

THE DEATH AND LIFE OF GREAT AMERICAN MALLS: (UN)SPECTACULAR
CREATIVE DESTRUCTIONS, LUXURY MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENTS,
AND GENTRIFICATION IN DALLAS-FORT WORTH

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Mall after mall was built in American cities, exhaustively emulated by developers often working in concert with civic governments. In service of capital, neoliberal urban governance engages in the risky subsidization of spatio-spectacle production, working together with private business entities to bolster tax revenue and aid in private capital accumulation. The extensive replication of malls in close geographic proximity to one another across the American landscape, erected through the neoliberal partnerships of civic governments and private business interests, has greatly contributed to mall decline and mall death. There is now, however, a new spatio-spectacle that has arisen to take the place of the “great American shopping mall”—the luxury mixed-use development. These luxury mixed-use projects have been adopted as a new trend within urban development following the reality of sweeping mall decline and are proliferating across the (sub)urban landscape. Luxury mixed-use developments, I argue, are merely a continuation of late capitalism's problematic spectacle fetish. Moreover, this process is revealed to be inextricably entangled with gentrification, driven by cities’ neoliberal desires to become/maintain status as global, “world-class” cities, performed through the spatialized ideology of neoliberal multiculturalism.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

My primary interest is in the production of urban space. Admittedly, this is a broad topic, as there are many aspects of spatial production that one could set out to examine. Certainly, there are also many types of urban space that might feasibly be explored. Much work on this topic (undertaken not only by bona fide geographers, but also economists and urban theorists) has in one way or another regarded the political economy of cities—i.e., the interaction between political and economic processes as manifested in the urban setting (e.g., Harvey, 1989, 2007; Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Peck & Tickell, 2002). Others have interrogated the cultural component of urban development—how culture informs spatial production and vice versa, and indeed, how culture informs the political economy of cities (e.g., Goss, 1993; Marin, 1984). It is here, at this crossroad between the influence of political economy and the influence of culture on urban spatial production, where my topical interest is situated and within which I launch my inquiry. I am interested to better understand how cultural landscapes—such as shopping malls and subsequent luxury mixed-use places—inflect with capital to create urban forms, and to understand the impacts of this capital-driven landscape on local community members with reference the Valley View Mall and its planned transformation into a luxury mixed-use landscape in Dallas, Texas.

Specifically, I want to explore how the neoliberal processes of urban entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 1989; Wilson, 2004) and creative destruction (Schumpeter, 1942; Brenner & Theodore, 2002) work together to produce urban forms and forge geographies of struggle for community members in aspiring global cities of the Global North. Neoliberal entrepreneurialism, also called neoliberal entrepreneurial urbanism or simply urban entrepreneurialism, involves a rolling back

of public sector services in favor of increased privatization, meaning that cities must entice private capital into their municipalities in order to generate revenue. Creative destruction refers to capitalism's need to cyclically create structures that aid in capital accumulation, only to later destroy these structures when they decline sufficiently in profitability. Additionally, I want to investigate the ways in which the erection of what I term spatio-spectacles masks the adverse effects of neoliberal urban entrepreneurialism and creative destruction with reference to my North Dallas study area. By spatio-spectacles, I mean to refer to the spatialization of the Debordian notion of "spectacle," a total commodification of reality which functions to disguise societal ills beneath a veneer of awe-inspiring spectacularity. I use this concept to describe certain kinds of built environments, namely, such things as grandiose shopping malls, luxury mixed-use developments, theme parks, sports stadia, casinos, etc.—structures which are also colloquially "spectacular" in terms of their scale and dazzling character. These are places which systematically gloss over the afflictions of the neoliberal urban condition: e.g., gentrification and the subsequent displacement of vulnerable community members.

Therefore, the contribution of this research is multifold: first, to conceptually reveal the relationship between urban entrepreneurialism, creative destruction, and spectacularization, as well as the impacts of these entangled processes on urban community members vis-à-vis shopping malls and luxury mixed-use developments. Second, to provide a case study that empirically substantiates this relationship. Existing literature does not explicitly connect these processes (urban entrepreneurialism, creative destruction, spectacular landscapes) and the production of shopping malls and luxury mixed-use developments. Understanding late capitalist neoliberal spatio-spectacle production (e.g., malls/luxury mixed-use landscapes) and its adverse effects on vulnerable urban populations is urgent considering that consumption and mall-

building/luxury mixed-use-building has inarguably been a prominent preoccupation of recent urban governance. What kind of urban governance encourages such spatial production? Where are these spectacles built and why? Why are they materialized in their mega-spectacular form? How do such neoliberal spectacles impact local communities when they are produced and when they are dead? A final contribution of this work, then, is to utilize the life and death of the great American mall as a template for understanding privilege and disadvantage in capitalist cities, and to elucidate the inner workings of contemporary capitalism as manifested in Global North urban settings. In order to explore the above questions, I first provide a conceptual framework through a synthesis of relevant literature, followed by a description of my study area. Finally, I discuss my guiding questions and methodology.

Conceptual Framework

I have conceptually grouped the existing literature into: (a) neoliberal urban entrepreneurialism and the production of malls/mixed land use consumption spaces, (b) creative destruction as the spatial process through which neoliberal entrepreneurialism transforms the urban condition, and (c) spatio-spectacular landscapes and their role in concealing the exploitative and marginalizing aspects of the neoliberal urban condition. Before discussing the above, I would first like to briefly clarify “shopping mall” as a concept versus “mixed land use place,” also called a “mixed-use development/landscape.” The definition provided by the International Council of Shopping Centers states that a shopping mall is a space with planned parking, at least 2 anchor stores, and at least 40 other store units (2004). In contrast, a mixed-use development refers to “a project or geographical area with two or more primary revenue-generating land uses” (Shen & Sun, 2020). These are typically open-air arrangements, as opposed to the enclosed structure of the shopping mall. Additionally, and unlike the shopping

mall, mixed land use areas usually contain a mix of retail, residential, commercial, and entertainment functions—stores, condominiums, hotels, apartments, office buildings, eateries, theaters, and so forth. Here, we are concerned with mixed-use developments that take on a luxury character—i.e., that target an affluent demographic by emphasizing high-end retail, residential, and other amenities.

Neoliberalism and the Urban Built Environment

Urban Entrepreneurialism

Neoliberalism is a global policy regime that seeks to deregulate, lower trade barriers in favor of free market exchange, and privatize previously state-run functions (Peet, 2005). The regime has achieved near-hegemonic global dominance, in large part due to its enforcement by the Bretton Woods Institutions (International Monetary Fund and World Bank) and the World Trade Organization. In cities, the ushering in of neoliberal forms of governance since the 1980s has meant the maximization of “free market” practices—an increase in the privatization of public sector services and a renewed emphasis on inter-city competition to attract outside capital investments (Harvey, 2005). Such governance “seeks to ‘re-entrepreneurialize’ cities physically and socially” (Wilson, 2004). Specifically, entrepreneurial strategies supplant redistributive policies, and governmental functions are handed over to non-state and quasi-state entities (Wilson, 2004, pp. 771–772.). However, neoliberalism must not be understood as a top-down, one-size fits-all imposition on cities; rather, “actually existing neoliberalism” is a complex assemblage produced by locally embedding the general aspects of neoliberal governance into variegated socio-spatial manifestations based on preexisting, city-based policy particularities (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). Thus, the global policy regime of neoliberalism inflects with actually existing places to form curious, contingent socio-spatial assemblages. Actually existing

neoliberalism is therefore contingent upon already emplaced social institutions, sensibilities, and landscapes at local levels, arising in place particular ways (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Wilson, 2004).

Geographer David Harvey has provided much in the way of a conceptual framework for understanding neoliberal urban governance. He argues that in the context of growing neoliberal entrepreneurialism and public-private partnerships, city governments are under immense pressure to attract private investments and hence outcompete other cities in “fixing” capital and in the production of new spectacles (Harvey, 1982; 1989). This urban entrepreneurialism is characterized by a stripping of public sector services, replacing publicly funded functions and programs with an “entrepreneurial” recommendation: cities should act like entrepreneurs in order to seduce investors into fixing capital within their municipalities—such as the enticement of big corporate headquarters, manufacturing plants, spectacular shopping malls, and large mixed-use developments. This constitutes what has been called a public-private partnership, where cities and private entities engage in a lopsided, quid pro quo arrangement. Tax incentives are commonly given to private investments in the hopes that these investments will be a boon to local employment and economic prosperity. Yet despite the grand promises of public-private partnerships, Harvey (1989) writes at length about the ways in which strategies of neoliberal urban governance fail to benefit the local poor and working class once implemented.

Regarding these failures, Harvey (1989) notes that the entrepreneurialism of these public-private partnerships is so named because of its speculative nature. It is not the affluent incoming private sector that assumes the risk of loss in the speculation; it is the public sector whose tax dollars are gambled away if the publicly funded investment goes belly up or does not generate the capital promised. Therefore, the city taxpayer bears the brunt of bad investments made in the

public-private partnership (Harvey, 1989, p. 7). Additionally, he points out that the types of investments made as the result of such partnerships are by vast majority political economic—investments whose principal expectation is the generation of further capital (profit)—rather than those whose focus is to increase general conditions of living (Harvey, 1989, pp. 7–8). Examples of the latter might include generating employment, investing in public education, and investments in low-income housing.

A product of neoliberal urbanism has been the rise of so-called global cities (Sassen, 1991; Ancien, 2011). So-called global cities include such places as New York City, London, Paris, Tokyo, Toronto, Los Angeles, Seoul, Beijing, Hong Kong, and Bangkok, among numerous others. Cities’ efforts to “go global”—to become transcendent nodes for economic exchange—plays out in neoliberal-entrepreneurial attempts by public officials and private developers to become “world-class” through the clearing and beautification of blighted areas, and spectacular development projects are often undertaken following the displacement of the urban poor (Ghertner, 2015; Chatterjee, 2014). Examples of such projects include the development of luxury shopping malls and mixed-use developments, towering condominiums, boardwalks, and sprawling parks.

Creative Destruction

“Creative destruction” refers to the perpetual destruction of old infrastructure and replacement with the new to stimulate growth; in order to create, capital must destroy what it has already built (Schumpeter, 1942). Here, this is to be taken in the literal sense of creation and destruction: a mall is built, serving its purpose of generating capital until the investment no longer offers returns that are sufficiently profitable (pursuant to the law of diminishing returns as commonly discussed in economics). Following its decline in profitability, the mall is destroyed,

and atop its ashes arises a mixed land use development. Assuredly, following its slide into eventual unprofitability, the mixed land use space too will be demolished and morphologically rejuvenated into a form that is better conducive to capital accumulation. This cycle goes on in perpetuity. Relatedly, Henri Lefebvre (1974/1991) provides a Marxist perspective that emphasizes the *production* of space. He argues that space is socially produced, and that this is necessary for social reproduction—i.e., the reproduction/maintenance of the ruling class’ hegemonic dominance. Thus, Lefebvre explains, social spatial production (creation) is necessary to the very survival of the capitalism. Yet this creation/production and destruction are embedded within the context of neoliberal urban entrepreneurialism; why did developers locate the mall in a particular space to begin with? Likely they were lured into the city by seductive entrepreneurial bait: a slew of tax incentives, assurances of an unresisting local populous ready to accept low wages, promises that roadways will be specially tailored to facilitate ease of entrance into the mall, etc. The same is surely true of mixed-use developments. Once profitability sufficiently declines, the mall—or even subsequent luxury mixed-use space—is destroyed and a new “spectacle” is erected, some new grandiose megaproject that will fuel capital accumulation, likely beckoned into the city by tactics of entrepreneurial seduction. While fueling capital accumulation, spectacular landscapes also serve another important purpose: they gloss over the exploitative footprints of creative destruction like gentrification, the displacement of poorer communities, and the overhaul of local businesses. These are the relationships that I want to emphasize.

Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore (2002) make these linkages clear. In tabular format, they associate “transformations of the built environment and urban form” with “neoliberal mechanisms of localization”—listing moments of destruction associated with these

transformations as well as moments of creation (Brenner & Theodore, 2002, Table 2, p. 371). Brenner and Theodore cite (2002) examples of destructive moments as being the “elimination and/or intensified surveillance of urban public spaces,” “destruction of traditional working-class neighborhoods in order to make way for speculative redevelopment, and a “retreat from community-oriented planning initiatives”—the latter example mirroring Harvey’s (1989) earlier point that public-private partnerships result in developmental investments that are in political economic interests, not community interests. Moments of creation, Brenner and Theodore (2002) note, include the “creation of new privatized spaces of elite/corporate consumption,” “construction of large-scale megaprojects intended to attract corporate investment and reconfigure local land-use patterns, “creation of gated communities, urban enclaves, and other ‘purified’ spaces of social reproduction, a “‘rolling forward’ of the gentrification frontier and the intensification of socio-spatial polarization” (see also Smith, 1996), and finally, an “adoption of the principle of ‘highest and best use’ as the basis for major land-use planning decisions” (Brenner & Theodore, 2002, Table 2, p. 371).

Gentrification is a significant product of creative destruction that must be underscored. Often as spaces of “elite consumption” are constructed (see Jayne, 2006), existing structures that serve lower income community members must be demolished or renovated. Neil Smith’s (1996) *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* serves as a compendium on the subject, connecting urban policy, entrepreneurial investment patterns, the eviction of lower- and working-class residents and urban homelessness to the phenomenon of gentrification. A crucial component in Smith’s theory of gentrification is the rent gap hypothesis. He locates a distinction between “capitalized” ground rent and “potential” ground rent, explaining that capitalized ground rent refers to the monetary value actually extracted from a property under present use,

whereas potential ground rent is the amount that could possibly be extracted if the property were altered in some fashion to accommodate those of higher socioeconomic status. Thus, he says, gentrification occurs when this rent gap is sufficiently large—and not merely when ground rents in an area are “low.” Gentrification is therefore dependent upon a difference between capitalized ground rent and potential ground rent. The erection of shopping malls and mixed land use developments is predicated on the closing of this gap between capitalized and potential rent; the previously existing structures must be demolished in order to make way for the mall or luxury mixed-use place specifically because they could not in their immobile forms realize potential ground rent. Further, the emergence of malls and luxury mixed-use places certainly has rippling gentrifying effects on nearby community neighborhoods.

Zukin, Trujillo, et al. (2009) conducted a case study concerning the development of “boutique” shopping outlets and their impact on the ethnic and class character of surrounding neighborhoods in New York City. Boutique shopping is an indispensable element of shopping malls and many mixed-use developments, where boutiques are understood to be stores that contrast with older outlets by catering to a more affluent clientele rather than one that is “traditional”—i.e., poorer and less mobile. They write that boutiquing is “part of a broad dynamic of postindustrial change and urban revitalization that may benefit certain residents while deepening economic and social polarization and place low- and middle-income neighborhoods at risk” (Zukin, Trujillo, et al. 2009, para. 5). Further, “boutiques ‘mark’ an area as safe for commercial investment that will upgrade services and raise rents. Moreover, by institutionalizing the consumption practices of more affluent and highly educated men and women *in place of* stores that serve the poor, it challenges the ‘right to the city’ of low-income residents” (Zukin, Trujillo, et al. 2009, para. 5). Close proximity to elite spaces of consumption

that contain luxury services like boutique shopping, fine dining, opulent theaters, and 5-star hotels means the skyrocketing of potential ground rent in nearby neighborhoods. Landlords in their pursuit to realize potential ground rent raise rental costs for tenants, driving out those who can no longer afford the rising fare. Therefore, evicted tenants must relocate and find affordable housing elsewhere, or become homeless—staying with relatives and friends on rotation, or worse, living on the streets. Housing structures are frequently extensively remodeled in order to cater to a new affluent demographic that can afford hiked ground rents, often the disproportionately white wealthier classes.

Informed by the above literature, I am interested to conduct fieldwork that helps to illustrate and make explicit this link between the process of creative destruction and broader strategies/policies of neoliberal entrepreneurial governance as they manifest in the urban built environment, and also that helps to better understand how these neoliberal creative and destructive moments intensify geographies of struggle for the local community as capital invades and leaves in “footloose” fashion. However, while urban entrepreneurialism and creative destruction are important aspects of late capitalist spatial production, I contend that of equal importance is what these processes materially produce. This leads me to a review of spatio-spectacular landscapes.

Spatio-Spectacular Landscapes

By spatio-spectacle, I mean to allude to both the Debordian concept of spectacle as well as to the term’s colloquial, descriptive sense. For Debord (1967/2014), a spectacle represents the total commodification of reality, including social relations, which functions to disguise societal ills beneath a veneer of awe-inspiring spectacularity. Within late capitalism, urban life has become permeated by the “immense accumulation of spectacles” (Debord, 1967/2014, p. 1).

Although the Debordian “spectacle” has routinely been conceptually applied to media studies, I use this concept to describe certain kinds of built environments, namely, such things as grandiose shopping malls, luxury mixed-use developments, theme parks, sports stadia, casinos, etc.—structures which are also colloquially “spectacular” in terms of their scale and dazzling character. These are places which systematically gloss over afflictions of the neoliberal urban condition like gentrification. The spectacular character of a structure diverts the attention of the public away from the conflict engendered by its construction: the erection of the mall or mixed-use development might displace locals, but how distant this displacement seems as our gaze becomes fixated on the fantastic structure born out of entrepreneurial creative destruction. (And have we not been distracted by assurances that a consequent influx of capital will be a boon to local economy, and that this wealth will trickle down throughout the community?) Jon Goss (1993) makes an important contribution to spectacular landscape literature, wherein he explores the way in which shopping malls are spectacularly designed to generate consumption. Although Goss speaks of malls in particular, the strategies of spectacularization that he outlines are also evinced elsewhere, such as luxury mixed-use developments.

One key way spaces become spectacular is through the intricate design of “retail as entertainment” (Goss, 1993, p. 22). Spaces become arenas for “theme shopping,” where consumption is enmeshed with spectacle. Galleria-type malls, for example, are characterized by “huge vaulted spaces suggesting a sacred-liturgical or secular-civic function . . . [where] natural daylight has enabled support of softscapes—internalized palms, trees, and shrubs—reminiscent of . . . the tropical vacation setting” (Goss, 1993, p. 24). A perfunctory look onto the urban landscape reveals that this spectacularization is present, too, in the mixed-use spaces that often replace malls the U.S. These are often characterized by such things as towering postmodern

architecture, artificial and contrived “green spaces,” and imposing sculptural installations. Importantly, with regard to malls, Goss notes that leasing agents carefully plan the tenant mixture of mall spaces. Places like laundromats, repair shops, and thrift stores are typically excluded from plans, as these remind the consumer of the materiality inherent to the commodity that they are encouraged to purchase. When malls do contain such places, Goss (1993) explains that it is often accompanied by a hope to attract more “desirable” tenants (p. 22). It is no secret that spectacular mixed-use developments mirror this planning strategy; the types of businesses allowed to operate within the development must be scrutinized, and the kinds of housing that the development will facilitate must also be critically evaluated in order to maintain a utopic, non-conflictual guise. It is unlikely that the planners of an “upscale” development would want laundromats and thrift stores interspersed among 5-star hotels, office towers, and boutiques—and it does not seem likely that affordable housing would be prioritized in such developments, either.

Study Area

Dallas Midtown is a luxury mixed-use development that is planned to replace the now-demolished Valley View Center Mall in Dallas, Texas. It is a \$4 billion project, a “centralized urban village,” to quote one of its developers, Scott Beck of Beck Ventures (qtd. in Plans to Turn Valley View Mall into an “Urban Village,” 2012). As one local news outlet described computer-generated images of the planned development, “the renderings of the future Dallas Midtown show a sparkling city-within-a-city, complete with restaurants, shopping, entertainment venues, hotels, parks, condos, and more” (Rogers, 2021). According to Dallas Midtown’s informational web page created by Beck Ventures, *dallasmidtown.com*, the plan for the spectacular development will include “luxury hotels,” “luxury condo units for sale,” “iconic office towers,” “up-scale multi-family rental units,” as well as “boutique shopping” and “restaurants and

entertainment venues” to quote the site (*About Us*, 2021). Notably, however, the plan to build Dallas Midtown is not merely confined to the old mall’s perimeter, but rather, it has been enlarged to encompass what are, at present, numerous nearby small businesses. Furthermore, an existing community of Latino and Black residents—many of whom are low-income—populates the surrounding area, which is at risk of gentrification-driven displacement.

Though planning for the Dallas Midtown development has been underway since 2011, in 2014 the City of Dallas reached an agreement with development company Beck Ventures to grant \$36 million in tax incentives to the Midtown developers through the creation of a “pay as you go” Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district (Carlisle, 2016). More recently in January 2022, the city—in coordination with private developers—made public a new and improved vision of the planned district, encompassing the Dallas Midtown luxury mixed-use development. Now, it will be a mixed-use oriented “international district” that serves as a “global showplace” (Seeley, 2022, January 4).

While I am concerned with the general problem of overmallings in this thesis and with the subsequent trend of luxury mixed-use developments, I focus primarily on the Valley View Mall and its relation to other nearby malls, namely, the Galleria Dallas and the now-closed Prestonwood Town Center. Thus, I have confined my primary study location to an approximately two-mile area within Far North Dallas that contains each of these three malls and immediately surrounding neighborhoods.

Guiding Questions and Methodology

In Chapter 2, I ask the following research questions: 1) Why has late capitalism encouraged the overproduction of spectacles like shopping malls and luxury mixed-use developments? And 2) How are capital, neoliberal governance, and policy imbricated in the

subsequent destruction of mall geography and the creation of “new” spectacles like luxury mixed-use developments? I primarily rely upon a critical discourse analysis of interview transcripts with Dallas civic administrators, development company employees, and community members. I have interviewed three civic administrators, two development firm employees, and ten community members. Further, where possible, photography is utilized to document aspects of this entrepreneurialism, creative destruction, and spectacularization as evinced in the built environment.

In Chapter 3, I ask, how does the production of spatio-spectacles like luxury mixed-use developments, mediated by neoliberal governance, gentrify communities in aspiring global cities of the Global North? In particular, how do neoliberal-entrepreneurial discourses function to (de)value existing community members to pave the way for spectacular landscapes and gentrification? In order to answer these questions, I rely on the same set of interviews as mentioned above for Chapter 2. When possible, I have made maps which illustrate demographic and poverty changes over time in my area of investigation in order to infer gentrification trends. The data for these maps was retrieved from the Social Explorer program, an online mapping and visualization tool drawing data from U.S. census records. In keeping with the recommendation of other scholars (Pull, 2021; Easton et al., 2020), I rely upon longitudinal census data. However, I am unable to adequately identify land or home value trends using available census data, as this data was not collected for key decades under investigation. Therefore, I have used racial demographic data in combination with family poverty data to discern changes associated with gentrification.

Significance

A case study that sets out to explicitly elucidate the relationship between shopping

malls/luxury mixed-use developments and neoliberal late capitalist governance, creative destruction, and spectacular landscapes has yet to be undertaken despite the clear prevalence of these conjoined processes in the Global North today. Here, I set out to conceptually reveal the relationship between neoliberalism, creative destruction, and spectacularization and the impacts of these entangled processes on urban community members with reference to shopping malls and luxury mixed-use developments, and to provide an illustrative case study concerning this relationship. However, I argue that this work goes beyond such a narrow purpose. I attempt to theorize key characteristics of the urban condition in order to make conceptually visible inner workings of the late capitalist city—how it imagines and creates “the urban,” and in turn, how it reimagines and (de)values people as resources in its project of capital accumulation. A detailed understanding of capitalism and its interaction with/production of the urban is requisite, I argue, to any operative resistance.

CHAPTER 2

(UN)SPECTACULAR CREATIVE DESTRUCTION IN THE LATE CAPITALIST AMERICAN CITY: THE DECLINE OF GREAT AMERICAN MALLS AND RISE OF LUXURY MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENTS

*What has been will be again,
what has been done will be done again;
there is nothing new under the sun.*

—Ecclesiastes 1:9

Introduction

Between 1956 and today, we have witnessed the rise and fall of the “great American shopping mall.” 1956 marked the completion of the first enclosed shopping mall—Southdale Center—developed by architect Victor Gruen in Edina, Minnesota. In the subsequent time, some 1,100 shopping malls have been erected across the American landscape (Credit Suisse, 2019). In order to meaningfully discuss shopping mall redevelopment, we must first define what is meant by the term “shopping mall.” I use the definition provided by the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC), which states that a shopping mall is a space with planned parking, at least 1 anchor store, and at least 50 other store units (2004). Mall-making was indeed a major preoccupation of developers and city planners, as evinced by their rapid proliferation. However, in 2007, for the first time since before 1956, no new malls were erected anywhere in the U.S. Dead and dying malls litter the landscape: a dead mall meaning one that has no operational stores within it, and a dying mall one that is very much on the verge of death, experiencing a loss of anchor stores and high tenant turnover rates. It has been estimated that a quarter of all U.S. malls will be dead by 2022—an estimate issued prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had significant negative effects on physical retail establishments (Hwang, Nageswaran, & Cho, 2020) that may well exacerbate shopping mall decline. Following the decline of malls, we have seen a

similarly rapid trend toward the construction of luxury mixed-use developments (Hirt, 2007; Rabianski, Gibler, Tidwell, & Clements III, 2009; Herndon, 2011). A mixed-use development refers to “a project or geographical area with two or more primary revenue-generating land uses” (Shen & Sun, 2020). These are typically open-air arrangements, as opposed to the enclosed structure of the shopping mall. Additionally, and unlike the shopping mall, mixed land use areas usually contain a mix of retail, residential, commercial, and entertainment functions—stores, condominiums, hotels, apartments, office buildings, eateries, theaters, and so forth. Here, we are concerned with mixed-use developments that take on a luxury character—i.e., that target an affluent demographic by emphasizing high-end retail, residential, and other amenities.

In this chapter, I argue that hitherto explanations of shopping mall death have been dramatically oversimplified. The rise and fall of the malling phenomenon and the subsequent trend toward luxury mixed-use developments must be analyzed within a framework that extends beyond pithy causal statements like “overmallng” or “online shopping” brought about the demise of the American mall. I explore the decline of the American shopping mall and subsequent proliferation of luxury mixed-use developments utilizing a Marxian understanding of spectacular landscape production, capital flows, and neoliberal urban governance strategies. Mall after mall was built in American cities, exhaustively replicated/emulated by developers, often working in concert with civic governments. Shopping malls are late capitalist spectacles materialized in the built environment—“spectacle” understood in the Debordian sense: a total commodification of reality, including social relations, which functions to disguise societal ills beneath a veneer of awe-inspiring spectacularity (Debord, 1967/2014; Goss, 1993). Built spectacles (spatio-spectacles) like shopping malls are products of late capitalism, which is mediated by neoliberal governance. In service of capital, neoliberal urban governance engages in

the speculative subsidization of spectacle production (like shopping malls), working together with private business entities to bolster tax revenue and aid in private capital accumulation.

This cultural logic of late capitalism (Jameson, 1984) to fetishize and uncreatively produce spectacular shopping malls has resulted in their overaccumulation as idle capital: the extensive replication of malls in close geographic proximity to one another across the American landscape, erected through the neoliberal partnerships of civic governments and private business interests, has greatly contributed to mall decline and mall death. There is now, however, a new spectacle that has arisen to take the place of the great American shopping mall—the luxury mixed-use development. These luxury mixed-use projects have been adopted as a new trend within urban development following the reality of sweeping mall decline and are proliferating across the (sub)urban landscape. Luxury mixed-use developments, I argue, are merely a continuation of late capitalism’s problematic spectacle fetish. Promoted by late capitalist neoliberal governance, the rampant, shortsighted construction of spatio-spectacles results in their consequent overaccumulation, destruction, and eventual replacement with yet another form of spatio-spectacle, e.g., shopping malls replaced with luxury mixed-use developments.

While the decline of shopping malls has been researched from a rather narrow, causal perspective that primarily implicates the rise of online shopping (e.g., Eastman, Iyer, & Randall, 2009; Rigby, 2011; Yan, 2018) and/or increases in physical retail competition (e.g., Resnick, 2015; Moore, 2013; Smith, 2016), little work has been done to apprehend the logic of capital accumulation and conciliating governance that underlies shopping mall production and demolition. Still less work has been undertaken regarding that which underlies the related construction of mixed-use developments. Therefore, my research attempts to target these existing gaps in urban research through the following questions: 1) Why has late capitalism encouraged

the overproduction of spectacles like shopping malls and luxury mixed-use developments? And 2) How are capital, neoliberal governance, and policy imbricated in the subsequent destruction of mall geography and the creation of “new” spectacles like luxury mixed-use developments? These questions are investigated through a case study of Dallas-Fort Worth and their surrounding suburbs, with particular emphasis on the Valley View Center Mall and its impending replacement with the Dallas Midtown luxury mixed-use development in Dallas, Texas.

Background

Existing literature investigating shopping mall decline has tended to focus on rising e-commerce and over-retailing as primary culprits, with scholars typically discussing one or both of these “causes.” There appears to be near-universal agreement that the rise of virtual space as an alternative to conventionally understood public space is a key component of mall decline, as online shopping may now be conducted from home as opposed to in physical retail establishments such as malls and big-box stores. Certainly, the impact of online shopping has dealt considerable damage to shopping malls across the country. Yan (2018) finds that the rising popularity of online shopping is inversely related to the popularity of shopping malls—meaning, the rise of e-commerce drives shopping mall death. Supporting this view, Moore (2013) writes in his article “The Death of the American Mall and the Rebirth of Public Space” that “[e]vidence suggests that the decline of the American mall, a classic late-twentieth century space, has something to do with the rise of twenty-first century virtual space” (p. 2), citing a number of statistics relating to exponential gains in e-commerce and comparatively meager gains in physical retail transactions.

Likewise, Rigby (2011) is concerned with the establishment of e-commerce as a major competitor of traditional retail outlets like shopping malls, and explores the way in which future

shopping must attempt to integrate both virtual and physical space to innovate the next wave of shopping experience. Resnick (2015) also looks toward mall innovation, and pays particular attention to customer experience in shopping centers. He argues that malls should combat online shopping by attempting to emphasize non-retail entertainment like live concerts; in addition, Resnick (2015) suggests rethinking the way in which physical retail is performed, advocating “newer innovations [that] combine co-working spaces for startup companies with new ideas and complementary pop-up store space for them to try out their new products and services in an ecologically valid environment with real customers.” (p.1). Notably, it is explicitly acknowledged in this literature (Rigby, 2011; Resnick, 2015) that shopping malls cannot continue to exist as before. Shopping malls as they were designed and reproduced do not possess sufficient unique value propositions to sustain them amid a backdrop of online shopping and—as I discuss shortly—extensive over-retailing. Indeed, prior to widespread access to virtual space, some scholars pointed to the phenomenon of overmallings, or over-retailing in general, as contributing to already-evident mall decline. In particular, I wish to highlight several authors who approach overmallings from a critical geographical and sociological perspective.

Goss (1993) presciently spoke about overmallings in the context of Dallas, Texas, writing in his article entitled “The ‘Magic of the Mall’: An Analysis of Form, Function, and Meaning in the Contemporary Retail Built Environment” that “many regions are effectively saturated and intercenter competition is intense. An extreme example is Dallas, where three megacenters (Galleria, Prestonwood and Valley View) are within two miles of each other” (p. 21). Goss’ (1993) article is critical in its approach, analyzing the shopping mall in a Marxian vein as a “spectacle”—as representing the total commodification of reality, including social relations, which disguises societal ills beneath a veneer of awe-inspiring spectacularity. Goss (1993),

however, is largely unconcerned with providing a deep analysis of overmallings and the logic of capital accumulation that motivates it—instead, he seeks to explicate the mall as spectacle and as simulacra, transforming reality into commodity through a series of intricate strategies. This project is informed by Debord (1967/2014), Jameson (1984), and Baudrillard (1994), who elaborate theories about the “spectacularization” of everyday life within late capitalism (i.e., the proliferation of magnificent malls, theme parks, stadia, casinos, etc.) and the replacement of authentic places and authentic social interaction with contrived pseudo-places and pseudo-communities re-casted around the act of commodity consumption. This perspective is discussed at more length in the conceptual framework.

In a similar vein, Sklair (2010) explores the iconicity of architecture and its role in the “culture-ideology of consumerism,” particularly how iconic architecture across the world reinforces a hegemonic capitalist ideology of commodity consumption. Significantly, Sklair (2010) identifies shopping malls as iconic structures on account of their representation in popular culture, their reputational eminence in the communities within which they exist, and their possession of symbolic/aesthetic attributes. Iconic architecture, he argues, is often influenced by capitalist globalization as such spaces (like shopping malls) frequently take on a transnational aesthetic—a tactic that attempts to elevate shopping above “the very real differences that exist between geographical, ethnic and cultural communities, at ‘home’ and ‘abroad’” (Sklair, 2010, pp. 139–140).

Harvey is more concerned with the logic of mall overproduction, briefly discussing overmallings in his much-cited 1989 article “From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism.” He explains:

Speculative projects of this sort are part and parcel of a more general macroeconomic problem. Put simply, credit-financed shopping malls, sports stadia, and other facets of

conspicuous high consumption are high-risk projects that can easily fall on bad times and thus exacerbate, as the ‘overmall of America’ only too dramatically illustrates (Green 1988), the problems of overaccumulation and overinvestment to which capitalism as a whole is so easily prone. (Harvey, 1989, p. 13)

Here, Harvey (1989) characterizes overmall as being illustrative of capitalism’s inherent tendency toward “overaccumulation and overinvestment.” Unlike previously discussed literature regarding e-commerce and its relationship to shopping mall decline, Harvey (1989)—and to a lesser extent Goss (1993)—cuts through cortical explanations to implicate macroeconomic, structural motivations. This is the kind of analysis that I want to extend as I explore shopping mall decline and the rise of mixed-use developments. While the confluence of e-commerce and overmall are indeed critical elements in any competent explanation of mall death and mixed-use emergence, I contend that it is equally vital to explicate why the capitalist mode of production engages in the creation and destruction of shopping malls, and how this relates to the subsequent trend toward mixed-use developments. There exists a substantial gap in previous mixed-use project literature vis-à-vis specific investigations of luxury mixed-use developments. Furthermore, within this already scant pool of literature, I have not been able to locate almost any academic work on the topic that is critical in its orientation.

Cartier (2016) perhaps comes the closest to such a critical analysis in her investigation of “mixed-use malls” in Hong Kong, China. Shopping mall development has been advanced across the globe, and while the death knell for new mall-making may have sounded in the United States, this is not so in many other countries. In China, new mixed-use arrangements are being constructed which have within them entire shopping malls—thus combining mixed-use and mall. Though this not unheard of in the United States, it is not our common mall morphology. Cartier (2016) argues that the redevelopment of Hong Kong’s industrial spaces into mixed-use malls destroys historic neighborhoods and (re)asserts the ideology of consumerism, echoing both Goss

(1993) and Sklair (2010). Enticingly, Cartier (2016) explains that such Hong Kong mixed-use malls often utilize spectacular designs to represent the “modern city.”

In this chapter, I want to continue along the critical trajectory of these authors as I explore the American shopping mall and luxury mixed-use development as Debordian spectacles erected and destroyed according to the needs of capital accumulation.

Conceptual Framework

Because I have set out to explicate shopping mall decline and subsequent luxury mixed-use development by situating it within a broader framework of capital accumulation, in this section, I discuss literature surrounding key concepts like: a) the circuits of capital, b) spatially fixed capital, c) creative destruction, d) neoliberal urban governance, and e) spectacular landscape production.

In “The Urban Process Under Capitalism,” Harvey (1978) describes the “circuits of capital”—delineating the way in which capital moves throughout the landscape, fleeing from place to place in response to crises of overaccumulation that punctuate capital’s predatory occupation of space. Crisis of overaccumulation, he explains, occurs when capital is left lying idle for an extended period of time resulting in its devaluation. Following devaluation, capital must abandon its host environment and relocate, seeking out a new “fix” in which to invest and extract additional surplus value. Harvey posits that capital begins by overinvesting in the primary circuit, that is, the realm of manufacturing and industry. Then upon crisis, or more rarely upon a smooth transition assuming that existing fixed capital was not dramatically devalued, capital moves into the secondary circuit, the realm of (sub)urban housing and (sub)urban development. Here, capital transforms landscapes into predacious environments contrived to aid in its gain, thereby seizing control of city life. Shopping malls and mixed-use developments we may situate

within the secondary circuit, according to Harvey's designations. Finally, after yet another crisis of overaccumulation, capital moves into the tertiary circuit. This circuit namely concerns research and development, software, e-commerce, and technologies (Harvey, 1978).

Shopping malls and mixed-use developments as urban landforms are examples of "spatially fixed" capital. This refers to capital that is held in the form of fixed assets within the landscape, like buildings and land, that is intended for long-term use and that is unlikely to be turned over into cash; "fixed capital is not a thing but a process of circulation of capital through the use of material objects" (Harvey, 2006, p. 205). Capital's need to produce spatial fixes, its necessary tethering to space, is integral to understanding the process of city production. Because capital is value in motion, some achieved increases in value (profit, in this case) must be plowed back into the production process in order to realize the increase of even greater value, pursuant to the capitalist mantra "accumulation for accumulation's sake." It is critical, as explained above, that capital does not lay idle else it becomes devalued. Capital must therefore be reinvested in order to stay in motion. One way in which capital is reinvested is through the cyclical production and destruction of the built environment.

This need of capitalism to create and destroy landscapes in perpetuity is known as "creative destruction." Old infrastructure must be destroyed and replaced with new infrastructure, reconfigured into higher and better uses to stimulate growth; in order to create, capitalism must destroy what it has already built (Schumpeter, 1942). Harvey (2001) elaborates about the function of creative destruction in capitalist spatial production, writing, "capitalism perpetually strives to create a social and physical landscape in its own image and requisite to its own needs at a particular point in time, only just as certainly to undermine, disrupt and even

destroy that landscape at a later point in time” (p. 333). Creative destruction is the spatial process through which neoliberalism—capitalism’s recent avatar—transforms the urban condition. Neoliberalism is a global policy regime that seeks to deregulate, lower trade barriers in favor of free market exchange, and privatize previously state-run functions (Peet, 2005). In cities, the ushering in of neoliberal forms of governance since the 1980s has meant the maximization of “free market” practices—an increase in the privatization of public sector services and a renewed emphasis on interurban competition to attract outside capital investments (Harvey, 2005). Such governance “seeks to ‘re-entrepreneurialize’ cities physically and socially” by weakening redistributive policies and handing governmental functions over to non-state and quasi-state entities (Wilson, 2004, pp. 771–772.).

Relatedly, as part of this broader regime of neoliberalization, a recent scholarship has emerged to discuss “decline machines” (Wilson & Heil, 2020; Vitale, 2015; Akers, 2015; Kozzielniak, 2018). This is a new conceptualization of capital accumulation and urban development which suggests that previous emphasis on growth underappreciated the significance of economic and physical built environment decline in the reinvigoration of development (i.e., growth). Decline machines rhetorically mobilize the decline of city space to encourage yet another round of (re)development—the spatial fixing of capital—and consequent capital accumulation.

However, neoliberalism must not be understood as a top-down, one-size-fits-all imposition on cities; rather, “actually existing neoliberalism” is a complex assemblage produced by locally embedding the general aspects of neoliberal governance into variegated socio-spatial manifestations based on preexisting, city-based policy particularities (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). Thus, the global policy regime of neoliberalism inflects with actually existing places to

form curious, contingent socio-spatial assemblages. Actually existing neoliberalism is therefore contingent upon already emplaced social institutions, sensibilities, and landscapes at local levels, arising in place-particular ways (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Wilson, 2004). This, for example, includes interaction with local political and religious sensibilities.

In the context of growing neoliberal entrepreneurialism, city governments are under immense pressure to attract private investments and hence outcompete other cities in fixing capital investments (Harvey, 1982, 1989; Leitner & Sheppard, 2002; Peck, Theodore, & Brenner, 2009). This urban entrepreneurialism is characterized by a stripping of public sector services, replacing publicly funded functions and programs with an “entrepreneurial” recommendation: cities should act like entrepreneurs in order to seduce investors into fixing capital within their municipalities—such as the enticement of big corporate headquarters, manufacturing plants, spectacular shopping malls, and large mixed-use developments. This constitutes what has been called a *public-private partnership*, where cities and private entities engage in a lopsided, quid pro quo arrangement. Tax incentives are commonly given to private business entities in the hopes that these investments will be a boon to local employment and economic prosperity. Yet despite the grand promises of public-private partnerships, Harvey (1989) writes at length about the ways in which strategies of neoliberal urban governance fail to benefit the local poor and working class once implemented.

Regarding these failures, Harvey (1989) notes that the entrepreneurialism of these public-private partnerships is so named because of its speculative nature. It is not the affluent incoming private sector that assumes the risk of loss in the speculation; it is the public sector whose tax dollars are gambled away if the publicly funded investment goes belly up or does not generate the capital promised. Therefore, the city taxpayer bears the brunt of bad investments made in the

public-private partnership (Harvey, 1989, p. 7). Additionally, he points out that the types of investments made as the result of such partnerships are by vast majority political economic—investments whose principal expectation is the generation of further capital (profit)—rather than those whose focus is to increase general conditions of living (Harvey, 1989, pp. 7–8). Examples of the latter might include generating employment, investing in public education, and investments in low-income housing.

Finally, I employ spectacle theory to discuss spectacular landscape production (e.g., shopping malls, luxury mixed-use developments). In his book *Society of the Spectacle*, Debord (1967/2014) opens with a line that calls back to Marx’s introduction to *Capital*: “In societies where modern conditions of production prevail, life is presented as an immense accumulation of spectacles” (p. 1). To reiterate what is meant by “spectacle,” this broadly refers to the total commodification of reality, including social relations, which disguises societal ills beneath a veneer of awe-inspiring spectacularity. I am concerned in this essay with the physical, spatial manifestation of the spectacle in the built environment—what I call the “spatio-spectacle.” Spatio-spectacles are spectacular landscapes—large, imposing structures (or arrangements of structures)—grandiose megaprojects like luxurious malls, gigantic stadiums, fantastic theme parks, and bedazzling casinos. They pretend at being utopian, but are erected in service of capital accumulation, utilizing strategies that attempt to evoke senses of nostalgia, community, grandeur, and exoticism to beckon consumers inside. One key way spaces become spectacular is through the intricate design of “retail as entertainment” (Goss, 1993, p. 22).

Goss (1993) is informed by Debord (1967/2014), Jameson (1984), and Baudrillard (1994), arguing that consumption is enmeshed with spectacle as spaces get manufactured as arenas for “theme shopping.” Galleria-type malls, for example, are characterized by “huge

vaulted spaces suggesting a sacred-liturgical or secular-civic function . . . [where] natural daylight has enabled support of softscapes—internalized palms, trees, and shrubs—reminiscent of . . . the tropical vacation setting” (Goss, 1993, p. 24). But despite attempts to maintain the spectacle’s utopian guise, critical scholars of utopic spaces (Marin, 1984; Jameson, 1984; Harvey, 2000; Chatterjee, 2016) agree that there can be no such materialized place as a utopia. Marin (1984) argues that utopia destroys itself as it becomes established in material form—erected as a landscape and in governance. This is because once materialized, it does not critique the existing external order—the exploitative mode of capitalist production; rather, it only aids in the perpetuation of commodity consumption and accumulation for accumulation’s sake (Marin, 1984, p. 240). Hence, according to Marin, the only utopia that can really exist is one that is “degenerate.” The spatio-spectacle, therefore, is a bastardized spatialization of a utopian vision—erected in commodified capitalist form.

As we encounter the term “mixed-use development,” an immediate association might reasonably be made to urban scholar Jane Jacobs and her iconoclastic 1961 book “The Death and Life of Great American Cities.” Jacobs (1961/1993) champions mixed-use spaces as a key to revitalizing ailing American city centers. Jacobs’ (1961/1993) advocacy for mixed-use is born out of a desire to abolish oppressive zoning regulations in order that communities might come together and more organically forge mixed-use environments—spaces which possess an intermingling of locally-owned primary functions to the benefit of existing community members, and which may serve to entice further migration into the city center thereby increasing population density. This ideal of community-generated mixed-use arrangements stands in stark contrast to the emerging model of luxury mixed-use developments in the United States. The luxury mixed-use development, I contend, must be regarded to be as an attempt to construct

another manifestation of the Debordian spectacle.

Luxury mixed-use developments are large-scale (re)development projects which emerge not out of the communities themselves, but as an imposition by large development companies often in public-private partnership with city governments. Further, such inorganic mixed-use developments take on a “luxury” character. By this I mean that they explicitly tout luxury services and amenities: high-end retail, 5-star hotels, fine dining, luxury residential, and so on, to the exclusion of non- “luxury” functions. Thrift shops and laundromats, for example, will not be found in such luxury mixed-use developments despite the obvious utility of these services. Thus, the maintenance of a luxurious image is of critical importance to these (re)development projects as the nature of uses within them are subject to careful curation by developers, property owners, and investors. Just as shopping malls engage in the curation of their occupant spaces to produce mall spectacle (see Goss, 1993)—obscuring the underlying exploitative processes of commodification through a “culture-ideology of consumerism” (Sklair, 2010)—luxury mixed-use developments utilize similar strategies to transform (sub)urban space into exclusionary, spectacular arenas of “elite consumption” (Jayne, 2006) which celebrate capitalist accumulation through conspicuous commodity consumption (Veblen, 1899/1934).

Methodology

In order to answer my two research questions, I primarily rely upon a critical discourse analysis of interview transcripts with Dallas civic administrators, development company employees, and community members. I have interviewed three civic administrators, two development firm employees, and ten community members. Although ten community members were interviewed, I present only quotations that I deem representative of sentiments expressed by multiple interviewees. These interviews were semi-structured in nature, meaning that although I

used a prepared set of questions, the interviews were open-ended, allowing conversation to unfold naturally so that the information provided by the informant was not strictly limited within the confines of a rigid question-and-answer format, as recommended by Longhurst (2003). Civic administrators were asked about their thoughts vis-à-vis shopping mall decline, mall aesthetics, the need for luxury mixed-use developments, mixed-use aesthetics, and the city's role in mall construction and luxury mixed-use development. Development firm employees were asked the same questions. Community members were asked for their thoughts vis-à-vis mall decline, mall aesthetics, the need for luxury mixed-use developments, and how they perceive existing luxury mixed-use developments. All of these community members are residents of neighborhoods immediately surrounding the impending Dallas Midtown luxury mixed-use project.

Gathered data is subjected to critical discourse analysis, an analytical method concerning the way in which language both mediates and constructs reality. This form of analysis involves tracing changes in language practices over time and examining how “language both shapes and reflects dynamic cultural, social, and political practices” (Starks & Trinidad, 2007, p. 1374). In her article about discourse analysis and qualitative research, Julianne Cheek writes, “language cannot be considered to be transparent or value free. Even the language that we take to be the most ‘natural,’ that is, the spoken word or talk, does not ‘have’ universal meaning but is assigned particular meanings by both speakers and listeners according to the situation in which language is being used” (2004). Therefore, close attention is paid to the positionality of my data sources, in particular to the implicit or explicit ideological positions adopted by them. Some additional quotations are culled from newspapers and online news articles, which are also subjected to critical discourse analysis.

Further, where possible, photography is utilized to document aspects of this

entrepreneurialism, creative destruction, and spectacularization as evinced in the built environment. As Gillian Rose explains in her (2013) article entitled *On the Relation Between ‘Visual Research Methods’ and Contemporary Visual Culture* regarding the employment of photographs within essay formats, “images are . . . powerful conduits for the sensory experience and feel of urban environments,” and moreover, that “taking photographs can also allow the researcher to reflect on what they encounter in their fieldwork and on their own relation to the field” (p. 28). Photos are taken of structures under investigation, including of any specific elements of interest. Where historical photographs are needed for demonstrative purposes, they are sourced from online articles, web pages, or newspapers.

Spectacular Overmalling in Hindsight: Dallas–Fort Worth

A Dillard’s newspaper advertisement in the August 8, 1990, issue of *The Dallas Morning News* urges its readers to visit one of its many locations (Figure 2.1):

SHOP VALLEY VIEW MON SAT 10 AM TO 9:30 PM . . . Prestonwood, NorthPark, Red Bird, Town East, Collin Creek, Valley View, Irving Mall, Richardson Square, Vista Ridge, Forum 303, Parks at Arlington, Six Flags Mall, North East, Ridgmar, Fort Worth Town Center, Tandy Center Downtown Fort Worth, Golden Triangle Denton (Aug. 8, 1990, Dallas Morning News)

or take the lead yourself with leather.

A. Reebok's BB Race leather high-top keeps the feet safe on their feet with durable, made-to-order construction and wide ankle collar for added support. White and Black, sizes 8-12, or 12-14, \$34

B. For girls, Reebok's Bass casual oxford shoes offer the right pair with longer wear, garment leather and color-comfortable, very long. White-pink. Girls sizes 8-12, \$26. Sizes 12-14, \$28

C. For casual oxford appeal, Bass Ranger is at the head of its class. Lace 'em up, but never be showing off the special 'Rangely Knot'. Medium brown leather. Sizes 12-14, \$35. Sizes 14-6, \$38

D. Danexx 'Max Cover' falls into step as a traditional lace-up oxford in black or brown leather. Girls sizes 11-4, \$28

* Children's shoes

Dillard's

Dillard's welcomes your Dillard's charge. VISA, MasterCard, American Express, Discover and Diner's Club Card

1001 W. VALLEY VIEW MON-SAT 10 AM TO 9:30 PM. TOWN EAST, RICHARDSON SQUARE, COLLIN CREEK, VALLEY VIEW, IRVING MALL, PRESTONWOOD, NORTH PARK, VISTA RIDGE & RIDGEMAR 10 AM TO 6 PM. SUNDAY 12:00 PM TO 5 PM

* Austin-Cedar Hills • Fairview • New City • North East • Cedar Creek • Valley View • Irving Mall • Richardson Square • Vista Ridge • Forum 303 • Parks at Arlington • Six Flags Mall • North East • Ridgmar • Fort Worth Town Center • Tandy Center Downtown Fort Worth • Golden Triangle Denton

Figure 2.1: August 8, 1990, Dillard’s advertisement citing many mall locations. See text for caption excerpt. Source: *The Dallas Morning News*.

This is not to be confused with an exhaustive list of all shopping malls that dotted the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) landscape in 1990. The Galleria Dallas, Seminary South in Fort Worth, Hulen Mall in Fort Worth, Big Town Mall in Mesquite, North Hills Mall in North Richland Hills, and the Outlet Mall of America in Plano were also in operation during this time—all built in Dallas, Fort Worth, or their suburbs. In total, 25 enclosed malls were constructed within a 60-mile radius in the DFW area between the 1950s and today (Figure 2.2).

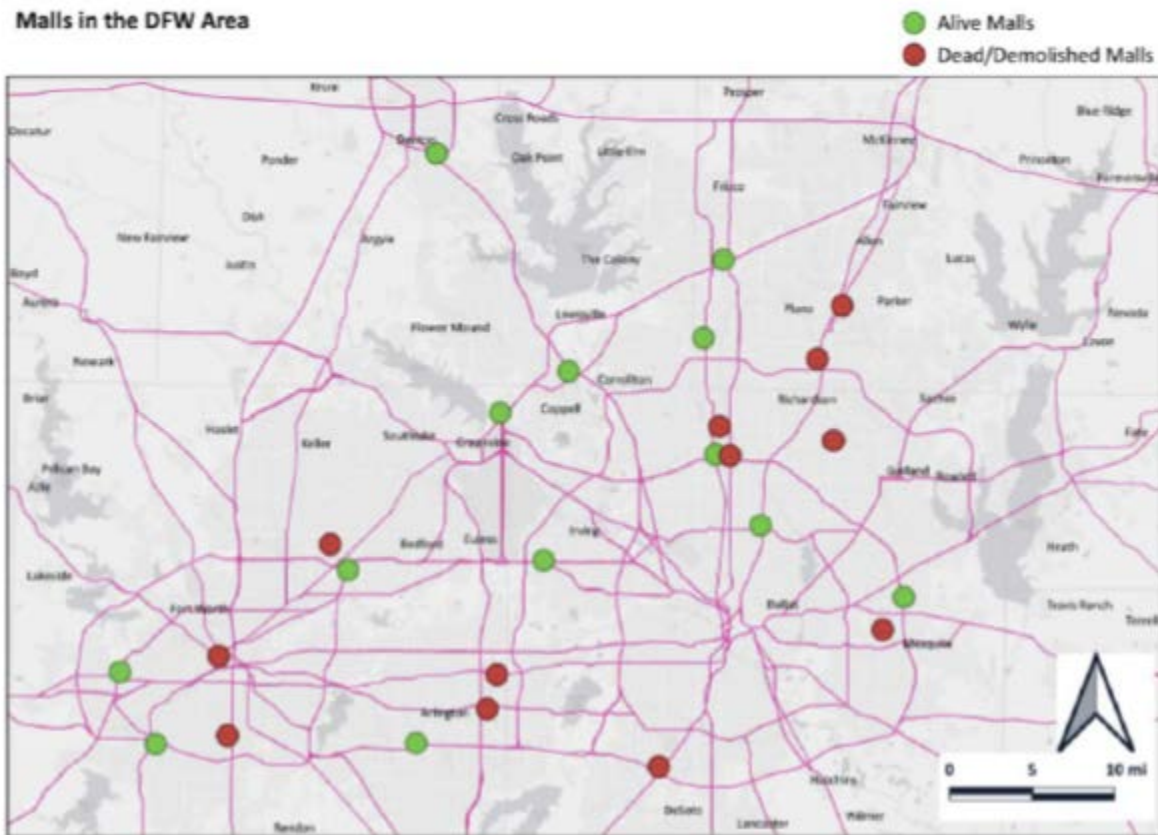


Figure 2.2: Map of enclosed shopping malls built in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

While Goss (1993) called attention to Prestonwood, Galleria, and Valley View in Dallas on account of their 2-mile proximity to one another, the abundance of malls in the surrounding area was left unmentioned. As I examined mall advertisements in *The Dallas Morning News*, I noticed an unsurprising trend: early mall advertisements circa 1950s–60s mention relatively few

malls, followed by an uptick in mall mentions during the 1970s–80s, and reaching its zenith with the most mentions of mall locations occurring in the late 1980s through the 1990s. After the 2000s, less and less malls are cited. This, of course, follows the trajectory of shopping mall development, which proliferated in the years proceeding the first American mall completed in 1956, but began to decline significantly in the early-to-mid 2000s (Figure 2.1, Figure 2.3, & Figure 2.4).

SPECIAL PURCHASE!
GINGHAM PLAIDS! NOVELTY COTTONS AND CHAMBRAYS!
SAVE! BETTER WOVEN COTTONS!

FIRST QUALITY! 37c

Soft pastels, vibrant stripes, glowing solids, rich plaids, deep traditional tones... a terrific assortment of quality woven cottons at pre-Easter savings! They're machine washable, 36 inches wide, in 2- to 10-yard lengths... come in colors and patterns galore. Hurry in for this Special Purchase tomorrow... 9:30 a.m.!

SEEN IN THE SMARTEST DALLAS SPOTS...

FAMOUS LOMA

FASHIONS FOR WHICH YOU SPEND A LITTLE... LOOK LIKE AN HEIRESS...

Exciting new Loma dress fashions for Easter and into summer! So many designs, we can't begin to show or describe them all... rich fabrics in solids and prints, smart two-piece styles, bewitching dresses... come see for yourself... you'll be amazed at the selection... the low Penney price of only \$12.95. Misses and junior sizes.

12.95

★ CASA VIEW Gas Thompson at Ferguson Road	★ OAK CLIFF 425 West Jefferson	★ EAST GRAND 5120 East Grand	★ INWOOD VILLAGE Inwood Road at Lovers Lane	★ BIG TOWN Loop 12 at Hay, 80 East	★ GRAND PRAIRIE 120 West Main Street	★ GARLAND Garland Shopping Center	★ IRVING Plymouth Park Shopping Center
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Figure 2.3: March 3, 1960, Penney's advertisement citing a few malls and some other shopping outlets. Source: *The Dallas Morning News*.

All events, 10:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m.

Thursday	March 15	NorthPark Center
Friday	March 16	NorthEast Mall
Saturday	March 17	Galleria Dallas
Saturday	March 17	Stonebriar Centre

Wacoal 'Romantic Inspiration' full-figure lace bra and high-cut panty in pink/ivory or nude/buff. Bra, 32–42dd, dds, q; 60.00. Panty, m–x; 26.00. Lingerie.

* No purchase necessary. Fit For the Cure® is a registered trademark of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. For 2007, Wacoal will make a minimum guaranteed donation of \$250,000 to the Susan G. Komen Foundation. Nordstrom will donate up to \$40,000. For breast health information, visit komen.org.

NORDSTROM

Galleria Dallas 972.702.0055. NorthPark Center 214.231.3900. NorthEast Mall 817.590.2599. Stonebriar Centre 972.712.3794

Figure 2.4: March 13, 2007, Nordstrom advertisement mentioning only four malls. Source: *The Dallas Morning News*.

Despite the expeditious development of these DFW malls by private developers and the financial subsidization of them by civic governments, many of these spectacular, enclosed shopping centers are no longer in existence. Twelve of the 25 aforementioned malls are either dead (with no remaining tenants inside) or have been demolished (see Figure 2.2). Many of the remaining malls are actively dying, such as the Ridgmar Mall in Fort Worth and the Golden Triangle Mall in Denton, which have experienced devastating anchor store losses in recent years (Pleven, 2016; Halkias, 2019). Some have rebranded, changed names, and changed owners, such as the Seminary South Mall in Fort Worth, which is now a Hispanic-oriented bazaar-style mall known as La Gran Plaza, or the Vista Ridge Mall in Lewisville, which is now called Music City Mall following a change in ownership. The track record for mall success in this region is plainly quite poor; nearly half of those built have already been permanently closed, and many of the remaining malls eek by in the face of imminent “death.” Several of those already demolished have been replaced with open-air retail strips, such as Prestonwood Mall in Dallas, which is now known as Prestonwood Town Center. A more recent trend, however, has been to tear down defunct mallscapes and transform them into expansive, luxury mixed-use developments (Little, 2005). This is not only the case in DFW, but nationwide.

In North Texas alone, the Valley View Center Mall in Dallas is planned to be replaced with a luxury mixed-use arrangement called Dallas Midtown (Figure 2.5); in South Dallas, a similar plan is to take effect vis-à-vis the Southwest Center Mall, formerly called Red Bird Mall; Collin Creek Mall in Plano is being redeveloped into a luxury mixed-use project. Elsewhere in the U.S., to cull but a few from many such examples, the Villa Italia Mall in Lakewood, Colorado, has been converted into a luxury mixed-use development called Belmar Shopping Center (Figure 2.6); in Raleigh, North Carolina, a high-end mixed-use development called North

Hills replaced the formerly enclosed North Hills Mall (Figure 2.7); Mizner Park Mall in Boca Raton, Florida, has been supplanted with a mixed-use “lifestyle center” that combines shopping with upscale leisure amenities now simply called Mizner Park (Figure 2.8). Where there once stood “great American malls,” within the secondary circuit (sub)urban landscapes are being reconfigured following the sweeping reality of mall death, pursuant to creative destruction: the need of capitalism to destroy what it has already built in search of further accumulation. Capitalism must reinvent and reinvigorate the now-devalued spectacular landscapes that litter American cities. Shopping malls were too hastily and numerous erected; following their decline, they occupy valuable real estate given the possibility of future redevelopment. This cyclical process of capitalist production and destruction of space, occurring within what Harvey (1978) describes as the secondary circuit of capital, undergirds late capitalist city construction.



Figure 2.5: Conceptual rendering of Dallas Midtown mixed-use development planned to replace Valley View Center Mall, Dallas, TX. Source: dallasmidtown.com.



Figure 2.6: Belmar mixed-use development that replaced Villa Italia Mall, Lakewood, CO. Source: *The News&Observer*.



Figure 2.7: North Hills mixed-use development replacing North Hills Mall, Raleigh, NC. Source: *continuumpartners.com*.



Figure 2.8: Mizner Park mixed-use development replacing Mizner Park Mall, Boca Raton, FL.
Source: *Boca Raton Magazine*.

Linda Koop, former urban planner and representative for District 11 in Dallas, alludes to the creative destruction associated with malling, saying in our interview, “No one wants to live next to a dying behemoth. It’s just blight on a massive scale, and to be frank, we’ve made a lot of them.” She is speaking about the old Valley View Center Mall, which, although once popular, was demolished in 2019 after standing mostly vacant for several years (Figure 2.9, Figure 2.10, Figure 2.11, Figure 2.12, & Figure 2.13). Valley View is in Far North Dallas and is one of the malls that Goss (1993) long ago identified as being in an overmalled locality. It operated within one mile of the Galleria Dallas Mall—just across the highway—and within two miles of the Prestonwood Mall. Today, only the Galleria remains, and internal sources with whom I have spoken say that even it is financially ailing (Figure 2.13). Koop elaborated about her perspective on mall decline:

So, I, being a former city planner, I know that everybody wanted to build malls back then, because everywhere else was getting [malls]. It was definitely keeping up with the Joneses, so to speak. 'How is a city supposed to compete with other cities, attracting investors and so forth, helping its tax base, if it doesn't have a mall like the suburb next-door, or the really urban areas?' That's what cities were thinking . . . And developers were making pretty quick money building these things with investment capital and some subsidies from local governments . . . But really, I don't know how they didn't see that it couldn't all work. It should've been plain as day.



Figure 2.9: Valley View Center Mall, circa 1982. Source: *The Dallas Morning News*.



Figure 2.10: Valley View Center Mall near death, 2019.



Figure 2.11: Rubble mound during Valley View Center Mall demolition, 2020.



Figure 2.12: Valley View Center Mall mid demolition and graffitied, 2020.



Figure 2.13: Galleria Dallas Mall. Source: NBC 5 DFW.

Mall-making was once a major preoccupation of city planners and private developers. Koop’s quotations speak to this reality, critiquing the shortsightedness of spectacular “behemoth”-building. Although it is left unnamed, the governance that she describes is quintessentially entrepreneurial, or as it is more commonly called following its concretization as a regime of governance strategies, neoliberal. From the 1970s until today, public-private partnerships forged between civic governments and private developers have motivated a great deal of city development (Harvey, 1989, 2005; Hodge & Greve, 2018). Looking to bolster their tax revenue, cities hoped to entice mall developers to build within their municipalities. In exchange, cities would subsidize development costs, usually by loaning taxpayer money to developers in the form of bonds. These entrepreneurial investments were speculative, however, in that return on investment was not guaranteed. Further, mall-making was predicated, as Koop explains, on “keeping up with the Joneses”—or, in academic speak, interurban competition characteristic of neoliberal urbanism (Leitner & Sheppard, 2002; Peck, Theodore, & Brenner, 2009).

When asked about what she thinks brought about the decline of Valley View Mall specifically, Koop said:

Shopping malls went out of vogue. It became apparent when I got on the city council in 2005 that Valley View was very much in decline. The Galleria and the other malls that were newer really took the luster off the Valley View Mall.

Although the grandiosity—the spectacularity—of the Valley View Center Mall was once present, the production of new shopping malls in the vicinity lessened the awe-inspiring effect of Valley View as spatio-spectacle in the secondary circuit. It quickly became dated as other, newer malls were erected nearby, not only in Far North Dallas, but also in surrounding suburbs. But regarding why this blatant overmallng was allowed to happen, Koop is not alone as a civic administrator in her retrospective befuddlement.

Jaynie Schultz is a representative for District 11 in Dallas and is a former member of the Dallas City Plan Commission and Urban Design Committee. “I think we over-retailed in cities. There’s just so much discretionary spending that families have to spend, and there are all these malls and stores, they’re just eating away at the market share,” she told me frustratedly. She implicates not only overmallng as contributing to shopping mall decline, but also a general problem of over-retailing and consequent over-competition facilitated by public-private speculative investments. Schultz went on, “Why we put up all these malls, I don’t know . . . and so many of them were just the same as everywhere else. The same stores, the same kinds of entertainment.” These are common threads throughout interviews that I have conducted with not only public officials, but also development firm employees and community stakeholders: it should have been obvious that mall over-competition and overaccumulation would emerge, that cities should have taken more caution vis-à-vis their speculative (entrepreneurial) ventures, and that despite the spectacular intention of mall design, shopping malls became banal via their

exhaustive replication between, and sometimes within, localities.

Suzanne Smith is the founder of Social Impact Architects, a “social change agency that provides consulting and learning experiences to changemakers working alongside them to create game-changing solutions to our most pressing social issues” (Social Impact Architects, 2019). Smith is also an adjunct professor in the College of Business at the University of Texas at Arlington. Following the 2019 demolition of the Valley View Center Mall in North Dallas, Smith and Social Impact Architects were hired by the city of Dallas and real estate development firm Beck Ventures in a consultation role to advise about the impending luxury mixed-use redevelopment project that is planned to replace the now-demolished Valley View mall. “Quite honestly, if I were you, I would look at why we let three malls co-locate next to each other, and NorthPark isn’t that far away, and neither is the one up in Plano,” Smith remarked about the Valley View-Galleria-Prestonwood triad of shopping malls in North Dallas, all within 2 miles of one another. She continued:

It didn’t make good business sense. That’s why I’m glad that I’m involved in this mixed-use project with the city and Beck [i.e., Beck Ventures, the development firm] . . . Mixed-use facilities like we’re trying to build here in Dallas are already being done in a lot of other places, and I hope we can give it some more pizzazz, for lack of a better word. I want it to be different.

In retrospect, some civic administrators and urban planners appear to see that this rampant spectacular production of shopping malls was an unsustainable model for generating capital in the neoliberal-entrepreneurial city. It was not, quoting Smith above, “good business sense.”

Rather than produce long-term prosperity, entrepreneurial spatio-spectacle-making resulted in the production of, to employ the language of former Dallas representative Linda Koop, “blight on a massive scale.” The lifecycle of the shopping mall spectacle begins as it is erected, materialized in the secondary circuit of capital, and ends as it is utterly degraded,

discarded by capital through disinvestment, and rendered into “blight.” Valley View represented such extreme urban blight following its decline that in 2018 the City of Dallas sued Valley View’s owner, Beck Ventures, to get on with its redevelopment into a luxury mixed-use development, with then-mayor Mike Rawlings calling Valley View Center “an embarrassment,” as reported by *The Dallas Morning News* (Wilonsky, 2018). As Smith previously remarked, “[m]ixed-use facilities like we’re trying to build here in Dallas are already being done in a lot of other places.” It is important at this juncture that I discuss the role of neoliberal governance vis-à-vis spectacular urban landscape production, given that I have already quoted Dallas public officials who engage in this kind of governance.

Replacing the Valley View Center Mall will be a luxury mixed-use development called Dallas Midtown (Figure 2.14). It is a \$4 billion project, a “centralized urban village,” to quote one of its developers, Scott Beck of Beck Ventures (qtd. in *Plans to Turn Valley View Mall into an “Urban Village,”* 2012). As one local news outlet described computer-generated images of the planned development, “the renderings of the future Dallas Midtown show a sparkling city-within-a-city, complete with restaurants, shopping, entertainment venues, hotels, parks, condos, and more” (Rogers, 2021). According to Dallas Midtown’s informational web page created by Beck Ventures, *dallasmidtown.com*, the plan for the spectacular development will include “luxury hotels,” “luxury condo units for sale,” “iconic office towers,” “up-scale multi-family rental units,” as well as “boutique shopping” and “restaurants and entertainment venues,” to quote the site (“About Us,” 2021). Much of this language indicates a substantially wealthy target demographic: “luxury,” “up-scale,” etc. Dallas Midtown, built on top of Valley View’s ashes, promises to beckon big corporate headquarters into the city to boost the city’s tax revenue through redevelopment and subsequent property value hikes (Retail/Leasing Plan, 2021). It is to

be built through a public-private partnership between the City of Dallas and development company Beck Ventures. \$36 million in tax incentives have been granted to the Midtown developers through the creation of a “pay as you go” Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district (Carlisle, 2016).



Figure 2.14: Conceptual rendering of Dallas Midtown mixed-use development. Source: dallasmidtown.com.

Luxury Mixed-Use Developments Already Not Spectacular Enough?

Put a big, I don't know, anything besides that same shit. If we've got to see that shit again; I'm like, dude, it's in Frisco, it's in Plano, it's in Fort Worth, it's everywhere. It's almost like it's the same builder making a damn circle. I wish they would put something else over there. Hell, throw a water park up in there. Anything, that's got to be more entertaining. I want to see some race cars driving around when I go through I-635. A roller coaster. Something entertaining except for the same F-ing retail with the same F-ing new restaurants that're coming in. It's just dull. Dallas is dull, man, in my opinion. Every day it's the same.

This is what Douglas told me as we looked out the window of his shop at the rubble of the razed Valley View Center Mall. He manages a small retail outlet facing the site of the old

mall, soon-to-be a sprawling mixed-use “city within a city.” In fact, his shop is situated within a small, dated-looking retail row that is within the perimeter of the planned Dallas Midtown luxury mixed-use development, and is likely to be bought up by the developer, Beck Ventures. His sentiment echoes what I have heard almost unanimously about shopping malls—but rather than refer to a problem of overproduction that belongs to the past, Douglas is expressing his frustrations in real time.

He is imaginative about what could replace the mall—perhaps because it appears like a canvas freshly wiped clean, waiting to be painted anew just outside his shop window. His machinations, though, are revealing: it is not enough that the luxury mixed-use project will have towering architecture, high-end hotels, entertainment venues, a massive park with an imposing water fountain. Reminiscent of great American malls, this type of mixed-use landscape can be found in any number of places, and very near each other. What the “sparkling” Dallas Midtown lacks, for Douglas, is any actual sparkle. The spectacularity of the development has already been rendered banal prior to its physical construction. It is not that Douglas dislikes spatio-spectacles; he seems quite fine to imbibe in the “society of the spectacle” (Debord, 1967/2014), but wants for something *really* spectacular, like a race car track, roller coaster, or water park. He is not alone in his perspective, but rather, is representative of most interviewees with whom I spoke. “I think it’s just too frou-frou, too much, like the Shops at Legacy [in Plano, a Dallas suburb]. At first, I was fascinated, but going out there now is boring,” said Brad, a resident in the Galleria neighborhood near the impending Midtown redevelopment. The similarity that Brad notes between the Shops at Legacy and the planned Midtown project is appropriate, given that developer Scott Beck has explicitly stated that Midtown draws inspiration from the Shops at Legacy in nearby Plano (Figure 2.15), another luxury mixed-use development touting many of

the same accolades as Beck’s own project (Fink, 2017).



Figure 2.15: Shops at Legacy mixed-use development. Source: shopsatlegacy.com.

Intrusive thoughts about the banality of the “spectacular” mixed-use redevelopment project confront not only private individuals, but also certain civic administrators. Dallas District 11 representative Jaynie Schultz remarked during our interview:

These mixed-use places are popping up everywhere. It’s a crisis. It all looks the same—boring. I call it post-Soviet boring. We’re going to have to do something about that. Honestly, I don’t know what we’re going to do. It’s a big problem. I don’t know.

Even as some power-wielding agents operating within urban governance privately acknowledge the futility of rapid spectacular mixed-use construction, it is as though it cannot be stopped. It is, to quote Schultz, already “a crisis”—which I would amend as being already a crisis of overaccumulation. Speaking under the condition of anonymity, a source employed by Midtown developer Beck Ventures conveyed their fear about the project:

If I say this, it could tank the entire project . . . So, not only is [Midtown] not competitive in Dallas, but I personally don’t think it’s competitive with all of these other developments that are happening. And I think that’s something no one wanted to talk about.

While some civic administrators and development company employees individually

harbor doubt and suspicion, enacted policies are caught up within the framework of neoliberal interurban competition. The overarching problem of banality was overlooked as Dallas civic administrators encouraged and mediated spectacular mall-building, and now, luxury mixed-use engineering. Therefore, urban geographies of late capitalism are defined by the overzealous, profit-seeking impetus of neoliberal capital—manifested through builder buyouts of city spaces and attempts by urban governance to seduce this capital. As the ebb and flow of capital-led governance and the topo-logic it traces is rendered banal time and again, the creative destruction of cities and geographies of capitalism remains the only constant.

(Un)Spectacular Banalities and Creative Destructions

Mall and luxury mixed-use development construction in Dallas-Fort Worth attests to the embedded logic of capital accumulation—”accumulation for accumulation’s sake”—showing the way in which spatial fixity occurs in the secondary circuit through the production of spatio-spectacles. The overaccumulation of shopping malls is evinced by their nationwide decline, and in DFW, by the stark fact that nearly half of those built have been demolished or sit as empty concrete shells. Still more are on the verge of death, plagued by anchor store closures and decreases in foot traffic. Following the decline of the great American mall, the rise of luxury mixed-use projects serves as a new form of spectacular spatial fix within the secondary circuit of capital accumulation. Pursuant to late capitalism’s compulsion to produce spectacles, as described by Debord (1967/2014), Jameson (1984), and Baudrillard (1994), spatio-spectacles like magnificent malls and luxury mixed-use developments are rapidly erected across the American (sub)urban landscape. Neoliberal urban governance facilitates this quick construction by encouraging private developers to make things like malls and luxury mixed-use facilities; public-private partnerships are forged between civic governments and private development firms

allegedly for the mutual benefit of the public and private business interests alike.

Indeed, the destruction of the Valley View Center Mall in Dallas and the city government's role in subsidizing the Dallas Midtown luxury mixed-use revitalization project speaks to the city's neoliberal character; urban governance aids the entrepreneurial, cyclical process of creative destruction in the secondary circuit by encouraging local, private megaprojects, which as we have seen, eventually fall into blight—thus paving the way for destruction and replacement with new spatial fixes, rejuvenated morphological forms, new spectacles, that are productive of capital accumulation.

However, this replication of “spectacularity” is only an illusion. Despite attempts to produce spectacular spaces, the tendency of capitalism to overaccumulate spatio-spectacles like shopping malls and luxury mixed-use developments inevitably renders them *unspectacular*. Interpreting the empirical/ethnographic data above, this is revealed to be the case in two senses: first, the overaccumulation of spectacles results in their eventual perception as being banal rather than awe-inspiring; and second, this rapid overaccumulation contributes to decline through overcompetition, such as shopping mall decline, which degrades spectacular spaces and turns them into unspectacular, degenerate utopias (à la Marin, 1984). Perhaps the first shopping mall in a general locale is “spectacular,” having the desired effect of transporting the shopper into a utopic wonderland of consumption (Goss, 1993), but the extensive replication/emulation of magnificent malls across (sub)urban geographies destroys any semblance of spectacularity. Spatio-spectacles become repetitive and hence, boring—but this overaccumulation via replication also breeds damaging overcompetition. Spatio-spectacles compete with one another; profit-hungry gladiatorial fights between and within municipalities contribute to “spatio-

spectacle” death, such as has occurred with many shopping malls. Failed spatio-spectacles, then, degenerate into disrepair and “blight.”

Crisis within late capitalism has been accompanied by the compression of time following the shift toward economic neoliberalization. While crises of overaccumulation once occurred on timescales of decades, we witness in recent times the acceleration of overaccumulation and consequent crisis arriving approximately every 7 to 10 years (Skoufoglou, 2019; Bresser-Pereira, 2010). At the same time as technology must be overhauled on shorter and shorter time horizons (Krugman, 1979), likewise urban landscapes must be overhauled via creative destructions within the secondary circuit. This fact is evidenced by the multiplication and decline of enclosed malls across American topography, followed by the proliferation of luxury mixed-use developments which already evince the signals of decline into degenerate utopias.

Luxury mixed-use construction has already begun to interact with the contradictions that will propel their eventual creative destruction; as we have gleaned from the ethnographic interviews of public officials, developers, and community members, banality and crisis of overaccumulation loom in the air. Capitalists—developers and investors—no longer produce spatial fixes with the intent to generate long-term profits. Rather, capitalists now engage with quick rounds of accumulation, producing built environments like spatio-spectacles (e.g., shopping malls, luxury mixed use developments, grand sports stadia, etc.) in rapid succession until their inevitable oversaturation and/or until a new form of immediately profitable spatial fix is imagined.

Further, I submit based on my interviews with public officials and developers that this compressed timescale of spatially fixed capital overaccumulation is facilitated by what some urban theorists have recently begun to conceptualize as “decline machines” (Wilson & Heil,

2020; Vitale, 2015; Akers, 2015; Kozcielniak, 2018). Decline, not simply growth, must now be paradoxically understood as a motivating factor of (sub)urban development. As the economic value and physical character of a city space declines, this decline is employed in rhetoric to lay the foundations that justify future redevelopment (Wilson & Heil, 2020). Shopping mall decline, as we have seen in interview quotations above, is associated with a rhetorical campaign that juxtaposes existing “blight” with the possibility of renewal and economic growth.

Critically, the imposition of spatio-spectacle production and creative destruction in the secondary circuit must interface with the prevailing regime of neoliberal governance. We understand, however, that neoliberalism manifests within space in local, place-particular ways (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Wilson, 2004). Agents who enact/perform neoliberal governance do so with local ambitions in mind: the neoliberal-entrepreneurial city wants to bolster its tax base by outcompeting other cities in the fixing of capital investments. The neoliberal municipal government subsidizes and encourages the production of malls and luxury mixed-use developments because this has been the entrepreneurial strategy of neighboring cities to generate tax revenue—yet because actually existing neoliberalism is inherently local, performed by civic administrators, no consideration is given to the bigger-picture precarity of capitalism as a machine of accumulation.

The neoliberal American city produces malls and luxury mixed-use developments because this has been the entrepreneurial strategy of neighboring cities to generate tax revenue—yet because actually existing neoliberalism is inherently local, performed by civic administrators, no consideration is given the bigger-picture precarity of capitalism as a machine of accumulation. That capital is prone to overaccumulation and consequent crisis does not concern local governmental entities; what matters is the immediate, local attempt to act entrepreneurially

by enticing private capital investment within a given municipality. In DFW, for example, civic administrators understand the subsidization of shopping malls and luxury mixed-use developments like Dallas Midtown through the lens of interurban competition; as former Dallas representative Linda Koop said above, “How is a city supposed to compete with other cities, attracting investors and so forth, helping its tax base, if it doesn’t have a mall like the suburb next-door, or the really urban areas?” Because human agents with local ambitions enact locally embedded neoliberalism, spatio-spectacles overaccumulate as cities engage in city versus city battles over securing capital investment.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have set out to answer the following research questions: 1) Why has late capitalism encouraged the overproduction of spatio-spectacles like shopping malls and luxury mixed-use developments? And 2) How are capital, neoliberal governance, and policy imbricated in the subsequent destruction of mall geography and the creation of new spatio-spectacles like luxury mixed-use developments? I answer these utilizing a conceptual framework informed by the Harvey’s circuits of capital model, the spatial fixity of capital, creative destruction, neoliberal urbanism, and Debordian spectacle theory. Methodologically, I draw upon interviews with Dallas civic administrators, development firm employees, and community members, as well as photographs of the built environment that illustrate mall overaccumulation and decline to investigate these two research questions.

A critical interpretation of interviews with civic administrators and development firm employees elucidates the logic of capital accumulation underpinning mall and luxury mixed-use development production and destruction, and speaks to the pervasive hegemony of neoliberalism, capitalism’s recent avatar. Shopping malls were built across the nation in rapid

succession, facilitated by locally embedded neoliberal governance—a trend that is now being echoed in the multiplication of luxury mixed-use developments. As revealed by Dallas civic administrators and development firm employees, the overaccumulation of spatio-spectacles like shopping malls and luxury mixed-use developments has been encouraged by a neoliberal shift toward interurban competition. Yet, the effect of this overproduction has been the banalification of “spectacular” landscapes and their overaccumulation as idle capital. Community member interviews show that the tendency of late capitalism to replicate spatio-spectacles like shopping malls and luxury mixed-use developments within the secondary circuit results in the death of any semblance of “spectacularity.”

Further, the process of creative destruction is shown to operate on compressed timescales as spectacular built environments are produced, destroyed, and renewed. No longer are spatial fixes intended to generate long-term profits and stall crises of overaccumulation; following the ushering in of neoliberal governance, capitalist production of city space within late capitalism is characterized by comparatively quick rounds of accumulation, decline, and crisis. These creative destructions are associated with our recent understanding of decline machine theory: decline as an accumulation strategy whereby resultant economic stagnation and blight provides a basis for cyclical redevelopment, growth, and subsequent decline.

Finally, through ethnographic interviews with civic administrators, the overaccumulation of shopping malls and new spatio-spectacles such as luxury mixed-use developments is demonstrated to be advanced by locally embedded neoliberalism. Because “actually existing” neoliberal governance must be locally, socio-spatially embedded, city governments act at local levels as they engage in interurban competition to seduce capital investment into their respective municipalities. Overaccumulation of malls or luxury mixed-use developments across localities is

not emphasized as a concern. Rather, neoliberal-entrepreneurial American cities are caught up in a vicious cycle of “keeping up with the Joneses,” i.e., competition with other cities, to attract capital investment in the form of spectacular, spatially fixed capital.

While this work has primarily relied on a case study of the Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas, metroplex to better understand shopping malls and luxury mixed-use developments and their relation to late capitalist accumulation strategies, it is important that similar work be conducted in other localities and indeed between localities to better substantiate, or rebut, the arguments that I have begun to formulate here with reference to U.S. cities. Nonetheless, I believe that this research begins to open an important window onto the nuanced and intertwined nature of systemic crisis within capitalism and how crisis is tied to the kinds of cities and geographies entrepreneurial governance both imagines and creates. Importantly, I am not ascribing causal logic to the motion of capital and its aftereffect—that is, governance and landscape. Instead, I have attempted to demonstrate how these processes are relationally co-constituted. Therefore, a different kind of urbanism cannot be imagined by simply altering architectural design or reforming urban policy; rather, such a transformation requires a reimagining of capitalism as a way of life.

CHAPTER 3

A NEW “MULTICULTURAL” GENTRIFICATION? SPECTACULAR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, DISPLACEMENT, AND MULTICULTURALISM IN THE ASPIRING GLOBAL CITY OF DALLAS

But is it error, or is it ideology?
—Henri Lefebvre
The Production of Space

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I found that it is through the place-entrenched, contingent character of neoliberal governance and its juxtaposition with space that geographies of (un)spectacular creative destruction are played out in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. I find that Dallas has produced malls and luxury mixed-use developments because this has been the entrepreneurial strategy of neighboring cities to generate tax revenue—yet because neoliberalism is enacted and performed at local levels, the local nature of negotiations between civic administrators and private business interests has meant that no consideration is given to the bigger-picture precarity of capitalism and its proneness to crises of overaccumulation. Consequently, mall after mall has been built as the result of entrepreneurial interurban competition, and now I contend the same overaccumulation born out of creative destruction is occurring vis-à-vis luxury mixed-use developments. In this chapter, I want to investigate the implications of this process for the urban communities that surround such “spectacular” developments.

Here, I argue that creative destructions of this kind often have gentrifying effects: a reverberating trail of gentrification often follows both shopping malls and luxury mixed-use developments, as an imperative of such spectacle construction is the reorganization of the

community—not only its ethos, but also its demographic—into one that is maximally conducive to commodity consumption. I contend that within late capitalism spatio-spectacles are increasingly produced, destroyed, and reinvented—associated with rounds of investment and disinvestment in nearby commercial and residential areas. Further, I suggest that this spectacle construction and consequent gentrification are tinged by cities’ neoliberal aspirations to become/maintain status as “global” or “world-class” cities. Largely through neoliberal-entrepreneurial public-private partnerships, cities construct built environments like luxury mixed-use developments, parks, boardwalks, and so forth in ways which pander to global capital. As they construct spectacular spaces, I find that some American cities have begun to employ and perform neoliberal discourses about “multiculturalism” to entice foreign capital, creating spectacular built environments that can best be described as pastiches of global cultural kitsch. Significantly, this involves the devaluation of (local) class and capital poor racial-ethnic identities and the exaltation of select cultural groups based solely upon foreign capital investment trends.

This investigation is guided by two primary research questions: How does the production of spatio-spectacles like luxury mixed-use developments, mediated by neoliberal governance, gentrify communities in aspiring global cities of the Global North? Particularly, how do neoliberal-entrepreneurial discourses function to (de)value existing community members to pave the way for spectacular landscapes and gentrification? Using the impending Dallas Midtown luxury mixed-use development as a case study, this is investigated utilizing a conceptual framework informed by creative destruction, neoliberal urbanism and multiculturalism, and the global city.

Conceptual Framework

In exploring the above questions, I have grouped relevant concepts and literature below as: creative destruction and the global city; gentrification and spatio-spectacular landscapes; and race, multiculturalism, and neoliberal governance.

Creative-Destruction and the Global City

“Creative destruction” refers to the perpetual destruction of old infrastructure and replacement with the new to stimulate growth; in order to create, capital must destroy what it has already built (Schumpeter, 1942). Here, this is to be taken in the literal sense of creation and destruction: for example, a mall is built, serving its purpose of generating capital until the investment no longer offers returns that are sufficiently profitable (pursuant to the law of diminishing returns as commonly discussed in economics). Following its decline in profitability, the mall is destroyed, and atop its ashes might arise a luxury mixed-use development. Assuredly, following its slide into eventual unprofitability, the mixed-use space too will be demolished and morphologically rejuvenated into a form that is better conducive to capital accumulation. This cycle goes on in perpetuity. Relatedly, Henri Lefebvre (1974/1991) provides a Marxist perspective that emphasizes the *production* of space. He argues that space is socially produced, and that this is necessary for social reproduction—i.e., the reproduction/maintenance of the ruling class’ hegemonic dominance. Thus, Lefebvre explains, social spatial production (creation) is necessary to the very survival of the capitalism. Yet this creation/production and destruction are embedded within the context of many forms of neoliberal urban entrepreneurialism (Brenner & Theodore, 2002) that represent the new urban aspiration to become “global cities” (Sassen, 1991; Ancien, 2011). So-called global cities include such places as New York City, London,

Paris, Tokyo, Toronto, Los Angeles, Seoul, Beijing, Hong Kong, and Bangkok, among numerous others.

Cities' efforts to "go global"—to become transcendent nodes for economic exchange—plays out in neoliberal-entrepreneurial attempts by public officials and private developers to become "world-class" through the clearing and beautification of blighted areas, and spectacular development projects are often undertaken following the displacement of the urban poor (Ghertner, 2015; Chatterjee, 2014). Examples of such projects include the development of luxury shopping malls and mixed-use developments, towering condominiums, boardwalks, and sprawling parks. Why do developers locate the mall in a particular space to begin with? Likely they were lured into the city by seductive entrepreneurial bait: a slew of tax incentives, assurances of an unresisting local populace ready to accept low wages, promises that roadways will be specially tailored to facilitate ease of entrance into the mall, etc. The same is surely true of luxury mixed-use developments. Once profitability sufficiently declines, the mall—or subsequent luxury mixed-use space—is destroyed and a new "spectacle" is erected, some new grandiose megaproject that will fuel capital accumulation, likely beckoned into the city by tactics of entrepreneurial seduction. While fueling capital accumulation, spectacular landscapes also serve another important purpose: they gloss over the exploitative footprints of creative destruction like gentrification and the overhaul of local businesses. Gentrification is a significant product of creative destruction that must be underscored; often as spaces of "elite consumption" (see Jayne, 2006) are constructed, existing structures that serve lower income community members must be demolished or renovated.

Gentrification and Spatio-Spectacular Landscapes

It is clear that the emergence of spatio-spectacles like malls and luxury mixed-use places

often has rippling gentrifying effects on nearby community neighborhoods and retail.

Gentrification has broadly been defined as “the transformation of a working-class or vacant area of the central city into middle class residential or commercial use” (Lees, Slater, & Wyly, 2010, p. xv). Others have added that gentrification is—in practice—an inherently racialized process, entangled with racial wealth disparities and biases (Sampson et al., 2006). Here, I am interested in exploring the relationship between gentrification as a classed and racialized project and the late capitalist trend of spectacular built environment (“spatio-spectacle”) production.

By spatio-spectacle, I mean to allude to both the Debordian concept of spectacle as well as to the term’s colloquial, descriptive sense. For Debord (1967/2014), a spectacle represents the total commodification of reality, including social relations, which functions to disguise societal ills beneath a veneer of awe-inspiring spectacularity. Within late capitalism, urban life has become permeated by the “immense accumulation of spectacles” (Debord, 1967/2014, p. 1). Although the Debordian “spectacle” has routinely been conceptually applied to media studies, I use this concept to describe certain kinds of built environments, namely, such things as grandiose shopping malls, luxury mixed-use developments, theme parks, sports stadia, casinos, etc.—structures which are also colloquially “spectacular” in terms of their scale and dazzling character. Given the proliferation of spectacular landscape production, often facilitated by public-private partnerships, it is sensible to consider the gentrifying impacts of such spectacular developments on urban communities. I am particularly interested in the dynamic between the creative destruction of (once) spectacular shopping malls and their replacement with luxury mixed-use developments.

Scant literature considers gentrification in relation to shopping mall or luxury mixed-use development, particularly residential gentrification surrounding mall construction. Smith (2006)

explained:

More than rehabilitated and refurbished flats, gentrification increasingly implies new restaurants and shopping malls in the central city, waterfront park and movie theaters, brand-name office towers alongside brand-name museums, tourist destinations of all sorts, cultural complexes . . . Gentrification is no longer simply a housing strategy; it represents the leading edge of metropolitan change at the urban center. (p. 198)

In his description of gentrification—quite distinct from his earlier descriptions (cf. Smith, 1986)—Smith (2006) taps into a new, spectacular character of gentrification which has taken hold of inner-city spaces. However, this observation is unaccompanied by any empirical substantiation. In this chapter, therefore, I set out to reveal through fieldwork and data analysis the nature of gentrification surrounding spectacular urban development projects.

Although without direct focus on shopping malls or luxury mixed-use developments, Zukin, Trujillo, et al. (2009) conducted a case study concerning the development of “boutique” shopping outlets and their impact on the ethnic and class character of surrounding neighborhoods in New York City. Boutique shopping is an indispensable element of shopping malls and many luxury mixed-use developments, where boutiques are understood to be stores that contrast with older outlets by catering to a more affluent clientele rather than one that is “traditional”—i.e., poorer and less mobile. They write that boutiquing is “part of a broad dynamic of postindustrial change and urban revitalization that may benefit certain residents while deepening economic and social polarization and place low- and middle-income neighborhoods at risk” (Zukin, Trujillo, et al., 2009, para. 5).

Further, “boutiques ‘mark’ an area as safe for commercial investment that will upgrade services and raise rents,” therefore facilitating the potential emergence of rent gaps surrounding boutique developments. Zukin, Trujillo, et al. (2009) continue: “Moreover, by institutionalizing the consumption practices of more affluent and highly educated men and women *in place of*

stores that serve the poor, it challenges the ‘right to the city’ of low-income residents” (para. 5). Close proximity to elite spaces of consumption that contain luxury services like boutique shopping, fine dining, opulent theaters, and 5-star hotels means the skyrocketing of potential ground rent in nearby neighborhoods. Landlords in their pursuit to realize potential ground rent raise rental costs for tenants, driving out those who can no longer afford the rising fare (see Smith’s 1979 work concerning rent gap emergence). Therefore, evicted tenants must relocate and find affordable housing elsewhere, or become homeless—staying with relatives and friends on rotation, or worse, living on the streets. Housing structures are often extensively remodeled in order to cater to a new affluent demographic that can afford hiked ground rents, often the disproportionately white wealthier classes.

Notably, gentrification is notoriously difficult to investigate empirically. This is the case for a variety of reasons: gentrification is a process rather than a singular event, occurring over time—sometimes quite gradually. Studies of gentrification are therefore often done post hoc, after the cementation of gentrification in an urban space—leaving gentrification-in-progress an underinvestigated realm within housing displacement literature. Studying active gentrification is particularly methodologically challenging; gentrification is characterized by a reorganization of an area’s demographics away from a lower economic class status and toward a higher economic class status, a process which occurs over time and is best captured by longitudinal retrospective census data (Pull, 2021; Easton et al., 2020). Furthermore, it is not typically feasible to track where displaced residents have gone, a major barrier to a more holistic conceptualization of gentrification dynamics (Marcuse, 1986).

Race, Multiculturalism, and Neoliberal Governance

Cedric Robinson provides a robust analysis of race and its function within the capitalist

mode of production in his 1983 book *Black Marxism*. Robinson (1983) coins the term “racial capitalism” to refer to the way in which actually existing capitalism has been inextricably conjoined with racist ideologies—with the hyper-exploitation of racialized bodies tracing its roots into pre-capitalist feudal history. More recently, a scholarship has emerged to discuss neoliberal capitalism (said to have been ushered in during the 1980s) and how race is portrayed within it. Melamed (2006) argues that neoliberalism has begun to engage in a generic rhetoric of multiculturalism specifically because the concept is devoid of any reference to race, and therefore to overt anti-racism. This “multiculturalism” retains associations with “diversity,” “fairness,” and so forth—but in a vague and superficial sense that does not explicate racism deployed by capitalism to aid in accumulation and the hyper-exploitation of poor and racialized bodies (Roberts & Mahtani, 2010; Wilson & Grammenos, 2005; Wilson, 2004).

Therefore, “culture and diversity without the historical-geographical context of their production” (Chatterjee, 2021, p. 45) is an abstraction that does not explicate how (neoliberal) capitalism engages in the exclusion and othering of persons whom it deems unproductive (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014). Some scholars have emphasized the discursive valuation and co-optation of racial and ethnic identities as a strategy for gentrifying neoliberal city spaces (e.g., Wilson & Grammenos, 2005; Summers, 2019; Lipman, 2009). At local levels, neoliberalism directly targets and co-opts ethnicity to aid in gentrification projects, generating discourses through political rhetoric, urban planning, and the media to devalue certain racialized ethnic bodies. Wilson and Grammenos (2005) refer to this series of tactics following their investigation of gentrification in Humboldt Park, Chicago, writing:

It follows that a play to a racialized ethnicity was at the center of this assault on body and neighborhood. Theorists of gentrification often marginalize this to emphasize class, but its central role in Humboldt Park was irrefutable. Ethnicity, it is increasingly recognized, is a new sphere for attack on people and communities in neoliberal times. The public is

now to see ethnicity to understand people and the logic of implementing diverse initiatives—for example, Workfare, tax-increment financing, and No Child Left Behind. Its consequences today ripple across cities: people are segregated, cut off from resources, stigmatized, and, in the case of gentrification, lose their homes and communities. Through ethnicity, neoliberal political designs are aggressively pursued. (p. 310)

Thus, while class is undoubtedly a key element of gentrification, of great importance, too, is the intersection of class with a community's ethnic character—and how certain ethnicities are valued respectively by neoliberal urbanism depending upon their perceived “productivity.” Kay (1987), for instance, argues that the top-down process of defining certain spaces as belonging to one ethnic group (for example, Chinatown) over another keeps alive surface-level categorizations that are nonthreatening and marketable in the project of capital accumulation. Such categorizations are not based on deep cultural affiliations, but rather on cosmetic and superficial features that mark and “other.” Summers (2019) considers this talk of multiculturalism as it relates to gentrification, arguing that the distinctly racial history of neighborhoods may be problematically recast as being “multicultural,” and hence, amenable to outside capital investment. For example, Summers (2019) argues that the history of the H Street Corridor, a historically Black neighborhood in Washington, D.C., has been subjected to a kind of neoliberal revisionism that narrativizes the neighborhood's past as being “diverse” in order to facilitate gentrification. Therefore, I argue on the basis of this literature that 1) gentrification projects co-opt and depoliticize ethnicity by ignoring racism and valuing select ethnic groups, and 2) that gentrification devalues certain racialized bodies. These two points are interconnected in that the superficial valorization of “productive” ethnic groups causes the displacement of others, particularly working class and racialized others.

In the age of the global city and the competitive construction of spectacular “world-class” built environments, I argue that the ideology of neoliberal multiculturalism is woven into the

fabric of many urban development projects. The superficial allusion to international cultures is utilized as a marketing ploy to imbue upon a place a “cultural” aesthetic and feel—resulting in aspects of the urban landscape becoming a pastiche of cultural kitsch and pseudo-diversity. Rather than a pastiche of styles from past historical eras as described by some postmodern theorists (e.g., Jameson, 1991), I submit that we are now witnessing the construction of urban spatio-spectacles that emphasize allusions to “multicultural” milieus: the entrepreneurial global city must take on a *global aesthetic*. As cities go global and perform multicultural urban aesthetics to attract capital investments, the gentrification of discursively devalued/”othered” poor and racialized communities poses a dramatic tension. Because gentrified urban communities are often comprised of class poor immigrants and ethnic minorities, cultural expression becomes a battleground between the authentically lived culture of “the other” and the commodified cultural pastiche that seeks to replace it in spectacular (re)development projects. Informed by the above literature, I investigate how and why late capitalist/neoliberal spatio-spectacle replication across the American landscape gentrifies vulnerable urban communities, and how this process of community creation (gentrification) in a neoliberal city interacts with the city’s increasingly global, “world-class” aspirations. This is achieved through a case study of an impending luxury mixed-use development in Dallas, Texas.

Methodology and Case Study

In this chapter, I ask, how does the production of spatio-spectacles like luxury mixed-use developments, mediated by neoliberal governance, gentrify communities in aspiring global cities of the Global North? In particular, how do neoliberal-entrepreneurial discourses function to (de)value existing community members to pave the way for spectacular landscapes and gentrification? In order to answer these questions, I primarily rely upon a critical discourse

analysis of interview transcripts with Dallas civic administrators, development company employees, and community members. Critical discourse analysis is an analytical method concerning the way in which language both mediates and constructs reality. Regarding language, I refer to interview excerpts, websites, or comments of city officials and developers. This form of analysis involves tracing changes in language practices over time and examining how “language both shapes and reflects dynamic cultural, social, and political practices” (Starks & Trinidad, 2007, p. 1374). In her article about discourse analysis and qualitative research, Julianne Cheek writes, “language cannot be considered to be transparent or value free. Even the language that we take to be the most ‘natural,’ that is, the spoken word or talk, does not ‘have’ universal meaning but is assigned particular meanings by both speakers and listeners according to the situation in which language is being used” (2004). Close attention is paid to the positionality of my data sources, in particular to the implicit or explicit ideological positions adopted by them.

I have interviewed three civic administrators, two development firm employees, and ten community members. These interviews were semi-structured in nature, meaning that although I used a prepared set of questions, the interviews were open-ended, allowing conversation to unfold naturally so that the information provided by the informant was not strictly limited within the confines of a rigid question-and-answer format, as recommended by Longhurst (2003). I also analyze quotations gleaned from the Dallas International District’s web page. When possible, I have made maps which illustrate demographic and poverty changes over time in my area of investigation in order to infer gentrification trends. The data for these maps was retrieved from the Social Explorer program, an online mapping and visualization tool drawing data from U.S. census records. In keeping with the recommendation of other scholars (Pull, 2021; Easton et al., 2020), I rely upon longitudinal census data. However, I am unable to adequately identify land or

home value trends using available census data, as this data was not collected for key decades under investigation. Therefore, I have used racial demographic data in combination with family poverty data to discern changes associated with gentrification.

Dallas Midtown is a luxury mixed-use development that is planned to replace the now-demolished Valley View Center Mall in Dallas, Texas. It is a \$4 billion project, a “centralized urban village,” to quote one of its developers, Scott Beck of Beck Ventures (qtd. in Plans to Turn Valley View Mall into an “Urban Village,” 2012). As one local news outlet described computer-generated images of the planned development, “the renderings of the future Dallas Midtown show a sparkling city-within-a-city, complete with restaurants, shopping, entertainment venues, hotels, parks, condos, and more” (Rogers, 2021). According to Dallas Midtown’s informational web page created by Beck Ventures, *dallasmidtown.com*, the plan for the spectacular development will include “luxury hotels,” “luxury condo units for sale,” “iconic office towers,” “up-scale multi-family rental units,” as well as “boutique shopping” and “restaurants and entertainment venues” to quote the site (*About Us*, 2021). Notably, however, the plan to build Dallas Midtown is not merely confined to the old mall’s perimeter, but rather, it has been enlarged to encompass what are, at present, numerous nearby small businesses. Furthermore, an existing community of Latino and Black residents—many of whom are low-income—populates the surrounding area, which is at risk of gentrification-driven displacement.

Though planning for the Dallas Midtown development has been underway since 2011, in 2014 the City of Dallas reached an agreement with development company Beck Ventures to grant \$36 million in tax incentives to the Midtown developers through the creation of a “pay as you go” Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district (Carlisle, 2016). More recently in January 2022, the city—in coordination with private developers—made public a new and improved vision of

the planned district, encompassing the Dallas Midtown luxury mixed-use development. Now, it will be a mixed-use oriented “international district” that serves as a “global showplace” (Seeley, 2022, January 4).

From Freedmen’s Town to (Dying) Malltopia

The Dallas Midtown area was once home to a freedmen’s town—an African American community known as Alpha that was founded immediately after the Civil War. Its center rested on what today is the intersection of Alpha Road and Preston Road, conjoining to the site of the old Valley View Mall and overlaying the impending Dallas Midtown luxury mixed-use development; the town’s official population never exceeded 111 before its official delisting as a community in 1987. In addition, the land on which the community rested was largely Black owned, much of which was utilized as farmland (Figure 3.1).



Figure 3.1: Aerial photo of Alpha showing farmland and residences, 1940. Source: Southern Methodist University Digital Archive.

In the 1950s and 60s, a coalition of middle- and upper-class African Americans set about erecting a neighborhood “to provide decent, affordable, and sanitary housing for African

Americans in Dallas” (Lawe & Lawe, 2019, p. 101). This was known as the McShann Road development, and it attracted a number of Black lawyers, doctors, and businesspeople. The neighborhood around McShann Road eventually became known as Preston Hollow—one of the most affluent Dallas neighborhoods. Still today McShann Road is predominantly African American, a testament to the impacts of sustained generational wealth (Scott, 2004, January 1).



Figure 3.2: Aerial Photo of Valley View Center Mall, 1973. Source: Dallas Morning News Archive

In the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, a series of urban processes dramatically transformed the area’s character. The Valley View shopping mall began as a singular Sears store developed in 1965 but was later expanded in 1973 into a full-fledged 2-story mall located by the intersection of Alpha Road and Preston Road (Figure 3.2). It was built on formerly Black-owned land. In 1969, the I-635 highway was built, cutting east-west and dividing the Valley View mall area from the affluent McShann Road and Preston Hollow neighborhood to the south. White flight

out of the community occurred in the 1970s and 80s in response to the racial integration of public schools, as many middle- and upper-class white Far North Dallas residents moved to the more than 25 surrounding suburbs, resulting in a hollowing out of the area's tax base (Lawe & Lawe, 2019, p. 104). It was in response to this white flight that low-income immigrants, largely Latinos, moved into the community in order to take advantage of cheap housing. Two more shopping malls were built near the Valley View Mall: Prestonwood Town Center in 1979 and the Galleria Dallas in 1982, all within a 2-mile radius (Figure 3.3).

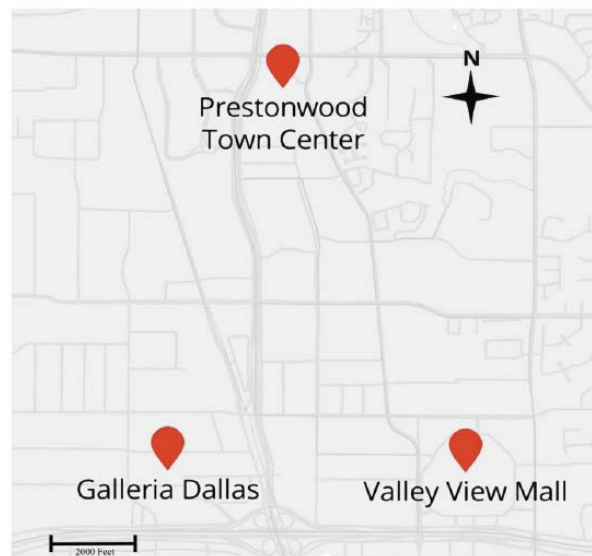


Figure 3.3: Proximity of Galleria, Valley View, Prestonwood Malls to one another.

Census data is unavailable for the Dallas Midtown/Valley View area prior to 1970, as it was previously comprised largely of farmland unincorporated with the City of Dallas. However, a demographic analysis of race/ethnicity¹, coupled with an analysis of the prevalence of urban poverty, over time in the Dallas Midtown/Valley View area is suggestive of class-racial dispossession and gentrification driven by shopping mall construction.

Since the 1970s, the Dallas Midtown/Valley View area has primarily been composed of apartments, with some affluent homes clustered in surrounding neighborhoods. In 1970, the

¹ Early census records make no distinction between race and ethnicity, unlike later census records.

residential areas immediately surrounding the mall had higher proportions of Black residents than nearby census tracts (Figure 3.4). This is to be expected given the area’s history as a freedmen’s town and as the site of the Black-organized McShann Road development. Following the construction of the Valley View Mall and Prestonwood Town Center Mall in the 1970s, data shows that by 1980 the proportion of Black residents plummeted (Figure 3.5) relative to white residents (Figure 3.6). The 1980s represented the “heyday” of American shopping malls, associated with rapid mall construction and consumption. However, by 2000 we begin to see in the Dallas Midtown/Valley View area the reintroduction of Black residents; moreover, we see a boom in the proportion of Latino residents (Figure 3.7). Certainly by 2000 the effects of overcompetition between the three malls—Valley View, Prestonwood, and Galleria Dallas—had already proved to be irreparably damaging. Prestonwood closed its doors in 2002 as a result of this market oversaturation.

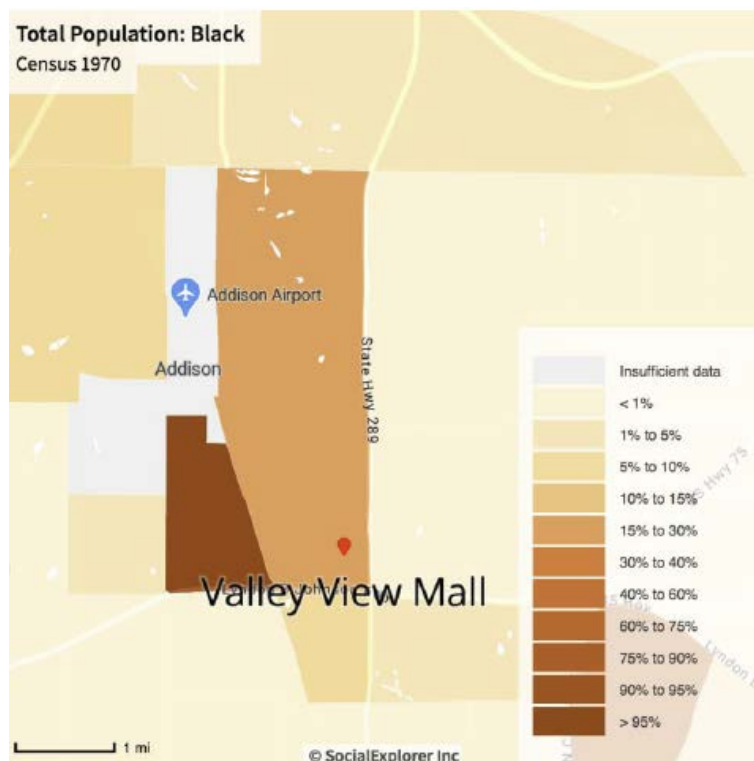


Figure 3.4: Proportion of Black residents in 1970.

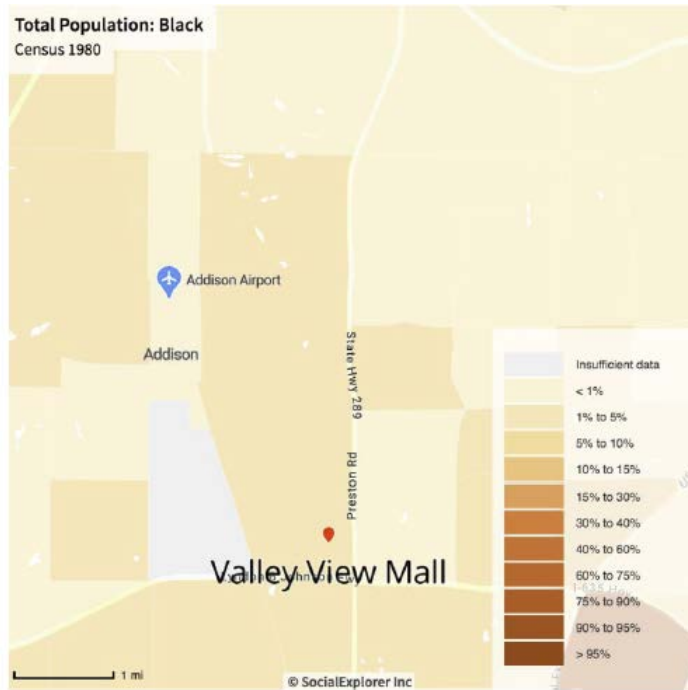


Figure 3.5: Proportion of Black residents in 1980.

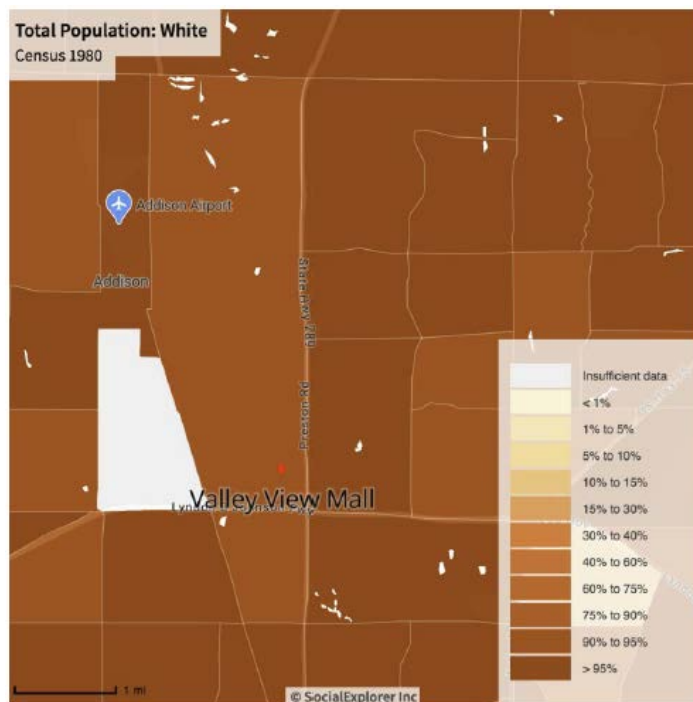


Figure 3.6: Proportion of white residents in 1980.

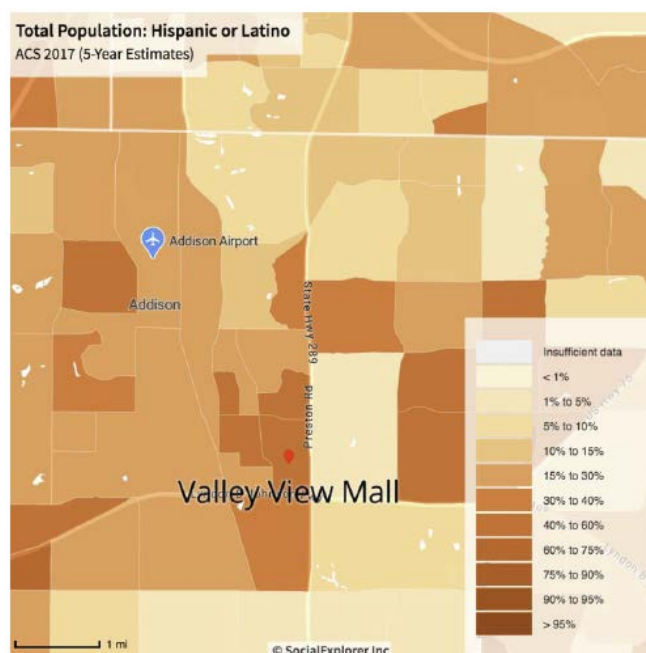


Figure 3.7: Proportion of Hispanic/Latino residents in 2017 (most recent).

With the trend of nationwide shopping mall decline already well underway (Moore, 2013), by 2010 the number of both Black and Latino residents immediately surrounding the Valley View Mall continued to rise alongside the increasingly evident dereliction of the property. Finally, 2019 and 2020 data show that the area is predominantly occupied by mostly Latino residents alongside a smaller proportion of Black residents (cf. Figure 3.8 & Figure 3.9). Concurrent to this temporal assessment of racial/ethnic demographics, we see a general trend toward increased poverty in the same study area over time which seems to be associated with the malls' life and death (see Figure 3.10, Figure 3.11, & Figure 3.12).

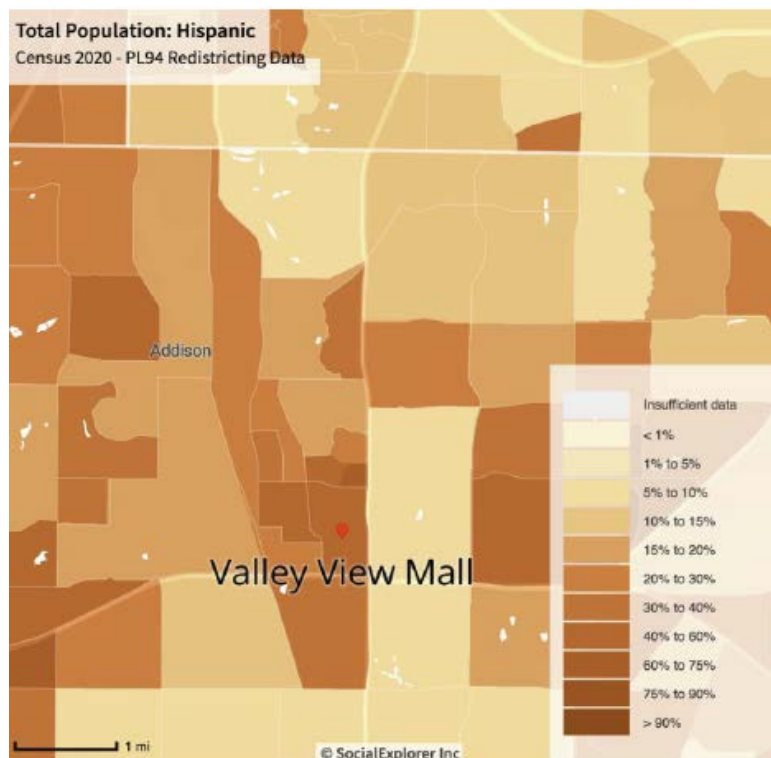


Figure 3.8: Proportion of Hispanic residents in 2020.

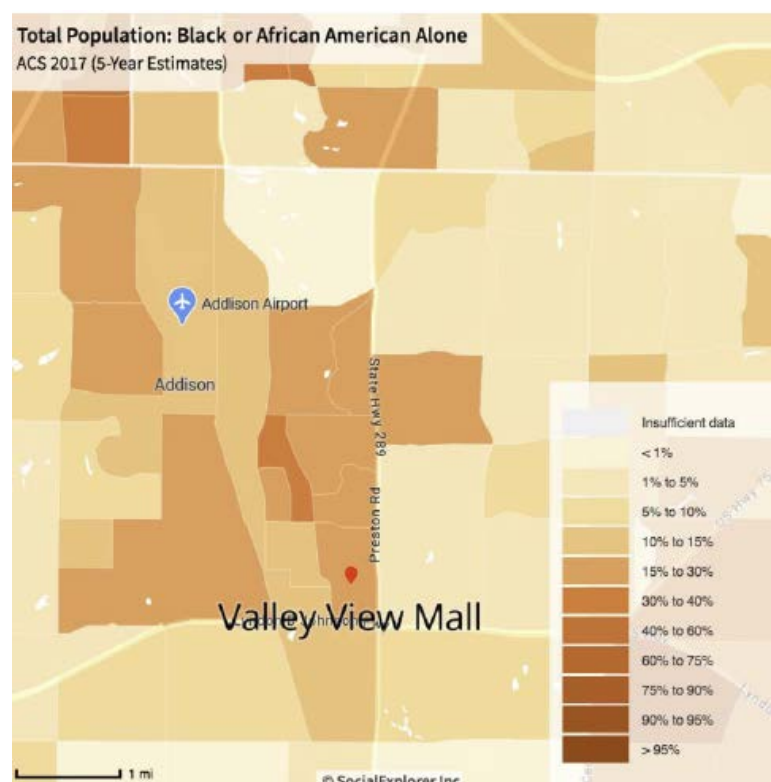


Figure 3.9: Proportion of Black/African American (alone) residents in 2017 (most recent).

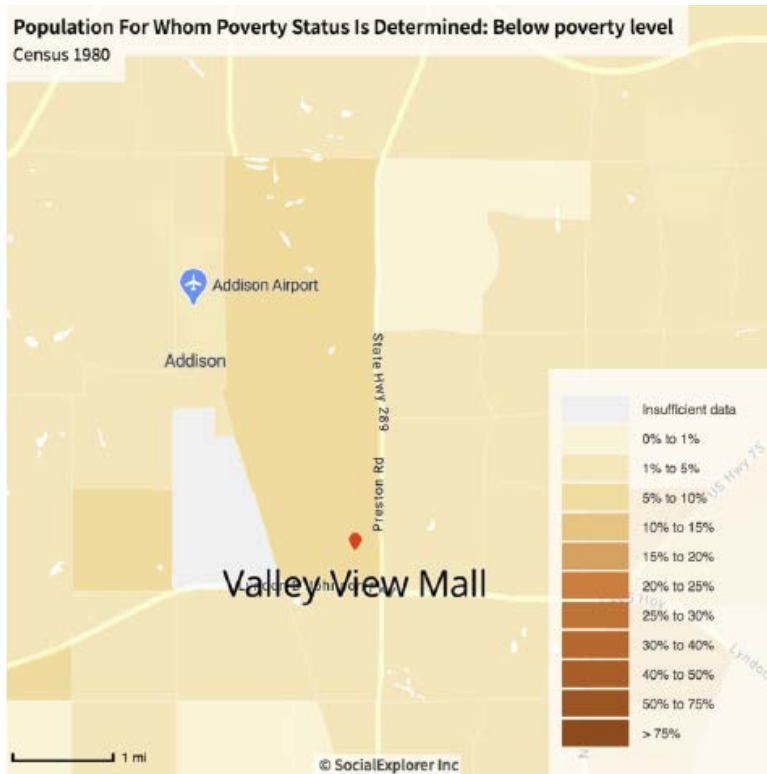


Figure 3.10: Proportion of population below poverty level in 1980.

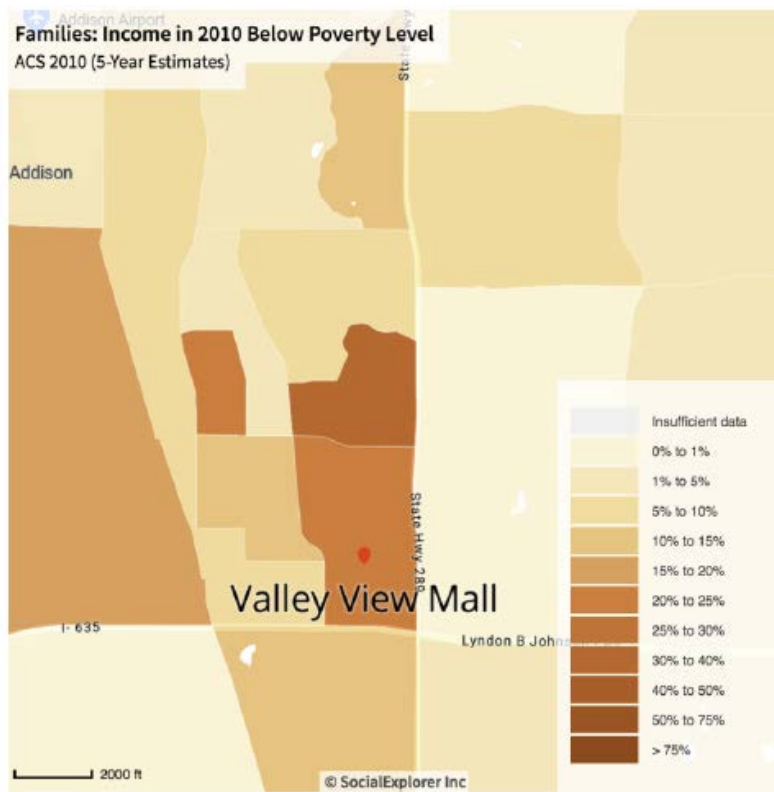


Figure 3.11: Proportion of families below poverty level in 2010.

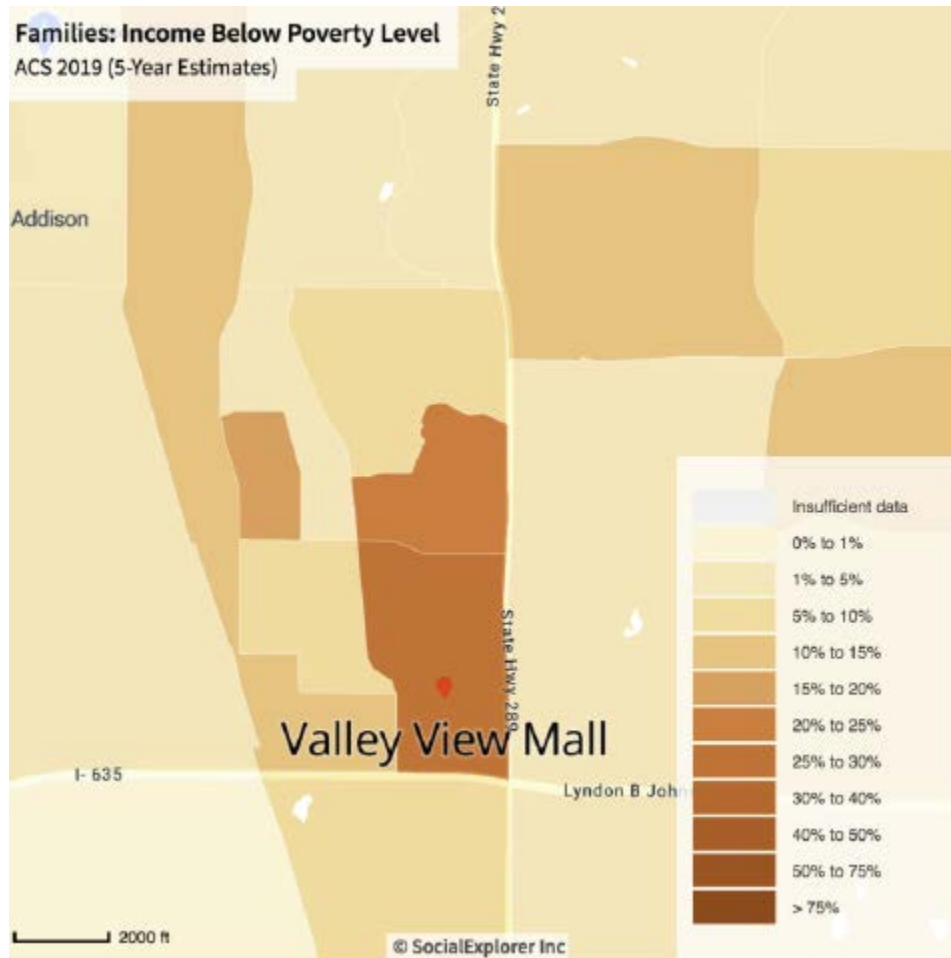


Figure 3.12: Proportion of families below poverty level in 2019 (most recent).

Therefore, the construction of these shopping malls appears to correlate with a temporary period of gentrification. In Dallas, investment in spectacular mallscapes atop formerly Black-owned land is associated at first with the gentrification/displacement of Black residents, but following mall decline via overcompetition and consequent disinvestment, the now blight-affected area comes to be occupied by more low-income racial-ethnic minorities, Latino and Black residents. Thus, in the trail of creative destruction—of the overproduction, subsequent overcompetition, and destruction of spectacular landforms—urban geographies undergo a kind of gentrification that is marked by impermanence; capital, facilitated by the neoliberal governance which encourages such spectacle production, overzealously overinvests in the built

environment to generate spectacle after spectacle, resulting in the gentrification of vulnerable urban communities, mostly displacing the devalued class and racial/ethnic poor. However, following the onset of spectacle oversaturation, disinvestment, and the spectacle's degeneration into unspectacular blighted landscape, falling rents in the surrounding area become conducive to the influx of low-income urbanites, many of whom are of minority status. Critically, I suggest that within late capitalism this tendency to uncreatively (over)reproduce spectacles like grandiose shopping malls (and consequently reorganize community demographics) may happen time and again within the very same perimeter. Moreover, I suggest that this process is imbricated with cities' neoliberal desires to become global cities, performed through the spatialized ideology of neoliberal multiculturalism.

A New Spectacle Arises: Global Capital and Mixed-Use Multicultural Kitsch

Following the Valley View Mall's decades-long decline culminating in its eventual demolition in 2019, the City of Dallas and private developers are preparing to redevelop the space into a luxury mixed-use development called Dallas Midtown. It is set to include, *inter alia*, fine dining restaurants, high-end shopping, entertainment venues, a 5-star hotel, a sprawling park, and luxury condos. In January 2022, it was announced that a public-private partnership between the City of Dallas and private developers will work together to transform the area not merely into a luxury mixed-use development, but to go beyond the original area plan to create what other cities have called "international districts," emphasizing global cultural diversity.

Examining the official web page of the Dallas International District and speaking with numerous Dallas civic administrators, development company employees, and Valley View/Dallas Midtown area community members, I sought to better understand the new public-private vision for a mixed-use "global showplace." Perhaps unsurprisingly, the official website

for the Dallas International District (*dallasinternationaldistrict.com*) is replete with quotations referencing the capture of international capital. Dallas mayor Eric Johnson is quoted as saying:

Dallas is already an international city with a diverse population, major attractions, and two world-class airports. But we still have immense untapped potential, and we can do more to promote and enhance our unique assets, strengthen our global business ties, and increase international tourism. The Dallas International District is a wonderful opportunity to boost our city's presence on the global stage while also transforming an underutilized area into an amazing gathering place that all of our residents can enjoy.

Dallas is represented in this quote as “already an international city” that contains “world-class” features (like its two prominent airports), but which has room to bolster its global business relationships through the construction of the International District overtop an “underutilized area.” Clearly, the mayor’s language is born out of the brute fact of neoliberal globalization, As globalization has intensified, cities—localities—have transcended nation states in terms of their global financial importance, becoming “nodes” that connect with other global cities more acutely (vis-à-vis communications, financial exchange, etc.) than smaller, merely local cities (Sassen, 1991). The city, then, aspires to tap into an increasingly global market to secure local capital investment: emphasis on the “global,” the “international,” and the “world class” is not merely plat du jour neoliberal political vernacular; it is a necessary discursive strategy to effectuate foreign capital capture by luring foreign corporations into the city.

Chris Wallace, CEO of the North Texas Commission (a public-private partnership created to facilitate the economic growth of the North Texas region), is also quoted on the International District Website:

The NTC applauds the City of Dallas and its partners on the continued successful redevelopment of the Valley View/Galleria area. This new Dallas International District will become a highlight of Dallas and our region, attracting international businesses and residents to further embrace our diversity and inclusion while helping to grow our vibrant economy.

Here again the attraction of international business is emphasized. Also noteworthy, however, is

the latter half of the quotation: the “embracing” of “diversity and inclusion” is to be achieved through the persuasion of *international* business to locate operations—and consequently labor—in the Dallas International District. But the International District is not international merely because its purpose is to entice foreign capital investment. Beyond the standard neoliberal-globalization fare, the built environment of the International District will be designed as an assemblage of “multicultural” milieus.

In my interview with Dallas District 11 representative Jaynie Schultz, she explained:

So, the vision for the district, and this goes beyond [Dallas Midtown], is that this will be a mixed-use live, work, play kind of environment, where people from all over the world can feel comfortable within various cultural milieus . . . If we rebrand this as a celebration of cultures that have moved to Dallas over the last 50 years that have basically been uncelebrated, right, the Panasian especially, we can design the public spaces to reflect those cultures, and there’s unlimited opportunity for their engagement there.

This “celebration of cultures” within the “International District” must be understood amid the backdrop of Dallas’ neoliberal efforts to become a global city—as Dallas is striving to make itself amenable to foreign capital investments, particularly Panasian investments, by redefining this area of Far North Dallas as “international.” Representative Schultz above makes it explicit, although perhaps unintentionally, that for the neoliberal city, multiculturalism as a “celebration of cultures” is a matter of “rebranding.” Cultural diversity becomes a spectacle employed by the city to promote itself as it petitions for the attention of global capital.

Suzanne Smith, founder of Social Impact Architects, has been hired by both the city and a developer to help frame this new vision for the International District. She—not a politician like Schultz—is more explicit about the intentions behind the project:

[Dallas is] really trying to emerge as kind of a global competitor, along the lines of a Chicago or a New York or a Los Angeles or a Miami . . . So, we are looking at turning this area of town—since it’s a blank sheet of paper—into what other communities are calling “international districts” . . . So the park would be international. There would be a

Japanese water garden, and an interfaith cultural center, and also there would be opportunities for us to attract companies that want to have their U.S.-based headquarters here. And obviously Texas is great for that because of our income tax and corporate taxes . . . Amazon could build whatever they wanted to build . . . So the place becomes a place that feels different; you feel like you're in Singapore, you know, the Middle East; there's night markets, there's suks, nightclubs. It can have a 24/7 vibe, because in theory our economy is going to be 24/7. While we're asleep, China is awake.

Neoliberal-entrepreneurial logic pervades this excerpt; Smith refers to the rampant interurban competition between Dallas and surrounding suburbs, the city's desire to attract foreign direct investments, and the aspiring global character of Dallas in the era of globalization. The multiculturalism being proposed places particular emphasis on Asian and Middle Eastern cultures—conveniently mirroring contributors of Dallas foreign direct investment: in particular, China, the United Arab Emirates, and India (Kartalis, 2019; Leffert, 2021; Djinis, 2021).

Furthermore, even what has been championed as a celebration of “PanAsian” cultures must fall under suspicion, as the discourse about which Asian heritages are being celebrated conveniently omits those which are less economically desirable, less prolific in the realm of foreign direct investment: Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Nepal are unmentioned, for example, and instead the celebration of China, Japan, Singapore, India, and Taiwan are emphasized.

I also spoke with community members about this project to inquire about the international district and rents. All interviewees live within the proposed international district. I asked Jerry, a Black small business owner who lives and works within the perimeter of the impending development, about his thoughts on the “International District.” He replied:

I heard they might want to do something international or whatever. I'm not against it, don't get me wrong, but like, what about us around here that're, you know, Black, Hispanic? Most of my customers here are, well, Black and live around here. That's not what they want, okay . . . This around here looks like some hood, because, I'm going to be real, it is, yeah . . . So, that business is going to have to come from . . . you know, other areas. Somebody that's not our demographic.

Jerry begins to make clear the tension between the racial/ethnic minorities who already inhabit

this generally low-income space (Black and Latino residents) and the “international” vision put forward by public officials and private developers. His clientele is predominantly Black, and he conveys his understanding that the city wants “[s]omebody that’s not [their] demographic.”

Similarly, Raymond, a Latino community member who lives in an apartment, explained: “What they’re building will not reflect who’s living around it.” This much is evident in the multicultural rhetoric employed by city officials as they discuss the grand new vision for the “community”—as the city’s interests have shifted, entrepreneurially, toward the valorization of “historically uncelebrated” Panasians. The area’s early history as a freedmen’s town—Alpha—is overlooked, and in fact was never mentioned by any civic administrators with whom I spoke.

Julio—another apartment-dwelling Latino resident—remarked sarcastically, “International is great, as long as it’s not Latino and Black.” Julio perceives the “celebration” of international cultures to be discriminating—an effort to change the face of the area from Latino and Black to emphasize less stigmatized demographics. Further speaking to the disillusionment about the project’s motivations, Jess, a Black community member, said about the planned international district—her frustration written in her face—“If you actually think this will ‘celebrate diversity,’ you’ve never been to this area . . . It’s just a marketing ploy to get the land cheap, displace Black and Latin people, and throw up more unaffordable housing. No, to hell with that. Celebrating diversity my ass.”

Some community members expressed skepticism about the very concept of an International District that is manufactured and imposed in top-down fashion. Pamela, a white community member, remarked, “I just know the districts that truly represent immigrants grow organically and gradually—think New York City, Philly. White people can’t deem developments to be ‘international,’” she motioned with her fingers to denote scare quotes. Pamela continued,

“That would be terribly fake. If those in power in Dallas would truly support the development of international communities, where they live, that would be the best way to support our diversity. Not this.”

Concern about rising prices and rents is an additional theme that has emerged. Marco, another close-by Latino apartment-dweller, explained about rising rent:

I’m worried about it, definitely. But to be honest with you I kind of stopped following all this [news about the Dallas Midtown development]. There didn’t seem to be anything new happening, like, the mall didn’t get torn down when it was supposed to, so we were waiting on that . . . there’s no telling when this [international district] thing they’re talking about will happen. Our rent’s gone up over the past few years, I’ve noticed that . . . If it keeps going up, we might have to find another place, sure. Just depends how bad it gets.

Some residents have seen their rents increase like Marco, and others recognize the inevitability of rising rents in relation to the area’s redevelopment. Brad, a white florist within the planned district, explained, “I would raise rent if I were a landlord, seeing what’s going to happen to the area—and eventually it will happen.” This echoes what another nearby Black business owner, Douglas, told me when he spoke about his commercial rent: “[o]ur overhead here is high, extremely high now, and in my opinion, I believe it’s because they know what’s coming over here. Also, in my opinion, they’re probably going to raise it again, because if I owned this, I would. I’d raise this shit up to \$10,000 a month.” An effect of these increased rents is expressed by yet another nearby community member, Cindia, a young Latina mother living in an apartment, who complained:

They priced everyone out of the city . . . how are we supposed to get teachers to come in and live here and teach our kids, or any of those people? I work in food service and it’s hard making ends meet, seriously, and people like teachers and the people we really need in the community don’t make much money . . . I don’t know what all is happening with that mall [Valley View], but I don’t think it’s going to help—but like at the same time I want it to be nicer around here, if that makes sense . . . I don’t want it to be too expensive.

This ethnographic data shows that nearby community members are indeed concerned about the

impacts of the planned International District on their commercial and residential rents, and that some have already felt the incipient effects of rising rent by landlords in anticipation of the redevelopment project.

Discursively, we have seen that the existing racial-ethnic community is being erased, replaced by a metaphorical “blank sheet of paper” upon which a new “celebration” of so-called cultural diversity can be overlaid within the mixed-use framework. It is evident, however, that this celebration is selective; Dallas’ neoliberal efforts to become a truly global and world-class city have entailed that it values and celebrates (caricatures) only the “right” kind of global cultures—the right kind of global migrants. Therefore, the built environment must take on a global aesthetic; old infrastructure must be destroyed, devalued races and ethnicities must be displaced, and the landscape must be renewed into a new spectacle productive of capital accumulation, now a performative multicultural mixed-use space designed to lure foreign investment into the municipality. Inner-city spaces become late capitalist pastiches of pseudo-multicultural kitsch, spectacles fashioned out of disparate allusions to cultural milieus congenial to the neoliberal city’s project to “go global” and attract global capital.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have set out to answer the following questions: How does the production of spatio-spectacles like luxury mixed-use developments, mediated by neoliberal governance, gentrify communities in aspiring global cities of the Global North? Particularly, how do neoliberal-entrepreneurial discourses function to (de)value existing community members to pave the way for spectacular landscapes and gentrification? I answer these questions through a comparative analysis of longitudinal U.S. census data concerning racial demographics and urban poverty between 1970 and 2020—in combination with a critical discourse analysis of Dallas

public officials, developers, and nearby community members. Following Smith's (2006) observation that "[g]entrification is no longer simply a housing strategy; it represents the leading edge of metropolitan change at the urban center" (p. 198), I corroborate this finding through fieldwork and census data analysis.

Gentrification must now be considered in relation to the proliferation of "spectacular" (re)development projects which have emerged as products of late capitalism throughout Global North cities. In my investigation of gentrification surrounding shopping malls and the subsequent rise of luxury mixed-use developments in Dallas, I find that urban geographies of the Global North undergo a kind of gentrification that is characterized by impermanence. Neoliberal governance encourages spatio-spectacle production through unremitting public-private partnerships, consequently overinvesting in the built environment to overproduce spatio-spectacles between and within localities, resulting in the gentrification of vulnerable urban communities—displacing devalued class and racial/ethnic poor residents. However, following spectacle oversaturation, disinvestment, and the spatio-spectacle's degeneration into unspectacular blighted landscape, falling rents in the surrounding area become conducive to the influx of low-income urbanites, many of whom are often of minority status. I find that within late capitalism this tendency to uncreatively (over)reproduce spectacles and gentrify communities may happen time and again within the same urban space—for example, the cycle of gentrification associated with shopping mall construction, followed by disinvestment, followed by a later round of gentrification surrounding luxury mixed-use redevelopment projects.

Finally, I find that this process is inextricably entangled with cities' neoliberal desires to become global/"world-class" cities, performed through the spatialized ideology of neoliberal multiculturalism. Although public officials and developers proclaim that (neoliberal)

multiculturalism celebrates cultural diversity, it is apparent that this celebration is problematically selective in practice. City government and private developers' neoliberal efforts to transform Dallas into a global and world-class city have entailed that it values and celebrates only the "right" kind of global cultures—the right kind of global migrants—namely, cultural groups selected solely on the basis of foreign capital investment trends to the exclusion of other devalued racial-ethnic groups, often those already inhabiting and using an inner-city space. The built environment, then, must take on a performative, pseudo-diverse multicultural aesthetic through the construction of "international districts" and "global showplaces"—a disingenuous politic that transforms urban morphologies into flytraps for foreign capital and distracts from the ongoing dispossession and displacement of the devalued class and racial/ethnic poor.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

*Only I will establish in the Mannahatta and in every city of these
States inland and seaboard,
And in the fields and woods, and above every keel little or large that
Dents the water,
Without edifices or rules or trustees or any argument,
The institution of the dear love of comrades.*

—Walt Whitman,
Leaves of Grass

In this thesis, I have made an attempt at something quite difficult: I examine capitalism, neoliberalism, and urban transformation in the context of “the great American mall,” interrogating creative destruction as a mechanism for spatio-spectacle production and the gentrification of vulnerable groups. Hitherto explanations of shopping mall death, I argue, have been dramatically oversimplified. The rise and fall of the malling phenomenon and the subsequent trend toward luxury mixed-use developments must be analyzed within a framework that extends beyond simple causal statements: “overmallng” or “online shopping” brought about the demise of the American mall. Rather, as I conduct a case study of the Valley View Mall in Dallas, Texas—which is planned to be replaced with an expansive, luxury mixed-use development called Dallas Midtown—I emplace the mall and luxury mixed-use development into dialectical relation with neoliberal/late capitalist strategies of urban governance, community impact and perception, and a Marxian understanding of value’s discursive constitution.

In Chapter 2, I draw upon interviews with Dallas civic administrators, development firm employees, and community members, as well as photographs of the built environment and advertisements that illustrate mall overproduction and decline to investigate the two research questions posed within this chapter: 1) Why has late capitalism encouraged the overproduction of spectacles like shopping malls and luxury mixed-use developments? And 2) How are capital,

neoliberal governance, and policy imbricated in the subsequent destruction of mall geography and the creation of “new” spatio-spectacles like luxury mixed-use developments? I argue that the creative destruction of spatio-spectacles such as grand, awe-inspiring shopping malls and luxurious mixed-use developments functions as a way to stall crises of overaccumulation by fixing capital into the urban landscape (see Harvey, 1978). The process of creative destruction is shown to operate on compressed timescales as spectacular built environments are produced, destroyed, and renewed. No longer are spatial fixes intended to generate long-term profits and stall crises of overaccumulation; following the ushering in of neoliberal governance, capitalist production of city space within late capitalism is characterized by comparatively quick rounds of accumulation, decline, and crisis. These creative destructions are associated with our recent understanding of decline machine theory: decline as an accumulation strategy whereby resultant economic stagnation and blight provides a basis for cyclical redevelopment, growth, and subsequent decline.

Finally, through ethnographic interviews with civic administrators, the overaccumulation of shopping malls and new spatio-spectacles such as luxury mixed-use developments is demonstrated to be advanced by locally embedded neoliberalism. Because “actually existing” neoliberal governance must be locally, socio-spatially embedded, city governments act at local levels as they engage in interurban competition to seduce capital investment into their respective municipalities. Overaccumulation of malls or luxury mixed-use developments across localities is not emphasized as a concern. Rather, neoliberal-entrepreneurial American cities are caught up in a vicious cycle of “keeping up with the Joneses,” i.e., competition with other cities, to attract capital investment in the form of spectacular, spatially fixed capital. The gentrifying effects of this spatio-spectacle construction are the subject of my investigations in the following chapter.

In Chapter 3, I asked another set of related questions: 1) How does the production of spatio-spectacles like luxury mixed-use developments, mediated by neoliberal governance, gentrify communities in aspiring global cities of the Global North? 2) Particularly, how do neoliberal-entrepreneurial discourses function to (de)value existing community members to pave the way for spectacular landscapes and gentrification? I answer these questions through a comparative analysis of longitudinal U.S. census data concerning racial demographics and urban poverty between 1970 and 2020—in combination with a critical discourse analysis of Dallas public officials, developers, and nearby community members. Following Smith’s (2006) observation that “[g]entrification is no longer simply a housing strategy; it represents the leading edge of metropolitan change at the urban center” (p. 198), I corroborate this finding through fieldwork and census data analysis.

In my investigation of gentrification surrounding shopping malls and the subsequent rise of luxury mixed-use developments in Dallas, I find that urban geographies of the Global North undergo a kind of gentrification that is characterized by impermanence. Neoliberal governance encourages spatio-spectacle production through unremitting public-private partnerships, consequently overinvesting in the built environment to overproduce spatio-spectacles between and within localities, resulting in the gentrification of vulnerable urban communities—displacing devalued class and racial/ethnic poor residents. However, following spectacle oversaturation, disinvestment, and the spatio-spectacle’s degeneration into unspectacular blighted landscape, falling rents in the surrounding area become conducive to the influx of low-income urbanites, many of whom are often of minority status. It is discovered that this tendency to uncreatively (over)reproduce spectacles and gentrify communities may happen time and again within the same urban space—for example, the cycle of gentrification associated with shopping mall

construction, followed by disinvestment, followed by a later round of gentrification surrounding luxury mixed-use redevelopment projects.

Moreover, through a critical discourse analysis of interviews with Dallas public officials and developers, this process is revealed to be inextricably entangled with cities' neoliberal desires to become/maintain status as global, "world-class" cities, performed through the spatialized ideology of neoliberal multiculturalism. Although public officials and developers proclaim that (neoliberal) multiculturalism celebrates cultural diversity, it is apparent that this celebration is problematically selective in practice. City government and private developers' neoliberal efforts to transform Dallas into a global and world-class city have entailed that it values and celebrates only select cultural groups, determinations made solely on the basis of foreign capital investment trends to the exclusion of other devalued racial-ethnic groups, often those already inhabiting and using an inner-city space. The built environment, then, must take on a performative, pseudo-diverse multicultural aesthetic through the construction of "international districts" and "global showplaces"—what I have called a disingenuous politic that transforms urban morphologies into flytraps for foreign capital and distracts from the ongoing dispossession and displacement of the devalued class and racial/ethnic poor.

Here, I have sought to theorize elements of the late capitalist neoliberal city, excavating the logic which underlies the trend of what I have called spatio-spectacular creative destructions. This effort of mine is not intended to be a narrow accounting of shopping malls and luxury mixed-use developments, but rather is intended to make visible important inner workings of the late capitalist city: how it imagines and creates "the urban," and in turn, how it reimagines and (de)values people as resources in its project of capital accumulation. It is through an explication of the anatomy of actually existing capitalism, its viscera and ideological mechanics, that a

viable plan might be put forward to combat this anti-democratic production of urban space, a project that I will continue to pursue—ceaselessly and in solidarity with all of my comrades. It is plain to me that the solutions we seek are not to be found in the plans of liberal (let alone neoliberal) urban planners or politicians. Capitalism’s engine is moored in cities—hence my contention about the pressing need to conceptualize capitalism as enacted in urban contexts—yet capitalism is also a hegemonic force which permeates the whole of civilization, its social relations and its artifacts. It is an all-subsuming and insidious construction, but a construction nonetheless. My research in this thesis therefore serves as entry point to my future work wherein I will attempt to imagine the nature of potential urban spatial justice. Is it at all possible within late capitalism—within which people have less power than capital—to break free from our chains and produce a truly representative urban space free from spectacle and simulacra? These are questions that I am excited to explore in future work.

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