could facilitate markets in pollution by reducing transactions costs, thereby allowing them to work for all groups. (p. 21)

In other words, market-based approaches typically do not hinge on challenging or altering the expected outcomes (e.g., by capping housing-price increases or preventing a change in the neighborhood landscape) but rather on increasing the negotiating power and financial capability of individual consumers within a given market.
INSTITUTIONAL APPROACHES: HOUSING-MARKET INTERVENTIONS

Other experts emphasize that urban sustainability initiatives cannot and should not be viewed in isolation from the pursuit of other forms of social justice, including the right to affordable housing (Dooling, 2009; Foy, 2012). Thus, some scholars advocate for direct interventions in the local housing market to prevent or offset the consequences of the shifts in housing stock and rents that are likely to stem from neighborhood environmental improvements. These can include efforts to build new low-income housing in areas slated to be cleaned up, as well as mechanisms to protect existing housing from price increases after environmental remediation has occurred. For example, Pearsall (2012) noted that rent stabilization was a key factor increasing residents’ resilience in the face of gentrifying forces in their New York City neighborhood. A related approach would work to increase affordable housing in places that already enjoy healthy environmental conditions, to expand the number of good housing options available to lower-income individuals and families.

The importance of affordable housing as a component of urban sustainability efforts is underscored in the research of Pollack, Bluestone, and Billingham (2010), which explored the effects of transportation investments on proximate communities. Consistent with the findings discussed in this chapter, the researchers found that “transit investment frequently changes the surrounding neighborhood...the most predominant pattern is one in which housing becomes more expensive, neighborhood residents become wealthier and vehicle ownership becomes more common” (p. 1). Despite the fact that the expansion of public transportation systems is often heralded as a means to increase the environmental health and sustainability of urban areas, Pollack et al. discovered that “...a new transit station can set in motion a cycle of unintended consequences in which core transit users—such as renters and low income households—are priced out in favor of higher-income, car-owning residents who are less likely to use public transit for commuting” (p. 1). In light of the potential for these undesirable outcomes, Pollack et al. stressed the need for direct housing-market strategies and programs—for example, the proactive acquisition of impacted land, the preservation and production of affordable housing and so forth—to be included in transit-oriented development plans.

ACTIVIST APPROACHES: CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

Alternative approaches focus on harnessing the power of residents to challenge the inevitability of gentrification as a by-product of environmental change. Here, the work of Winifred Curran and Trina Hamilton (2012) is particularly instructive. There is an important distinction to be drawn, these scholars argued, between “gentrifying” a community and “stabilizing” a community or forestalling further commercial or physical deterioration. In other words, in the narrative of urban change, neighborhood improvement is often conflated with large-scale reinvestment, suggesting that there is predictability and a presumed antagonism around the outcomes of neighborhood change. Yet, when low-income people are involved in the process, and their needs are represented at the table, the “expected” path can be interrupted and redefined. Applied to the case of Greenpoint, Brooklyn, this thinking underpinned a local strategy to push for environmental remediation that was “just green enough” or “just clean enough,” wherein “as much of the environmental hazard as possible is removed in order to assure community health while still allowing for industrial uses on the waterfront for the explicit purpose of maintaining the area’s working-class population” (p. 1039). Thus, the false dilemma that typically dictates the discourse on environmental remediation was contested, demonstrating a possible world where “...cleanup does not automatically or exclusively lead to the ‘parks, cafes, and a riverwalk’ model of a green city” (p. 1028).

Such a change in narrative is often best accomplished via the efforts of community alliances, particularly those that cut across class and residential tenure lines (Hamilton & Curran, 2013). Environmental activists and longtime residents can shape the course of neighborhood change by teaching gentrifiers about the needs and worries of the local community and identifying ways that each group can complement the strengths and supplement the weaknesses of the other. Activist approaches thus draw heavily from the social movements literature, focusing in part on the ways in which framing the issues in “collective” terms—that is, emphasizing the risks, opportunities and responsibilities that different groups share—can lead to equitable outcomes (Hamilton & Curran, 2013; see also, Gin & Taylor, 2010, for more on the deployment of different frames in response to gentrification).

CONTRACTUAL APPROACHES: COMMUNITY BENEFITS AGREEMENTS (CBAs)

Finally, any of the aforementioned approaches may be buttressed by formal contracts detailing the specific community benefits or mitigations that will accompany urban sustainability initiatives. One example is a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA; Janis, 2007). Since the early 2000s, CBAs have been deployed numerous times throughout the United States, typically in the context of large municipal economic development projects that stand to have a significant impact on low-income communities (the “L.A.
Live" CBA, negotiated as part of the development of a multibillion dollar entertainment complex in downtown Los Angeles, is a prime example; Saito, 2012). While CBAs may have different purposes and applications depending on the project and market in question, their primary goal is to ensure that vulnerable residents will both share in the anticipated gains of a planned development, as well as be spared undue burdens associated with it (Larsen, 2009).

Thus, in the case of economic development projects, emphasis may be placed on the creation of new jobs for local residents, the enforcement of certain hiring and wage requirements and plans to build or reserve space for needed community organizations, services and amenities. For urban sustainability or environmental remediation initiatives, CBAs may focus on these common ideas but also include explicit conditions concerning the protection or creation of affordable housing units, the provision of opportunities for community input on the development plans and/or mechanisms to capture for public use a certain percentage of the expected price increases stemming from the cleanup.

CONCLUSION

To avoid the pernicious paradox of environmental gentrification, we agree with Checker (2011) that the EJ movement must combat "postpolitical" discursive practices and technocratic governance systems that shun politics and de-link sustainability from social justice considerations. The danger is that postpolitical planning and policymaking approaches appear to be politically neutral and consensus-based, as well as ecologically and socially sensitive. In actual practice, however, they too often disallow spaces for a politics of resistance, and they do not allow for more democratic modes of governance (Swyngedouw, 2007). As such, justice and equity considerations are subordinated in favor of profit-minded development. In such a circumstance, the proponents of neoliberal forms of sustainable development and environmental gentrification can deflect resistance by appropriating (or even co-opting) the material and discursive successes of the EJ movement to serve high-end redevelopment (Checker, 2011, p. 212). To combat this possibility, the EJ movement must claim the high ground in the public debates around sustainable urban development and insure that the "greening" of America's cities serves all residents—both present and future generations.

NOTES

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