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Who Fits the Profile?: Thoughts on Race, Class, Clusters and Redevelopment

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WHO FITS THE PROFILE?: THOUGHTS ON RACE, CLASS, CLUSTERS, AND REDEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION

The way we talk about the inner city has changed so much recently. The 21st century knowledge-based economy has created an affluent, readily-available class of people seeking walkable face-to-face urban living, accessible to both work and entertainment. The formerly reviled space of the "inner city" is being normalized into simply "the city." This urban normalization seems a natural outcome of market forces as undeniably there is high demand for the relatively scarce supply of centrally-located, amenity-laden, urban space.   The market for urban space does not happen in a vacuum, however. Instead, cities facilitate the hot market for urban land with a longstanding "affluent-attraction" policy and seek to attract people with resources to live, work, and shop in the city.[1] The affluent-attraction policy now coincides with both the desires of developers, who find it profitable to convert properties to residential and commercial developments, as well as the burgeoning desires of national retailers, who seek to establish a presence in the city. The result is significant urban spatial restructuring—redevelopment and gentrification of underutilized and neglected urban sites, both occupied and unoccupied, into significantly more upscale developments. The types of redevelopments vary, ranging from mixed-use commercial developments that combine, rather than separate, residential and retail components to festival market places, aquariums, stadiums, convention centers, and hotels.

When we see a brand new redevelopment like Atlantic Station in Atlanta,[2] it is sometimes difficult to articulate the problems such a

[1]   . *See* Audrey G. McFarlane, *The New Inner City: Class Transformation, Concentrated Affluence and the Obligations of the Police Power*, 8 U. PA. J. CONST. L. 1, 3-5 (2005).
[2]   . Atlantic Station, http://www.atlanticstation.com (last visited April 22, 2006).

development represents.   With the completion of each new redevelopment project, we are seeing striking physical and social change in the city; the new structures standing in dramatic contrast to what stood there before. We see the promise of renewal and hope for the city's fiscal future in the new commercial activity with the potential for stimulating development in areas immediately surrounding the project. We also see the culmination of the local economic development project: efforts by cities and states to adjust to globalization through economic development efforts: consumption-oriented strategies heavily dominated by shopping and entertainment.[3] In sum, we see much needed improvement to the economic and social well-being of the city. Or do we?

Much attention in the gentrification literature focuses on the displacement of existing neighborhood residents,[4] but less attention focuses on the mechanics of exclusion that occur with redevelopment. Often redevelopment, particularly on formerly vacant urban sites such as Atlantic Station, is not acknowledged as exclusionary because the new project is such a striking improvement over what stood there before. The exclusion is obscured because there were no original residents or tenants to displace; thus, there is no open conflict between old and new.[5] Notwithstanding the lack of displacement, there is still exclusion. It is easy to forget that the working class or poor people—often disproportionately black and Latino—were the old users of the neighborhood surrounding the

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[3]   . The redevelopment is also a reflection of an ongoing relationship between business and government, a part of the ongoing local economic development project. *See* Susan G. Davis, *Space Jam: Media Conglomerates Build the Entertainment City*, *in* GENDER, RACE AND CLASS IN MEDIA: A TEXT-READER 159, 168 n.2 (Gail Dines & Jean M. Humez eds. 2002) ("The developers and promoters of the entertainment-retail projects rely heavily on financial and political help from state and local governments. As is well-known, city governments, redevelopment authorities, planning commissions, state and local tax codes, tax abatements, and zoning ordinances all play an important role in smoothing the way for large-scale commercial real estate projects, and so they actively promote the high-consumption and now retail entertainment, redefinition of social space. . . ."). *But see* Andres Duany, *Three Cheers for "Gentrification,"* 12 AM. ENTERPRISE 36, 37 (2001) (noting gentrification is spontaneous and natural, but government tries to take the credit).

[4]   . *See* Jacob Vigdor, *Does Gentrification Harm the Poor?*, *in* BROOKINGS-WHARTON PAPERS ON URBAN AFFAIRS: 2002 133, 142-46 (William G. Gale & Janet Rothenberg Pack eds. 2002) (arguing that gentrification may positively impact poor residents); Lance Freeman & Frank Braconi, *Gentrification and Displacement: New York City in the 1990s*, 70 J. AM. PLAN. ASS'N, 39, 51 (2004) (demonstrating that rates of residential mobility among low income households were lower in gentrifying neighborhoods).

[5]   . *See* Elvin K. Wyly & Daniel J. Hammell, *Islands of Decay in Seas of Renewal: Housing Policy and the Resurgence of Gentrification*, 10 HOUSING POL'Y DEBATE 711, 717 (1999).

redeveloped area. The users of the new development are disproportionately white and affluent. To the extent they are demographically present within a metropolitan area, some affluent blacks, Latinos, and Asians sprinkle the pool of patrons. This normalizes the race and class transformation, embedding it within a complex interrelationship between shopping as entertainment, privatization of public space, and racialized class perceptions of who fits the profile for upscale city living. In particular, the specific techniques to structure the retail environment in a way that shapes the new inner city by accelerating or concentrating the affluent transformation have not been adequately considered. Current retail redevelopment projects serve as an important component of American society's orientation towards mass consumption of luxury brands and images. Also, upscale redevelopment allows a city to acquire a new image as the location for upper middle class privilege, no longer devalued in the mainstream economy. In order to facilitate the aura of luxury and privilege, a level of sameness and exclusion is embedded in and intertwined with the design and operation of today's mall, including the selection of appropriate "retail concepts" for the mall.[6]

This Article examines the race and class implications of the geo-demographic marketing profiles, known as clusters, which are used to design and manage these arenas for consumption. It argues that today's retail shopping concepts are based on a problematic, subjective reality and unreality of marketing techniques unduly influenced by race and class assumptions and meanings. These clusters are used by retail mall developers whose profit needs lead them to construct predominantly upscale retail malls in ways that lead to racialized class exclusion. The structure of mass, upscale shopping and its dominance in today's urban redevelopment schemes raises the important question of who will be able to partake in this new and improved urban experience and who will not?.

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[6] . *See* Michael J. Weiss, The Clustered World: How We Live, What We Buy and What It All Means About Who We Are (2000) (using census data, zip codes, and marketing surveys to classify people into lifestyle segments based on: (1) where they live—whether in a city, small town, or rural area; (2) their lifestage—whether they are young and single, married with children, or a retiree; and (3) their marketplace behavior).

I. Consumption Needs: Born To Shop?

When talking about redevelopment, we are in large part talking about shopping.[7] Retail shopping is an important, if not dominant, aspect of many redevelopment projects today. In fact, such retail opportunities are no longer limited to stand-alone shopping centers. Instead, extensive shopping areas are included in or next to condominiums, airports, train stations, hotels, and office buildings.[8] The provision of shopping "opportunities" in these new venues illustrates that shopping has become a prevalent, if not central, part of life seamlessly woven into work, home, and leisure. The emphasis of upscale shopping in urban development is, in part, a reflection of "mass affluence."[9] A taste for luxury or upscale shopping is not limited to the rich. Many more people have disposable income and credit and are oriented toward what is termed "affordable luxury."[10] Rising consumer affluence is also associated with the late 20th century transformation of shopping into entertainment[11] and commodified dreams of utopia.[12]   Shopping thus extends beyond an activity centered around acquiring essential goods and services to one of fulfilling psychological needs that are natural and human, as well as artificial and created. The demand for services and convenience is both independent and a reflection of the success marketers have had in inculcating the ownership of luxury or upscale goods into our consciousness.

II. Dreaming and Theming Shopping in the City

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[7]   . *See* Jon Goss, *The "Magic of the Mall": An Analysis of Form, Function, and Meaning in the Contemporary Retail Built Environment*, 83 Annals of the Ass'n of Am. Geographers 18 (1993) (noting "shopping is the most important contemporary social activity.").

[8]   . *Id.*

[9]   . With the rise of "mass affluence," luxury is an item of mass consumption. *See generally* Paul Nunes & Brian Johnson, Mass Affluence: Seven New Rules of Marketing to Today's Consumer 29-58 (2004) (advising marketers to market to the middle class in ways that meaningfully address contemporary consumer logic, preferences, and demands for luxury).

[10]   . *Id.* at 48.

[11]   . Davis, *supra* note 3, at 159-60.

[12]   . Jon Goss, *Once-Upon-A-Time in the Commodity World: An Unofficial Guide to the Mall of America*, 89 Annals of the Ass'n of Am. Geographers 45, 49 (1999).

What happens when you combine shopping and redevelopment with a city's economic development aspirations? There is a convergence in placing a high value on the status and identity of the affluent and privileged. Across the nation, we see a striking similarity in the types of shopping venues. The similarity between these venues —oddly comforting and stifling at the same time—occurs because national retailers dominate these malls. Retail shopping tends to be luxury dominated, and the presence of this cookie-cutter luxury has significant implications.[13] Each new redevelopment project allows a city to acquire a new image for itself as the location for upper middle class privilege, no longer devalued in the mainstream economy. For developers, the affluent customer allows them to tap into a globalization-fueled economic trend that has skewed income and wealth to the upper tiers of society.[14] But the developer really has three customers in mind when tailoring their redevelopment to the affluent: they have to attract shoppers in search of affordable luxury, secure retailers that can attract the right kind of shoppers, and convince the city to support their plans.

Perhaps the greatest attraction of a new shopping venue and its luxury orientation is its relationship to desires for fulfillment. The shopping experience involves a complex interplay of overlapping yet distinct dimensions of human reality as actor and the acted upon. Shopping makes a purchaser a subject acted upon by retailers who seek to create and shape the purchaser's identity through the images represented by the products for sale.[15] Shopping also allows the buyer to be an active, autonomous agent by acting to obtain or purchase the object, and thus the image.[16] The hunt for and acquisition of personal

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[13] . *See* Andrew MacLaran, *Masters of Space: The Property Development Sector, in* Making Space: Property Development and Urban Planning 7, 42-43 (2003) (offering examples of redevelopment emphasizing "luxury").

[14] . See Mike E. Miles, Gayle Berens, & Marc A. Weiss, Real Estate Development: Principles and Process, 543 (3d ed. 2000) ("Retailers, homebuilders and landlords that cater to lower-income households will experience particularly weak demand . . . because of ongoing skewing of the distribution of income and wealth in the new economy.").

[15] . *See* Douglas A. Kysar, *Kids & Cul-De-Sacs: Census 2000 and the Reproduction of Consumer Culture, Book Review*, 87 Cornell L. Rev. 853, 858 (2002) (arguing that we can neither look at preferences as formed purely by individuals nor marketing as pure manipulation of unwitting individuals, but that marketing both creates and satisfies created preferences).

[16] . *See* Neal Gabler, Life the Movie: How Entertainment Conquered Reality 204 (1998) ("In truth, since the act of buying and then displaying goods [is] often the most efficient and effective way to create a convincing role for oneself in the life movie, *consumption really seem[s] to be a form of*

meaning through the objects that buyers purchase is real, although perhaps fleeting. The physical place of today's shopping malls presents a controlled arena for collective life through the idealized fantasy of the mall environment.[17] The mall also represents the culmination of fear and anxiety, as demonstrated by the demand for security while shopping.[18] With the transformation of shopping into entertainment, as well as its association with the upscale identity, the desired shopping environment from the developer's perspective is one that allows the person to become an actor in a carefully designed movie that encourages spending and supports the carefully crafted upscale identity.

The success of any redevelopment scheme requires that developers not only tailor it to an existing market, but also that it is appropriately designed to create a new market by becoming a "destination."[19] The most skilled creators of shopping as a destination are theme park operators.[20] Thus, the trend towards retail shopping as entertainment destination relies heavily on theme park techniques. The idea is to turn the retail shopping environment into one that creates an opportunity for exciting stimulation that will encourage people to shop and spend. These environments are carefully created, however, to allow the operator to maintain spatial and message control within the environment through the use of themes.[21] According to Susan Davis, theming "applies strong narratives to space . . . ."[22]

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entertainment.") (emphasis added).

[17] . According to Goss, the dream of the mall contains "traces of ideals of collectively meaningful life that we are . . . vulnerable to forgetting." Goss, *supra* note 12, at 49.

[18] . *See generally id.* at 47.

[19] . "The term 'destination' refers broadly to an area where tourism is a relatively important activity and where the economy may be significantly influenced by tourism revenues." Tourism Destination Management, http://www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism/policy/destination-mgmt.htm (last visited Apr. 22, 2006). *See generally* Chris Ryan & Jenny Cave, *Structuring Destination Image: A Qualitative Approach*, 44 J. OF TRAVEL RES. 143 (2005) (discussing "destination image" and "self concept" and contrasting feelings of fear, excitement, and discomfort in tourism); Graham Hankinson et. al., *Relational Network Brands: Towards a Conceptual Model of Place Brands*, 10 J. OF VACATION MARKETING 109-21 (2004).

[20] . *See* Davis, *supra* note 3, at 159-60 (noting entertainment conglomerates like the Walt Disney Company, Time Warner, Viacom, Seagram's Universal Studios, and Sony are financing massive real estate projects).

[21] . *See* Goss, *supra* note 12, at 53 (observing that the themes at the Mall of America emphasize mobility, travel, and temporal transport).

[22] . Davis, *supra* note 3, at 164.

In any upscale shopping environment, it is extremely important to deploy narratives of luxury, privilege and exclusion.[23] The environment must exclude anything or anyone that contradicts the image of the safe experience of arms-length, face-to-face interaction in an ordered, stimulating environment of abundance and fulfillment. Therefore, it is particularly important to the theme approach to eliminate conflicting or undesirable images, ideas, or experiences.[24] "Because so much retail-entertainment space is entirely privately owned, in shopping malls and theme parks, *screening* of visitors can be subtle but intense."[25] "Most retail-entertainment spaces have developed careful entrance and exit control; set back from the street, they are effectively gated since visitors enter through a hotel, from a freeway off-ramp, or from huge parking garages . . ."[26] Architectural and security techniques are used to discourage certain people, such as the homeless or teenagers, because of their appearance, undesirable behavior, or likelihood they will spend little money.[27] Covert video camera surveillance is used to control space as well as allow further refinement of that control by analyzing the detailed information gathered for retail and market research.[28] Also, a typical mall excludes stores that challenge the fantasy narrative that the environment presents. Mall operators strive to ensure strict complementarity of retail and service functions through seeking the appropriate tenant mix and carefully planning their locations in the mall. They exclude repair shops, laundromats, or thrift stores because those tenants might remind the consumer of the reality of how the fantasy commodity they are buying came to be.[29] Goss elaborates:

> the technical and semiotic perfection of illusion makes The Mall
> vulnerable to contamination and destabilization by real traces of

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[23] . *See* Goss, *supra* note 12, at 47.

[24] . Goss, *supra* note 7, at 22.

[25] . Davis, *supra* note 3, at 164.

[26] . *Id.*

[27] . Goss, *supra* note 7, at 26.

[28] . Davis, *supra* note 3, at 164.

[29] . Goss, *supra* note 7, at 26. This suggests that upscale malls are not readily accessible to the types of small businesses with otherwise low skill and cost barriers to market entry. *See* Amy C. Bushaw, *Small Business, Local Culture, and Global Society: Some Examples from the United States*, 5 J. SMALL & EMERGING BUS. L. 223, 224-25 (describing the important needs that small businesses are still meeting, despite globalization).

the Real, such as specks of dirt and evidence of exploitative relations of production. [F]ield trips to local shopping malls [teach] how the commodity aesthetic depends upon a knowing willingness not to know . . . .[30]

III. MARKETING TO THE RIGHT CONSUMER USING RACE AND CLASS PROFILING

In order to make this upscale environment a destination and experience of choice, a mall must seek to attract and hold the attention of a particular type of customer. Developers will tailor the mall toward predictions about that particular customer's needs and interests, as perceived by the developer and the potential retailer. These predictions are shaped by identifying desirable segments of the population through sophisticated geo-demographic marketing analyses of potential desirable retail markets. The "geo" in the demographic is significant. For example, a basic demographic segmentation approach uses census data to "target consumers of specific age, gender, race, ethnicity, marital status, educational background, or occupational characteristics . . . ."[31] Geo-demography takes it a step further and is based on the assumption that people tend to live in homogeneous clusters of individuals "similar to themselves in socioeconomic status, race, educational attainment, housing preference, and other important demographic and psychographic[32] characteristics."[33] The science of geo-demography is used to create customer segments "mixing demographic information with small

30   . Goss, *supra* note 12, at 72.
31   . Kysar, *supra* note 15, at 878.
32   . *See* Daniel Yankelovich & David Meer, *Rediscovering Market Segmentation*, 84 HARV. BUS. REV. 122, 124 (2006) (noting that while psychographic segmentations were made to strengthen brand identity and make an emotional connection with consumers, they have performed poorly by failing to inform companies about potential markets, which customers drive profits, or how to set price points). "Psychographics may capture some truth about real people's lifestyles, attitudes, self-image, and aspirations, but it is very weak at predicting what any of these people is likely to purchase in any given product category." *Id.*
33   . Kysar, *supra* note 15, at 878. Kysar notes, however, that the way in which Census data is collected inspires the grouping of people by geography. "Census Bureau officials design census tracts and census blocks . . . to create 'homogeneous units with shared population characteristics, economic status, and living conditions.'" *Id.* at 878 (quoting John J. Fahsbender, Note, *An Analytical Approach to Defining the Affected Neighborhood in the Environmental Justice Context*, 5 N.Y.U. ENVTL. L.J. 120, 131 (1996)).

units of geography" to determine clusters of similar consumers ranked socioeconomically.[34] Marketers use these or similar geographic and non-geographic marketing techniques to market everything.[35] These marketing techniques are particularly relevant to urban redevelopment because "[d]emographic profiling is guiding local plans for central business districts, development sites, and neighborhoods. Planners . . . creat[e] cluster profiles to establish the demand for land uses in downtown plans."[36] "Real estate developers utilize the methods of demographic profiling to define their market and convince planners to approve their projects." [37] Based on the presence or possibility of desirable consumer profiles within an area, the developer will assemble the appropriate retail concepts in the hope that it will draw the desired customer base.

Claritas, Inc.'s PRIZM (Potential Rating Index by Zip Markets) system is one of the more prominent cluster typologies. Specifically, this system uses census data, zip code clusters, and private sociology (i.e., marketing surveys) to classify people into lifestyle cluster segments based on geography,[38] lifestage,[39] and marketplace behavior.[40] PRIZM ranks the nearly 70 resulting lifestyle clusters in order of purchasing power, status, and marketing desirability. They are labeled with clever descriptive names such as: Upper Crust, Winner's Circle, Urban Achievers, Big City Blues, Young Digerati, Bohemian Mix, and Young Influentials.[41] While the names given to

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[34] . WEISS, *supra* note 6, at 24.

[35] . *See id.* at 73; Kysar, *supra* note 15, at 854-55.

[36] . John T. Metzger, *Clustered Spaces: Racial Profiling in Real Estate Investment*, LINCOLN INST. OF LAND POL'Y CONFERENCE PAPER 15 (2001).

[37] . *Id.* at 16. Metzger recommends that "an alternative, needs-based demography can guide urban planning, community-based development and metropolitan growth management." *Id.* at 23. But how do you define needs? A city would say that it needs the affluent. The affluent would say they want city space, and in their minds, that equates to a need. *See* James M. Buchanan, *Principles of Urban Fiscal Strategy*, 11 PUB. CHOICE 1, 13-16 (1971) (recommending that cities follow a fiscal strategy of providing urban amenities that meet the needs of the affluent).

[38] . The system looks at whether you live in a city, suburb, small town, or rural area, as well as the race and class makeup of that geographic area. Metzger, *supra* note 35, at 4.

[39] . *Id.* (compiling data on your household structure, lifestyle, and aspirations, (e.g., young and single, married with children, or retired) as well as taking into account your race, class, and ethnicity).

[40] . "[Z]ip code clusters are defined by the urban, suburban, small town, or rural location and neighborhood environment; the race, ethnicity, class, age, household structure, occupation, lifestyle, aspirations, and consumer preferences of its residents; and the structural and economic characteristics of the housing stock." *Id.*

[41] . The PRIZM system in place at the time of Weiss's and Metzger's writings is now known as "PRIZM 62." Claritas, http://www.claritas.com (last visited Apr. 22, 2006). The current segment system

the groups are somewhat glib, PRIZM words the descriptions of each cluster segment carefully use terms like "diverse" or "ethnic" to signal which neighborhoods are white, which are white and Asian, which are white, Asian, and Hispanic, which are Hispanic and black, or which are black.[42]

IV. IS THERE ANYTHING WRONG WITH CLUSTERED MARKETING?

According to Michael Weiss, clusters reveal a truth about who and what we are as consumers. Preferences and tastes that we might think of as original or unique to ourselves are not. In fact, reading a cluster's definition and realizing the accuracy of the description of one's preferences or habits within a designated cluster type can be discomfiting. Nevertheless, Weiss's extensive discussion of clusters does not consider that when segments are combined with both racial and class perceptions, the clusters may be over-generalized, fail to account for eclectic combinations of preferences that might defy categorization, or may not reveal meaningful predictions about who will and will not buy. At the very least, clusters must be skewed by the images of ourselves that are sold to us and arguably, as a result, are coveted and absorbed.

What is quite troubling is the extent to which geo-demographics absorb and use perceptions of race and class as a predictive measure of future behavior patterns.   We cannot forget that clusters only reflect both the best and the worst of what this society has to offer.

> As Malcolm Cross and Michael Keith . . . [observe] 'our way of
> seeing cities and thinking about cities . . . is deeply racialized.' It
> is in this 'racialized urbanism' that Blackness is the urban Other,
> the disordered and the dangerous . . . . [This racialized urbanism]
> provides the city with 'cognitive maps' 'to regulate spatial
> movements and locational possibilities.' [43]

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with   66   segments   is   known   as   PRIXM   NE.   PRIZM   NE   Segments, http://www.tetrad.com/pub/documents/pnesegments.pdf (last visited Apr. 22, 2006).

[42]   . *See* PRIZM Segments, http://www.tetrad.com/pcensus/usa/claritas/prizmne.html (last visited Apr. 22, 2006).

[43]   . STEPHEN NATHAN HAYMES, RACE, CULTURE AND THE CITY: A PEDAGOGY FOR BLACK URBAN STRUGGLE 4 (1995) (linking race and urban restructuring) (quoting Malcolm Cross & Michael Keith, *Racism, and the*

For example, at least one anecdote illustrates that desirable, upscale shopping is considered white. After a cluster segment study about the infiltration of black shoppers and black-oriented businesses into the Loop retail district,[44] a real estate marketing research corporation warned a private, downtown planning entity in Chicago that the racial image was not one that the downtown would want to send about who or what the city was about, even though these businesses might have been striving and serving a market with money to spend.[45]

Even more troubling is the extent to which geo-demography absorbs and reflects existing patterns of racial and economic segregation, not only adopting, but also reinforcing them. According to John Metzger, clusters over-generalize based on stereotypes that have racialized land use decision-making.[46] In particular, Metzger argues that clusters are too closely based on racial homogeneity of a neighborhood.[47] Racial or ethnic homogeneity as a basis of measurement has long been discredited in the different but related context of real estate valuation.[48] As a result, past housing discrimination and segregated neighborhoods strongly influence where one falls in the cluster hierarchy and replicates the correlation between race, property values, and quality of housing stock.[49]

According to Weiss, however, individual cluster classifications are accurate because they are frequently revised as more information becomes available or changes; "these cluster definitions constantly

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Postmodern City, *in* Racism, the City and the State 9-10 (Malcolm Cross & Michael Keith eds. 1993).

[44] . Metzger, *supra* note 35, at 21.

[45] . 1*See* Metzger *supra* note 35 at 21.

[46] . Metzger, *supra* note 35, at 3.

[47] . *Id.*

[48] . After a lawsuit challenging the real estate practice of appraising property values by the race of occupants—called racial infiltration—the appraisal industry revised its appraisal manual disavowing the once common practice of examining the racial composition of a neighborhood as misdirected. United States v. Am. Inst. of Real Estate Appraisers of the Nat'l Ass'n of Realtors et. al., 442 F. Supp. 1072, 1077 (N.D. Ill. 1977) (settled by agreement).

[49] . Metzger links his criticism of clusters with his earlier critique of the negative impact on urban planning of linking neighborhood decline to a racial homogeneity of a neighborhood. He builds off Weiss's observation that the "theories of the Chicago school of sociology" influenced the cluster's focus on spatial factors. Metzger, *supra* note 35, at 3 (quoting Weiss, *supra* note 6, at 11); *see also* John T. Metzger, *Planned Abandonment: The Neighborhood Life Cycle Theory and National Urban Policy*, 11 Housing Pol'y Debate 7, 51 (2000) (arguing that such real estate appraisal methods were based on neighborhood life cycle theories that measured stages of decline based on racial infiltration—racial and social population change and cause inner city neighborhood disinvestment).

change due to 'gentrification, urban decay, and demographic shifts.'"[50]

> [A]dvancements up the socioeconomic ladder by African Americans have resulted in cluster adjustments. The former Black Enterprise segment, typified by upwardly mobile blacks, disappeared in the 1990 cluster system as surveys showed its residents had more in common with non-black families of similar socioeconomic status than with other blacks.[51]

Metzger argues, however, that even the revised PRIZM typology "strengthens the connection between the median home value and socioeconomic ranking of its 62 neighborhood clusters."[52] In other words, past housing discrimination and segregated neighborhoods influence where one falls in the cluster hierarchy. Metzger observes, for example, that the reclassification of clusters called Black Enterprise was not consistent between highly similar minority communities.[53] While one former Black Enterprise area, Atlanta Zip Code 30034 for the south DeKalb area, was reclassified as a suburban Kids & Cul-de-Sacs cluster, another former Black Enterprise cluster, Chicago Zip Code 60620 for the Mount Auburn area, was reclassified from Black Enterprise to a much lower ranked "Mid-City Mix" urban neighborhood cluster. The difference, according to Metzger, was that the 1990 Mount Auburn Zip Code population was "nearly three times greater than South De Kalb [sic] and the median age of its dwelling units was 44 years, compared to 18 in the Atlanta zip code."[54] The impact of this downgraded reclassification could be quite significant. For example, it could negatively affect the potential for commercial or retail development, causing retailers that might be appropriate for the customer base to be unwilling to locate in or near this Chicago neighborhood and thereby potentially contribute to its decline.

Although Metzger asserts that this and other examples "indicate how the revised PRIZM urban rankings accommodate the racial and

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50 . Metzger, *supra* note 35, at 4 (quoting Michael J. Weiss, The Clustering of America 6 (1988)).
51 . *Id.* at 5 (quoting Weiss, *supra* note 6, at 29).
52 . *Id.*
53 . *Id.* at 15.
54 . *Id.* at 5-6.

spatial biases of neighborhood life cycle analysis,"[55] he is unclear about the precise connection between the reclassification and the life cycle analysis typology of neighborhoods based on racial infiltration. Rather than illustrating a direct cause and effect, Metzger appears to be pointing out that the clusters replicate the correlation between race and property values and quality of housing stock. In a way, clusters are self-fulfilling prophecies: an area is ranked lower because its black population is higher and its housing stock is older and worth less, yet the housing stock is worth less and the black population is higher because the level of market investment is lowered based on cluster classification.

V.   RACIAL PERCEPTIONS AND CLUSTER CLASSIFICATIONS

Metzger's work also offers an example of how racial perceptions, rather than objective demographic data, play into cluster definitions.[56] Although Metzger does not make this critique directly, the example of south DeKalb's reclassification actually provides a glimpse of how clusters lean more towards stereotype rather than demographic reality. What can explain how south DeKalb received an urban cluster classification in the first place? In order to be admitted into a solidly suburban cluster such as Kids & Cul-de-Sacs, there had to be a social assumption made that a black neighborhood had to be urban even when the area is suburban. This racial perception in cluster analysis might explain why, to date, another affluent suburban black area like Prince George's County, Maryland, has little, if any, upscale commercial retail investment or shopping opportunities.[57] Similar assumptions seem to be at play with the cluster classification of a Hispanic neighborhood in the Southwest.[58]

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[55] . *Id.* at 6.

[56] . Metzger, *supra* note 35, at 23.

[57] . *See* Mary Jo Wiggins, *Race, Class and Suburbia: The Modern Black Suburb as a 'Race-Making Situation,'* 35 U. MICH. J.L. REFORM 749, 770-72 (2002) (discussing commercial disinvestment in the affluent black communities of Prince George's County in Maryland, south DeKalb, Georgia, and View Park in the Baldwin Hills section of Los Angeles). *See generally* SHERYLL CASHIN, THE FAILURES OF INTEGRATION 1 (2004).

[58] . *See* Wiggins, *supra* note 57, at 141-63 (noting extensive collections of newspaper articles documenting residents' frustration in black, affluent, suburban communities about the overabundance of downscale commercial or retail amenities and the dearth of desired upscale establishments).

That neighborhood was placed in a lower cluster category even though its economic purchasing power was greater than higher ranked white clusters.[59]

VI.   The Contingent Welcome of Blacks to the Mall

The race and class transformation of redevelopment is normalized because it is embedded within local economic development's attempt to bring the affluent back to the city. This endeavor utilizes and interacts with shopping as leisure activity where one should feel stimulated, entertained and yet safely comfortable and techniques for structuring the mall environment predicated on privatization of public space and racialized class perceptions of who fits the desirable profile for upscale city living. The great equalizer of the new urban shopping experience is that those who have the money to pay are welcome. If you do not have the money, then you are supposed to go to a place appropriate to your financial means. Yet this is too simplistic a notion of what the urban upscale mall represents. The urban upscale mall is the site of the new inner city; it is the physical and symbolic manifestation of new and improved city living. The techniques that suburban mall developers used in the middle class, white context of the suburban mall have been turned to the urban setting. Judging by the trajectory of gentrification in the cities, the techniques are concentrating affluent whites in formerly working class neighborhoods that it would have been unthinkable for them to live in before because the neighborhoods were racialized black and poor.

But to the extent that blacks and other minorities with the financial means of partaking in the shopping and entertainment experience of the upscale mall are present demographically, they can be operatively white and participate as shoppers in the new urban city. The sphere of consumption has expanded to include blacks "with class" but on a limited basis; the welcome is contingent. It is well-documented, for example, that "retail racism" is an unpleasant reality of shopping while black. Either blacks (and other minorities) are excessively surveilled in retail settings by being followed, are treated to excessive

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59   *.   See* Metzger, *supra* note 35, at 5.

service in order to be monitored, are likely to receive rude service, are denied service altogether, or their checks are refused.[60] In part, this has to do with an ongoing history of policing black people in public places. It also is due to conflation of blackness with poverty and the public perceiving the poor as morally corrupt, which means that "minority consumers must daily face treatment not generally encountered by whites, particularly in retail settings."[61] Therefore, though the presence of even a handful of affluent blacks serves to integrate the mall, it does not eliminate the racial exclusion embedded in the upscale mall concept. The upscale image in the new development is deliberately coded to communicate whiteness because over-association with blackness will mean that the attempt to reconfigure the race and class status of the city failed.

CONCLUSION

The new inner city is rising in opposition to the image of what the city represented as a geographic area racialized black and classified poor. The mechanics of exclusion, such as cluster-based marketing, combine with the other forces of urban spatial restructuring to reclaim the space of the city for the white and affluent to the detriment of the working class. It also replicates the racial and economic segregation of the suburbs in the city. Geo-demography does not merely reflect objective snapshots of demographic reality, but instead is unduly influenced by racial perceptions and assumptions. It reinforces disinvestment in neighborhoods that were geographically disadvantaged by racial and economic segregation, and by supporting the urban policy of attracting the affluent back to the city, geo-demography allows developers to accelerate gentrification by tailoring retail shopping to not simply meet the needs of but also attract particular desirable consumers with upscale retail concepts.

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[60] . *See* Desiree Kennedy, *Consumer Discrimination: The Limitations of Federal Civil Rights Protection*, 66 Mo. L. Rev. 275, 276-78 (2001) (detailing consumer racism in retail environments including excessive policing of and disparate security measures towards blacks); *see, e.g.,* Lewis v. J.C. Penney Co., 948 F. Supp. 367, 368-69 (D. Del. 1996).

[61] . Elizabeth M. Chin, Purchasing Power: Black Kids and Consumer Culture 30 (2001).

Admittedly, it is hard to walk in today's malls, which are filled with exciting, alluring products in carefully planned and controlled environments abounding in narratives of luxury and abundance, and figure out what to do about exclusion. The exclusion seems a natural outcome of an upscale shopping environment. But the lesson of clusters and redevelopment is that consumption should not be destiny. Urban redevelopment is contributing to a racialized, economically segregated commercial environment reflecting an exclusive vision of what new inner city living should be. As cities become reinvigorated with people of means willing to fight to live there, it is worthwhile to think about how shopping environments both shape preferences and build outcomes that subordinate the interests of the nonwhite and nonaffluent by excluding them from the mall as both shoppers and entrepreneurs.