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HOUSING REHABILITATION IN THE INNER CITY: A COMPARISON OF TWO NEIGHBORHOODS IN NEW ORLEANS*

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Rehabilitation of old homes is proceeding at a rapid pace in two neighborhoods, Algiers Point and Lower Marigny, close to downtown and the Vieux Carré in New Orleans. Although both neighborhoods are similar in size and socioeconomic composition, the scale of rehabilitation is greater in Lower Marigny because of its proximity to areas previously renovated. Respondents pointed to two major sets of forces, the attraction of historic buildings and proximity to urban services, as reasons for their housing rehabilitation decision. Property sales have increased dramatically since the onset of rehabilitation. The pattern of sales is contagious in Lower Marigny, reflecting the greater degree of renovation in that area, but, as yet, does not display any predictable pattern in Algiers Point. Both neighborhoods are moving toward a composition similar to other inner-city rehabilitated areas occupied by white, middle-class professionals with displacement of indigenous groups.

A recent survey showed that almost half of the 260 American cities of more than 50,000 population are experiencing rehabilitation of houses in inner-city areas [47]. Private investment by homeowners, real estate speculators, and cooperative groups accounts for most of the renovations with government contributions still minimal. During decades of neglect and decay, poor people moved into those neighborhoods near downtown. Changing housing preferences by

a growing number of middle-class families is now producing a dramatic turnaround in the character of formerly run-down areas [28].

The "back-to-the-city" movement, as it is viewed by many observers, is a major boost to central city fortunes by increasing the city tax base through the renovation of decrepit and abandoned houses [2; 4]. However, conflicts occur with the indigenous groups who are often forced out by rising housing costs and increasing property taxes [9; 14]. New Orleans was one of the first American cities to experience the return of the middle class to the inner city with the renovation of the Vieux Carré (French Quarter) after 1930. Other neighborhoods close to the Vieux Carré are now undergoing housing rehabilitation with

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HOUSING REHABILITATION

TABLE 1
COMPARISON OF POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS
ALGIERS POINT AND LOWER MARIIGNY 1950-1960-1970

| | 1950 | | 1960 | | 1970 | |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | Algiers Point | Lower Marigny | Algiers Point | Lower Marigny | Algiers Point | Lower Marigny |
| Total population | 5256 | 4374 | 4501 | 3652 | 3785 | 2899 |
| Percent black | 1.41 | 1.58 | 1.11 | 1.53 | 3.9 | 9.6 |
| Persons per household | 3.20 | 3.49 | 2.94 | 3.05 | 2.76 | 2.66 |
| Percent males | 46.44 | 48.54 | 44.21 | 48.03 | 44.47 | 47.32 |
| Percent under 18 | 25.15 | 27.78 | 28.75 | 30.96 | 29.69 | 27.32 |
| Percent foreign stock (foreign born 1950) | 1.71 | 4.0 | 7.22 | 20.56 | 8.80 | 20.35 |
| Median school years | 8.9 | 7.4 | 9.0 | 8.0 | 10.0 | 8.1 |
| Percent same house 5 years ago (1 year ago 1950) | 82.79 | 85.24 | 55.92 | 48.11 | 52.56 | 50.09 |
| Median income (dollars) | 3191 | 2303 | 4445 | 3572 | 5651 | 4239 |
| Percent owner occupied | 35.89 | 29.85 | 33.13 | 27.44 | 29.74 | 23.38 |
| Median housing value (dollars) | 8771 | 5930 | 12000 | 10000 | 15000 | 13300 |

Source: U.S. Census of Population, Census Tract Statistics.

its accompanying population change. This paper examines the process of rehabilitation in two New Orleans neighborhoods (Algiers Point and Lower Marigny) and attempts to predict the future population composition and housing character of the two areas (Figure 1).

While this paper focuses on the process of rehabilitation in two specific neighborhoods, the method of analysis may be profitably duplicated in other areas experiencing renovation. While the particular timing and scale of rehabilitation will depend on conditions in each city, we argue that the general reasons behind housing preservation and the stages through which a neighborhood passes are similar from city to city. Algiers Point and Lower Marigny provide excellent study areas because of their location in a city with a very strong preservation tradition, the scale of renovation in each neighborhood, and their similarity in size and in socioeconomic and demographic composition. In addition, the two study areas started their preservation from different bases: Lower Marigny was significantly more rundown than Algiers Point, which never approached a slum-like condition.

Census tract data from 1950-1960-1970 indicate the similarities and differences between the two neighborhoods (Table 1). Both Algiers Point and Lower Marigny show a consistent decline in population, a similar out-migration rate, and low black population. Lower Marigny gained appreciably in black population during the sixties. Algiers Point is more middle class than Lower Marigny; its residents are wealthier, better educated, and own higher value homes. These statistics reflect Algiers Point's reputation as a stable family neighborhood and Lower Marigny's image as a declining neighborhood but with good prospects for rehabilitation.

The black population in Lower Marigny is now concentrated in the northern part of the area while the few black resi-

dents of Algiers Point are scattered in small nuclei throughout that neighborhood. Rents are still low in both areas although Algiers Point experienced a sharp increase in rents between 1960 and 1970. Home ownership is much higher in Algiers Point, and since 1970 both areas have experienced an increase in the rate of ownership as individuals bought houses for the purpose of rehabilitation (Table 1).

Two neighborhoods were chosen in order to determine if the rehabilitation of old houses is due to the same set of motivations and if the scale and geographic spread of renovation is similar. Although Algiers Point and Lower Marigny share many common characteristics, their reputations differ significantly. The "urban village" of Algiers Point stands in marked contrast to the rundown appearance of large areas of Lower Marigny [3; 15]. Its short time-distance from the Vieux Carré has affected Lower Marigny preservation while Algiers Point, separated from the retail and commercial core by the Mississippi River, was expected to experience a different set of influences, unrelated to developments on the east bank.

Two major questions are tackled in this paper. The first question concerns the process and scope of housing rehabilitation in Lower Marigny and Algiers Point. These neighborhoods are similar in socioeconomic and housing composition. By asking both long-time residents and newcomers their attitudes toward preservation, we probed the reactions of both groups to this neighborhood-changing process. At the same time, we collected information on the housing stock, focusing on its style, quality, and scale of renovation. Finally, by examining city records of property transactions in the two neighborhoods, we focused on the specific changes in the housing market that were the result of the onset of rehabilitation.

The second question focuses specifically on the individuals who undertake

the actual rehabilitation. We asked them a series of questions about their decision to renovate an older home. Previous research by Travis [46] has pointed to two general sets of reasons as explanations for the decisions of middle-class whites to move to inner cities. Cheaper housing and easy accessibility afforded by inner city locations constitute one set of stimuli, while the attraction of the historic character of the old neighborhoods and buildings provides another [46].

NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

In order to examine the relationships between housing rehabilitation, historic preservation, and the motivations of individuals who renovate their houses, an empirical model of neighborhood change through historic preservation proposed by Travis [46] is used. This model is composed of three stages. The first period, termed the *prehabilitation stage*, is characterized by slum-like conditions, with abandoned retail outlets, boarded up buildings, dilapidated multifamily dwellings, and a general air of decay. Inner-city neighborhoods are threatened with wholesale clearance and renewal. Neither Lower Marigny nor Algiers Point ever deteriorated to this level of decline. The end of this stage is marked by the "discovery" of the area by outsiders interested in its historic character and renovation possibilities.

The second stage of this Travis model, titled *early rehabilitation*, is typified by the presence of preservation societies, legal action by state and local governments to prevent destruction of historic structures, the diffusion of knowledge through the local media market on the advantages of the area, and an increasing willingness of local lending institutions to grant mortgage and home repair loans. After the initial pioneering settlements by young middle-class whites, predominantly single or childless couples, this stage is characterized by large-scale

renovation and its accompanying neighborhood change. Both Lower Marigny and Algiers Point are in this second stage, although Lower Marigny is further advanced because of its proximity to the Vieux Carré.

Both neighborhoods show signs of entering the final stage of the Travis model, the *advanced rehabilitation* stage, identified by skyrocketing prices of both dilapidated and renovated houses, the presence of large-scale real estate development interests, the departure of the original renters, and closure of small neighborhood businesses. Assuming no major reversal of the restoration events of the past five years, both Algiers Point and Lower Marigny will have finished their rehabilitation cycle within the next decade.

HOUSING REHABILITATION IN INNER CITIES

Travis [46], in his analysis of 24 large American cities, noted 43 housing preservation areas in the cities. Some of these neighborhoods are nationally known for their well-maintained residences, upper middle-class populations, and aura of exclusiveness. Society Hill (Philadelphia), Georgetown (Washington, D.C.), Brooklyn Heights (New York), and Vieux Carré (New Orleans) had experienced a period of slum-like conditions [6; 26; 29]. Similar trends are apparent in the inner areas of European cities [4; 12; 13; 16; 17; 21]. The factors behind inner-city resurgence are generally thought to be consistent from city to city, and an understanding of these factors helps in predicting future renovation areas [28].

Rehabilitation of houses most often occurs in areas having a strong historic heritage, based on a distinctive housing style and an association with important periods in the city's history [24; 35]. The original renovators are mostly young, footloose, single individuals. They are followed by middle-class, often childless,

professional couples who have an interest in the preservation of an important part of the American past [30].

Residents of older areas have petitioned the U.S. Department of the Interior to place their neighborhoods on the National Register of Historic Districts. By 1975, 176 neighborhoods were designated as historic residential districts. In contrast, 4355 "conservation areas" are listed in Great Britain, including almost all historic town centers and some nineteenth-century industrial cities [16, p. 28]. Local authorities have complete control over building and how proposed landscape changes should be managed [17, pp. 272-73]. By legislating building design and conformity to the older architecture, local and federal authorities in the United States have encouraged the rehabilitation of existing structures [34]. The cycle ends with the neighborhoods becoming enclosures of middle and upper income residents.

Historic district designation confers mixed blessings. Residents may object to enforced housing modifications, and the status conferred on a neighborhood invites speculators, drives up housing prices and property taxes, and, consequently, forces many longtime residents to look elsewhere for affordable homes [36]. The most vexing problem posed by housing rehabilitation is the displacement of the indigenous population [9]. In a recent survey of 43 cities, Phipps found that "the most significantly impacted segment of society in neighborhood displacements is the elderly, irrespective of the size and location of the city, and renters would be second" [14, p. 23]. Various suggestions made by governmental bodies and community groups all involve the retention of older and poorer residents through the provision of low-cost loans for purchase, the allocation of certain buildings for rented apartments, and the support of community services that bind the neighborhood [2].

Tensions between the newcomers and

the longtime residents are well documented [9; 33; 38; 42]. In many instances, preservation efforts have the effect of clearance/renewal projects, that of the displacement of the indigenous population. In a participant-observer role, Cybrisky [9] documented the changes in the working-class ethnic community of Fairmont in Philadelphia as middle-class professionals moved into the neighborhood while blacks were excluded. The indigenous population has become a buffer for the high-status group against the blacks. However, Ford and Fusch [18] found that the preservation of the German Village area in Columbus (Ohio) was perceived extremely positively in adjoining black neighborhoods, and black residents felt that their own area was a better place because of this preservation. The apparent contradiction between the feelings of the Columbus sample and the resentment toward newcomers documented in other studies, such as in Fairmont, may be attributed to the difference between a group that does not live in the rehabilitated zone, and therefore does not feel threatened, and groups whose streets are being renovated and who feel forced to move.

A second set of reasons for rehabilitation is the availability of cheap housing and the attraction of the central city. High prices of new homes in suburban areas (now averaging over \$60,000) are forcing potential homeowners to look elsewhere in the city for affordable houses. This factor, combined with changing family needs (57 percent of American households have no children under 18), is directing these newly formed households toward the bargains still available in older homes [28]. More mortgage money is becoming available to inner-city areas, partly because lenders are impressed with the success of rehabilitation efforts and partly because local officials and federal agencies want to see houses recycled, the tax base increased, and areas close to downtown on the upswing [4; 31; 35; 45].

The attraction provided by the commercial core may be the most important determinant of housing rehabilitation. If the job base downtown remains constant or increases, the demand for homes close to downtown will be present [4; 14; 28]. Shifts in the occupational distribution of the population to professional and other office jobs are spurring office construction in many downtowns. The renovation of Society Hill and other neighborhoods within two miles of center-city Philadelphia is closely linked to the revival of the central business district [33]. Frieden [19] considered the strength of the central core, the transport system, and the accessibility of vacant building sites to be related to the probability of rebuilding in inner cities. Additionally, place utility variables (access to services, safety and cleanliness, nature of schools, and the general quality of the local environment) play an important role in deciding the rate of neighborhood upgrading [14; 26; 46].

FINANCING HOUSING REHABILITATION

In contrast to previous efforts to renew inner-city areas, present rehabilitation developments are almost completely funded through private enterprise [45]. Rehabilitation of houses never achieved its potential as an integral part of urban renewal projects [49]. At present, the initial renovation of buildings is undertaken by individual homeowners who, because they bought the property cheaply, can spend a large amount of money on renovation materials and labor. Rebuilding costs can be reduced by "sweat equity," as many new homeowners perform the interior renovations themselves. Mitchell [31] has stressed the role of the private sector because public funds are limited and are needed elsewhere, and the use of financial institutions to service loans improves efficiency and indicates a long-term commitment by local lenders.

The Tax Reform Act of 1969 provided

tax incentives for the rehabilitation of low- and moderate-income housing. However, as stated by Sunley [45], by limiting the five-year write-off of expenditures to rental housing and to those with moderate and low incomes, the act provides benefits which are marginal rather than substantial. Other federal grant and loan programs for rehabilitation, such as the Section 312 loan program, are restricted to urban renewal or deteriorated areas. State, federal, and local funds are available for the care and renovation of buildings with historic significance [34; 35]. Despite this funding, most residents of inner-city neighborhoods rely on their own savings and financial efforts. Rent-control laws in many cities encourage home ownership by allowing renters first choice at homes being sold to speculators in renovation areas [14]. But the private market publicly unassisted cannot provide a remedy for the housing shortage among poor families. In Newark, N.J., only 43 percent of the families in the entire city and only 1.6 percent of those in the inner city had incomes of \$15,000 or more, the level of income required to pay the rents of new and rehabilitated private housing [44].

Real estate corporations are turning in increasing numbers to the burgeoning housing markets in preservation zones. By buying large numbers of properties and renovating them or by building houses in the same style as the existing structures, corporations are changing the nature of rehabilitation. In Queen Village, adjoining Society Hill in Philadelphia, the average cost for a renovated row house in 1974 was \$30,000 (\$10,000 of this for renovations) while the cost of a new residence built by a corporation was over \$40,000 [5].

HOUSING REHABILITATION IN NEW ORLEANS

The preservation movement is very strong in New Orleans [32]. At present

four neighborhoods in the city have been named as historic districts, while over 30 buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places and 11 neighborhoods (including the two under study here) are viewed as potential historic districts [8].

As shown by Gilmore [20] and Lewis [26], neighborhoods in New Orleans are well-defined due to a complicated settlement process that was dictated by the city's peculiar site. Neighborhood groups are very active, especially in those areas undergoing rehabilitation by middle-class whites. A newspaper, *Preservation Press*, is published on a regular basis and neighborhood groups sponsoring local preservation are active throughout the city. The architectural legacy of New Orleans has been documented by Sauder [43]. A range of styles is represented in the city, partly the result of its settlement by different cultural groups and partly the result of the development of various neighborhoods during separate periods in the nineteenth century. (See Sauder [43], Figure 1.)

Over 1000 historical buildings were identified in the city, including the Vieux Carré by the 1965 Community Renewal Program. (Of these, 15 were located in Lower Marigny and 21 in Algiers Point.) The Curtis and Davis study [8] designated both Lower Marigny and Algiers Point as second-priority historic districts. As pointed out by Agena [1], historic preservation in New Orleans has been helped by a powerful commission in the Vieux Carré which has done a remarkable job of preserving that area. Other neighborhood groups covet this power and wish to have a stronger voice in the future development of their areas.

THE STUDY AREAS: LOWER MARIGNY AND ALGIERS POINT

Lower Marigny and Algiers Point are located approximately equidistant from the Vieux Carré but in terms of relative

location, Algiers Point is at least five times farther than Lower Marigny. Access to the West Bank neighborhood is by a car/passenger ferry, which runs every half-hour, and by the tollfree, but congested, Greater New Orleans Bridge (Figure 1).

Both neighborhoods are clearly demarcated. Lower Marigny's limits are formed by major thoroughfares on three sides and a line of warehouses, along the docks, on the fourth. Algiers Point's northern boundary is the Mississippi River levee; the eastern boundary is an empty zone; the southern boundary is a major thoroughfare and racial divide; and the western boundary is the Mississippi River. We excluded the retail part of Algiers Point (the old downtown) from our study area.

Settlement in both neighborhoods dates from the middle of the nineteenth century. Lower Marigny was subdivided by 1849, while Algiers Point was built up between 1850 and 1875. Lower Marigny was an outgrowth of the Creole part of the city which focused on the Vieux Carré. Algiers developed as a separate city on the West Bank, its growth spurred by the terminus of the railroad to the west. With the arrival of European immigrants in New Orleans, Lower Marigny became a destination for low-income Irish and German workers.

The dominant house type in both neighborhoods is characteristic of New Orleans housing of the late nineteenth century. The "frame" Creole double cottage, the "shotgun," and the "camelback," generally with small backyard areas, account for 68 percent of the housing stock in Algiers Point and 64 percent in Lower Marigny. Unlike the obvious architectural and historical attractions of Society Hill colonial townhouses and Brooklyn Heights brownstones, these small, working-class residences may appear unworthy of preservation. Indeed, it is remarkable that these small residences remained standing until the era of preservation. But, as Gilmore [20] has pointed

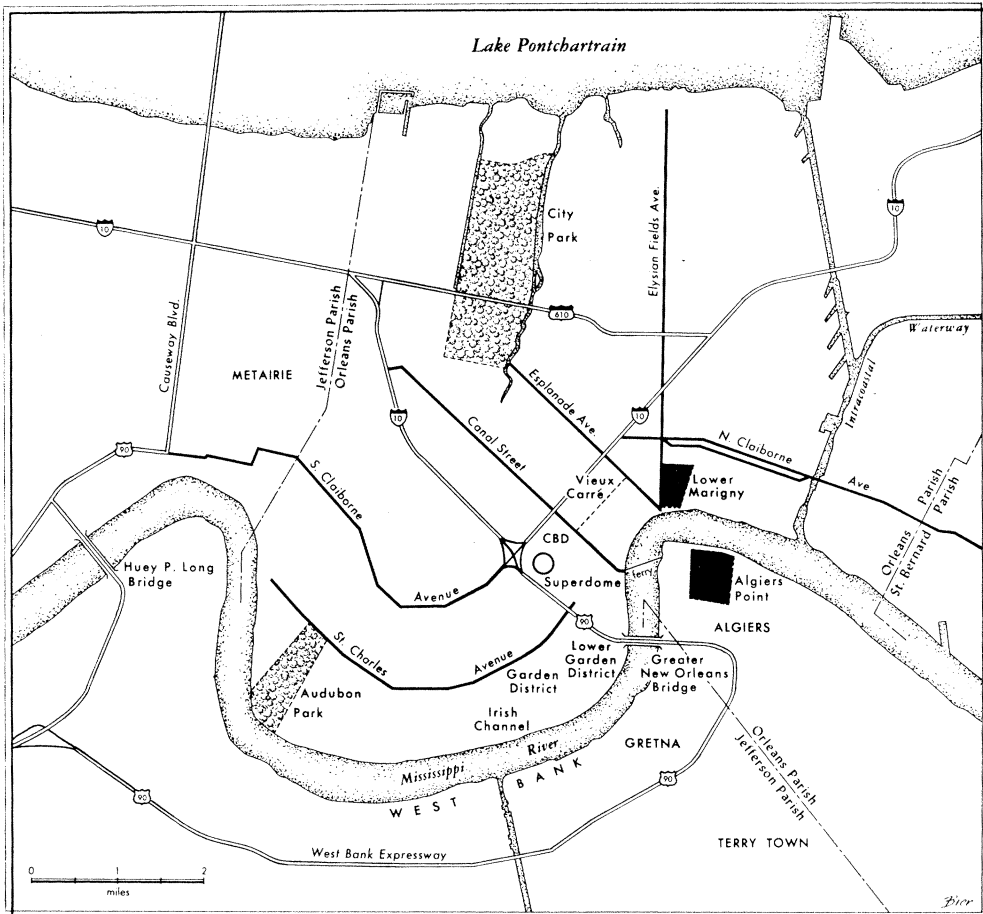


Fig. 1. Location of Study Areas, Algiers Point and Lower Marigny.

out, due to the difficulty of building in the swampy environment of New Orleans and the exclusion of large areas of the city to segments of the population, the price of building lots remained high. Therefore, building new homes is still expensive and as a result, old ones are not recklessly discarded.

The origin and development of working-class residences in New Orleans can be traced to the cultural forces that influenced the city in the context of its physical environment, both climatologic and geomorphic. The ubiquitous low-cost house, the "shotgun," originated in

the Caribbean [39; 48]. It is a one-story, narrow, wooden structure with rooms lined up one behind another without a hallway. In New Orleans, the basic design was grandly embellished [26]. The "camelback," with one-story fronting the street and two floors behind, is found throughout the Mississippi Valley but is usually associated with the older parts of New Orleans. The "double bungalow," also a low-cost "renter" dwelling, is dominant throughout both Algiers Point and Lower Marigny. They originally contained two homes under the same roof, but today many are being

converted into single family dwellings by newcomers to the neighborhoods. As Lewis says, "the result (of these buildings) . . . is a city that (is) aggressively *sui generis* in appearance, a place of great charm to native and tourist alike" [27, p. 60]. Large, stylistic Victorian houses, often converted into apartments, are scattered throughout both neighborhoods. To the outsider, both areas appear as a hodgepodge of house styles and quality, with blocks of small, working-class residences ending in huge Victorian frame-buildings and dilapidated structures cheek-by-jowl with renovated and freshly painted houses. In general, Algiers Point has a better appearance than Lower Marigny, with less street litter and noise, fewer signs of industry, and an appearance of an "urban village" [10].

DATA

The research focused on two aspects of housing rehabilitation: attitudes toward rehabilitation and the spatial aspects of property change and housing renovation.

Two data sets, one of residents' attitudes and one of property sales, were collected. A random survey of residents' attitudes, stratified by streets and length of residence in the neighborhood, was conducted in March 1976. Ninety-six residents in Algiers Point and 126 residents in Lower Marigny were interviewed. Apart from the usual socioeconomic background questions, specific information was gathered on house renovations, housestyle, residential intentions, and job location. Twenty questions, recorded on a five-point scale, covered residents' attitudes towards their residences and neighborhood, as well as their feelings about the historical character of their homes and neighborhood. Respondents were also asked to give their subjective opinions about life in their area. With the exception of a lower proportion of males and a higher propor-

tion of family members in the Lower Marigny sample, the composition of our sample closely reflects the 1970 census composition of both neighborhoods. The two Lower Marigny differences were expected because of the changes produced by middle-class families moving into the area since 1970.

The second data set is comprised of all property transfers in both neighborhoods between 1951 and 1975. This quarter-century allows an evaluation of the effects of the housing preservation movement on property sales. Each property transfer was classified as a transfer to another member of the family or as a nonfamily sale, and the values of the sale, year of property transfer, and location of property lot were recorded for each transfer. A total of 1315 property sales were recorded for Lower Marigny and 934 in Algiers Point.

ATTITUDES OF RESIDENTS TOWARD REHABILITATION

Travis [46] has suggested that the attitudes of neighborhood residents toward housing rehabilitation is related to their socioeconomic background, their length of residence in the neighborhood, and whether they own or rent their homes. We tested these propositions by hypothesizing that satisfaction with the neighborhood is related to seven background variables (sex, educational level, marital status, occupation, length of time in neighborhood, residential intentions, and owner or rented house). Twenty questions (with five-point scales) measured residents' attitudes toward their homes and neighborhoods. Chi-square analysis, with a 0.01 level of confidence, was used to test the relationships between socioeconomic background and satisfaction levels.

Location of their homes in relation to essential services appeared consistently as a matter of concern for Algiers Point residents, an expected reaction to their isolated position on the West Bank,

while in Lower Marigny, differences in attitudes appeared on the issues of historic preservation and the quality of neighborhood life. In Lower Marigny, residents with higher occupational and educational status, long-time residents, and homeowners were more dissatisfied with negative aspects of their homes and neighborhoods (taxes, noise, appearance of neighbors' houses, and quality of local schools). Conversely, these groups pointed with pride to the historic character of their homes and neighborhood.

We did not find any consistent differences in the attitudes of Algiers Point residents to the questions dealing with historic preservation but, instead, we found sharp differences on the issues of access to services and neighborhood quality (appearance of neighbors' homes, safety/cleanliness of area, and

cost of mortgage or rent). Women and those intending to leave the neighborhood were consistently more dissatisfied with the lack of facilities in the neighborhood, while residents with unskilled jobs and long-time dwellers stressed their concern with the house payments and the safety and cleanliness of the streets (Figure 2).

Since there appeared to be a significant correlation between length of time resident in each neighborhood and such variables as occupational status, education level, and ownership of home, we reanalyzed the relationships between the background variables and satisfaction levels, using length of residence as a control variable. (Small sample sizes eliminated many tests from consideration.) Only three tests showed a significant difference in attitudes. Even with the

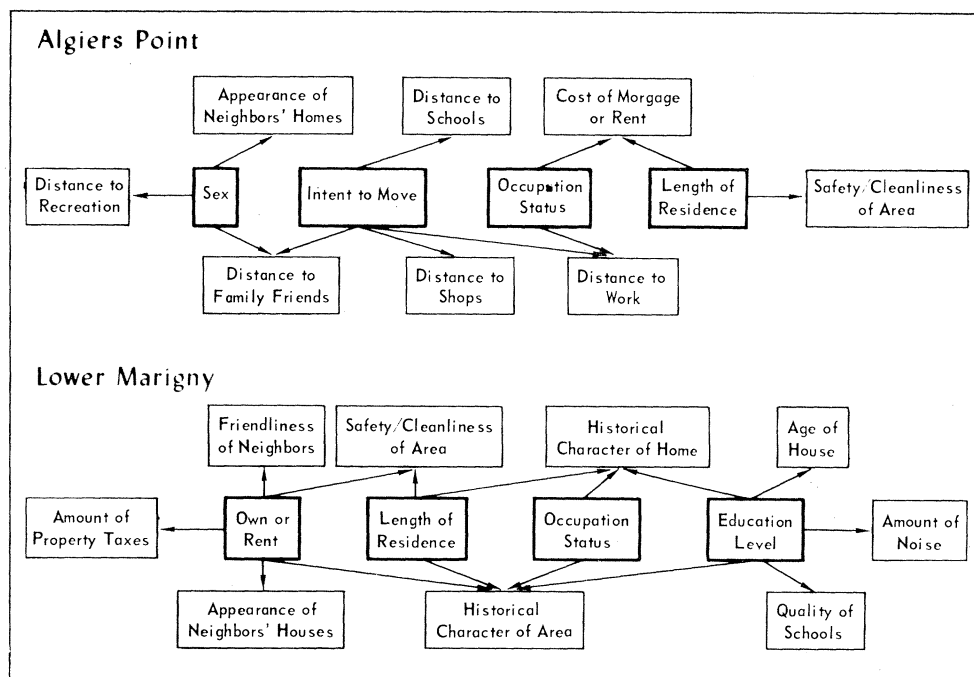


Fig. 2. Relationships between Attitudes and Socioeconomic Characteristics for Respondents in Algiers Point and Lower Marigny. Significant relationships, at the 0.01 level of confidence, are indicated by the arrows on the chart. The background variables are shown by the boxes with heavy lines at the center of each figure and the satisfaction variables are on the periphery.

length of residence control, Algiers Point respondents with higher occupational status recognized and appreciated this area's historic character more than blue-collar residents. In Lower Marigny, with the same control, those who own houses were dissatisfied with the appearance of their neighbors' houses, and residents of higher educational status were more dissatisfied with the quality of local schools. The fact that only three tests showed a significant difference in attitude testifies to the importance of the newcomer/indigenous population division in explaining divergent attitudes toward aspects of neighborhood life.

The differences and similarities between the attitudes of Algiers Point residents and those of Lower Marigny are evident from a list of opinions of life in their neighborhood (Table 2). In general, more Lower Marigny residents were unhappy with the noise, industry,

and dirty streets but many were pleased with the historic character of their neighborhood. Again, Algiers Point residents were unhappy with their lack of accessibility to city facilities and other services, but more people mentioned their ties to the neighborhood, which may compensate for its inaccessible location. Most significantly, a large number in both areas indicated their satisfaction with the good qualities of their neighborhood. A 27-year-old resident in Lower Marigny provided a capsule description of change there:

The neighborhood started going downhill about 10 years ago. Long-time residents started moving to the suburbs. Trash started moving in. This trend changed several years ago. A better class of people started moving in. People started fixing their houses. Unfortunately, crime is still high.

TABLE 2
SUBJECTIVE RESPONSES BY NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTS*

| | ALGIERS POINT | LOWER MARIGNY |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| Good neighborhood/pleased with neighborhood | 24 | 28 |
| Proud of historic character | 7 | 15 |
| Houses need upkeep/dirty streets | 10 | 12 |
| Neighborhood is convenient | 4 | 12 |
| Industry polluting/too noisy | 0 | 12 |
| Neighbors are quiet/friendly | 7 | 10 |
| Lack of parks/no place for kids | 7 | 7 |
| Too many blacks | 7 | 7 |
| Too many slums/slumlords | 2 | 6 |
| Neighborhood is unsafe | 8 | 6 |
| Too many bars/winos/drunks | 0 | 5 |
| Neighborhood is safe | 3 | 4 |
| Grew up here/family ties | 8 | 2 |
| Need better public services (bus, fire, police) | 8 | 0 |
| Neighborhood is inconvenient | 7 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 102 | 114 |

* Values indicate the number of times each aspect of neighborhood life was mentioned.

PLACE UTILITY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Travis [46] has suggested that rehabilitation takes place because of the attraction of middle-class families to houses and neighborhoods with a historic character. He called this trend the "historic preservation" factor. Additionally, rehabilitation occurs in neighborhoods close to urban services and downtown attractions and in areas with special qualities such as good schools, safety, quiet streets, and a large number of families. Travis referred to this second attraction as the "place utility" factor. We tested the proposition that residents in Algiers Point were attracted by the "place utility" factor and those of Lower Marigny by the "historic preservation" factor. This belief was based on Lower Marigny's reputation as a neighborhood with old buildings worth preserving, its position next to the French Quarter, and its image as a rather dingy inner-city

area [3; 40]. Algiers Point's image is that of an "urban village," with long-time residents, large number of families, and pleasant atmosphere [10; 15]. Three questions measuring historic character of house and historic character of neighborhood and eight questions measuring place utility (location with respect to shopping, distance to schools, distance to work, safety and cleanliness of neighborhood, friendliness of neighbors, appearance of neighbors' houses, quality of local schools, and amount of parks and open space) were put to the residents and the responses recorded as satisfaction levels on a five-point scale.

Our hypothesis was partially confirmed. Lower Marigny residents rated the historic character of their neighborhood higher than those from Algiers Point (Table 3). Conversely, Algiers Point respondents rated their neighborhood significantly higher than Lower Marigny residents rated theirs for the

TABLE 3

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES TO HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND PLACE UTILITY QUESTIONS*

| | <i>Algiers Point</i> | <i>Lower Marigny</i> | χ^2 | Significant at 0.05 level |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------|---------------------------|
| Historic Preservation Variables | N | N | | |
| Historic character of house | 70 | 100 | 16.26 | YES |
| Historic character of neighborhood | 72 | 100 | 13.89 | YES |
| Age of house | 67 | 93 | 10.98 | YES |
| | <i>Algiers Point</i> | <i>Lower Marigny</i> | | Significant at 0.05 level |
| Place Utility Variables | N | N | χ^2 | |
| Friendliness of neighbors | 86 | 104 | 7.31 | NO |
| Appearance of neighbors' houses | 88 | 123 | 9.12 | NO |
| Distance to schools | 44 | 48 | 3.12 | NO |
| Distance to work | 55 | 71 | 3.09 | NO |
| Access to shopping | 86 | 114 | 18.55 | YES |
| Safety/cleanliness of neighborhood | 89 | 116 | 14.91 | YES |
| Quality of local schools | 73 | 79 | 10.22 | YES |
| Amount of parks and open space | 81 | 111 | 16.96 | YES |

* Tests are based on 2 x 5 matrix and 4 degrees of freedom (neighborhoods vs satisfaction levels on a five-point scale). Sample sizes change due to the varying number of residents who responded to each question.

TABLE 4

COMPARISON OF DIMENSIONS: PRINCIPAL COMPONENTS ANALYSIS

| <i>Coefficients of Congruence</i> | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| Algiers Point Dimensions | Lower Marigny Dimensions | | | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 1 | .2327 | .9386 | .2563 | .1202 | .2410 | .2776 |
| 2 | .2143 | .1826 | .8084 | .0966 | .2032 | .1997 |
| 3 | .2081 | .3198 | .1444 | .6212 | .1182 | .1407 |
| 4 | .4896 | .2272 | .1910 | -.0108 | .9647 | .3047 |
| 5 | .6425 | .3521 | .3655 | .1193 | .2763 | .1698 |
| 6 | .6914 | .4169 | .2499 | .1439 | .2532 | .9107 |

| Algiers Point | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| <i>Dimension</i> | <i>Eigenvalue</i> | <i>Variables</i> | <i>Loading</i> |
| 1. Historic Preservation | 6.4049 | Hist. Character of Neighborhood | .7474 |
| | | Appearance of Neighbors' Houses | .6865 |
| | | Hist. Character of House | .6710 |
| | | Age of House | .6443 |
| | | Appearance of House | .5745 |
| 2. Access of Essential Services | 2.1531 | Distance to Schools | .6250 |
| | | Distance to Work | .5723 |
| | | Distance to Friends/Family | .5169 |
| 3. Housing Maintenance | 1.6875 | Cost of Taxes | .5847 |
| | | Cost of Repairs | .5149 |
| | | Hist. Character of House | -.4391 |
| | | Age of House | -.4014 |
| 4. Quality of Neighborhood Life | 1.3718 | Recreation Opportunities | -.6118 |
| | | Quality of Schools | -.5540 |
| | | Presence of Industry | .4778 |
| 5. Access of Social Activities | 1.1856 | Distance to Friends/Family | .5081 |
| | | Friendliness of Neighborhood | .4017 |
| 6. Access to Leisure Activities | 1.0180 | Distance to Parks/Recreation | -.4833 |
| Cumulative Percentage | 69.17 | | |

| Lower Marigny | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| <i>Dimension</i> | <i>Eigenvalue</i> | <i>Variables</i> | <i>Loading</i> |
| 1. Quality of Neighborhood Life | 6.6329 | Friendliness of Neighbors | .7631 |
| | | Appearance of Neighbors' Houses | .7515 |
| | | Distance to Recreation | .6907 |
| | | Safety/Cleanliness | -.6803 |
| | | Traffic/Noise | -.6680 |
| 2. Historic Preservation | 1.9367 | Hist. Character of House | .5921 |
| | | Age of House | .5833 |
| | | Hist. Character of Neighborhood | .5207 |
| 3. Access to Essential Services | 1.6428 | Distance to Work | .6249 |
| | | Distance to Schools | .5696 |
| | | Quality of Schools | -.4332 |
| 4. Housing Maintenance | 1.2141 | Cost of Taxes | .6958 |
| | | Cost of Repairs | .5275 |
| 5. Amenity/Pollution | 1.1488 | Presence of Industry | -.5731 |
| | | Distance to Recreation | -.4494 |
| 6. Housing Cost | 0.9721 | Cost of House Payments | .5731 |
| Cumulative Percentage | 71.82 | | |

place utility variables (parks and open space, quality of schools, and safety and cleanliness of the neighborhood). For the "location" variables, Lower Marigny residents were satisfied with their accessibility to shopping facilities; otherwise, there was no significant difference between the neighborhoods.

Elements of both factors are present in the attitudes of residents of the two neighborhoods, with place utility considerations ranking high in the feelings of Algiers Point respondents, while people from Lower Marigny expressed a high level of satisfaction with the historic aspects of their homes and neighborhood. These considerations attracted newcomers into these two neighborhoods just as they are responsible for drawing others into similar inner-city areas throughout the country.

DIMENSIONS OF ATTITUDES TOWARD REHABILITATION

Because of the visual likeness and similar socioeconomic composition of the

two areas, we felt that the same general attitudinal dimensions governing rehabilitation would be present in newcomers in both neighborhoods. Principal components analysis of responses to the twenty attitudinal questions was used to identify the dimensions. The matrix of Coefficients of Congruence, matching the dimensions derived for both neighborhoods, indicated the similarities between pairs of loadings (Table 4). The six most important components and their associated variables are also shown in Table 4. Aside from a quality of neighborhood life (place utility) dimension which ranked first in Lower Marigny, the ordering of the most significant dimensions was similar for both neighborhoods. Algiers Point's isolation is reflected by dimensions labeled "access to essential ser-

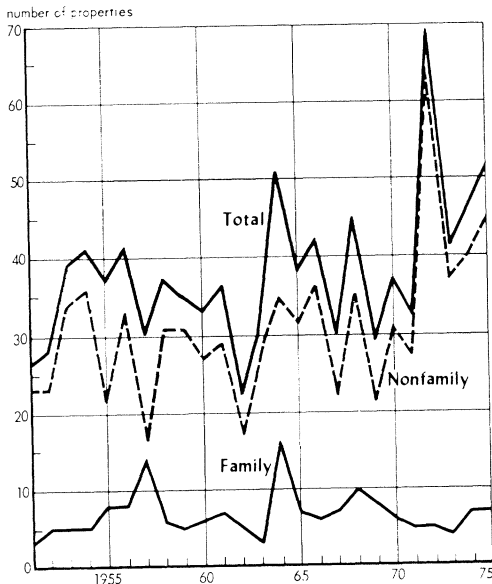


Fig. 3. Property Sales 1951-1975 in Algiers Point.

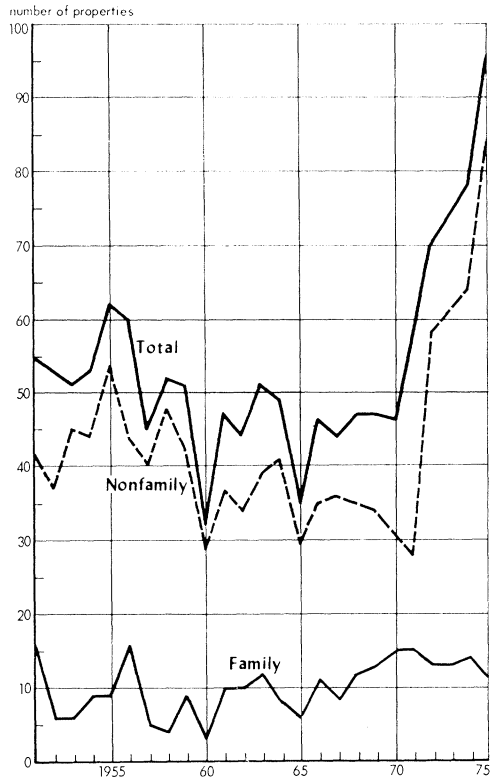


Fig. 4. Property Sales 1951-1975 in Lower Marigny.

vices (school, shopping, city services)” and “access to social and leisure activities.” The basic differences between the two neighborhoods are illustrated by the rank-order of the principal components. While both sets of respondents emphasized the importance of historic factors in their choice of home, the accessibility factor appears as a major concern in Algiers Point and the quality of neighborhood life, most important in Lower Marigny, ranks as the fourth component in the West Bank neighborhood.

Travis [46] identified similar dimensions, with the accessibility factor ranked most important in his survey of German Village, Columbus residents. It seems as if newcomers moving into rehabilitated houses in inner cities display consistent

attitudes that reflect an attraction based on a combination of historic preservation and place utility reasons. The precise importance of each factor will vary from city to city, but this consistency of attitude allows us to predict future rehabilitation based on the distribution of historic areas and access to urban services.

PROPERTY SALES IN ALGIERS POINT AND LOWER MARIIGNY

A comparison of the property sales graphs for the two neighborhoods reveals the more active real estate market in Lower Marigny, a function of the “spillover effect” of this neighborhood’s location near the French Quarter and the center of the city (Figures 3 and 4). Both areas exhibited a fluctuating property market until 1970 when the number of property transfers increased dramatically in Lower Marigny, followed two years later by a sharp increase in Algiers Point. This upward trend has continued in Lower Marigny but has been less consistent in Algiers Point. We can date the “discovery” of the two neighborhoods by middle-class families to 1970 in Lower Marigny and 1972 in Algiers Point.

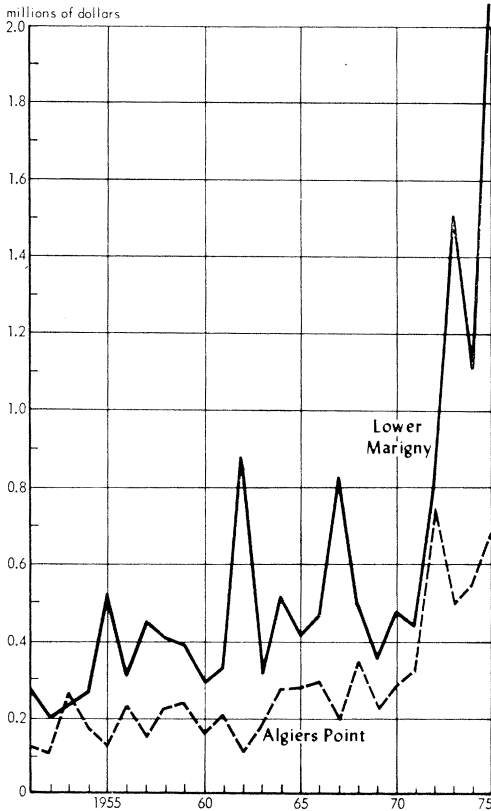


Fig. 5. Values of Property Sales 1951–1975: Algiers Point and Lower Marigny.

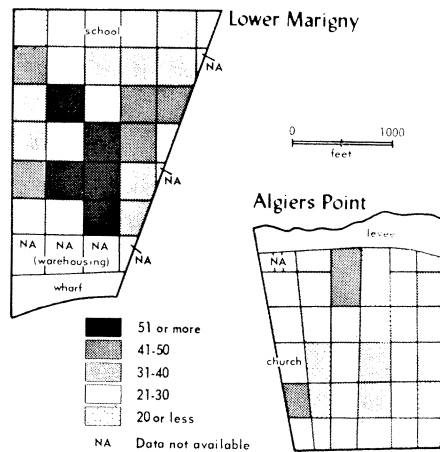


Fig. 6. Distribution of Property Sales 1951–1975: Algiers Point and Lower Marigny.

A comparison of the graphs in Figure 5 reveals the consistently higher value of sales in Lower Marigny, the gap growing wider in recent years. (Because of inflation, values of sales are much higher than 20 years ago and the graphs can only be used for neighborhood comparison.) This dollar difference reflects the higher average property value (1975 figures: \$24,812 in Lower Marigny and \$15,249 in Algiers Point) and larger number of properties changing ownership in Lower Marigny. Sales of commercial properties, which command higher prices, and uneven and quick spurts in sales provide evidence of real estate speculations in Lower Marigny.

In Lower Marigny, the largest number of property sales occurred at the center of the neighborhood away from the main arterials which serve as neighborhood boundaries (Figure 6). The northern part of the neighborhood has many larger commercial properties and, consequently, a lower turnover of properties. The area of high property turnover is contiguous and is spreading from south to north. Blocks with the highest black populations in 1970 experienced the largest number of property sales, lending credence to Lewis' [27] observation that blacks are being displaced by middle-class whites. In Algiers Point, the pattern of sales showed no clustering, but as the preservation movement gains in the neighborhood, contiguous blocks of restored houses are expected to appear (Figure 6). In 1976, clusters of three or four restored homes could be

seen throughout the area and these are expected to provide the nuclei for further renovation.

A compact nine-block area at the center of each neighborhood was selected for analysis of the spatial pattern of sales. We hypothesized that the pattern of sales is contagious, a function of property speculation and the rehabilitation of houses. Just as housing abandonment is contagious (that is, the probability that a property will lie abandoned being strongly influenced by its location with respect to already abandoned dwellings) so too, housing renovation may be contagious [8; 10]. Cox [7] and Harvey [23] have examined the spillover effects of housing rehabilitation with its positive externalities and housing abandonment which imparts negative externalities. Once started, housing gentrification or abandonment continues because the feedback mechanisms, which generate further rehabilitation or abandonment, are dependent upon the direct spatial influences of these two processes of neighborhood change. Property lot numbers were recorded for each sale between 1951 and 1975 in the two study areas. Sales were grouped into four periods corresponding to eras of sales activity (Table 5).

The Poisson frequency distribution, a stochastic process model which contains the assumptions of randomness and independence, was used to analyze the spatial pattern of property sales [22; 41]. The distribution of sales differs significantly from a Poisson (random) distri-

TABLE 5
POISSON DISTRIBUTION ANALYSES OF PROPERTY SALES

| | Algiers Point | | | | Lower Marigny | | | |
|-----------|---------------|----------|------|---------------------------|---------------|----------|------|---------------------------|
| | λ | χ^2 | d.f. | Significant at 0.05 level | λ | χ^2 | d.f. | Significant at 0.05 level |
| 1951-1957 | 0.44 | 5.35 | 3 | NO | 0.97 | 15.71 | 4 | YES |
| 1958-1963 | 0.38 | 4.84 | 3 | NO | 0.60 | 4.59 | 4 | NO |
| 1964-1969 | 0.48 | 4.84 | 3 | NO | 0.69 | 16.66 | 4 | YES |
| 1970-1975 | 0.65 | 3.80 | 3 | NO | 0.94 | 11.43 | 4 | YES |

bution in Lower Marigny in the periods 1951 to 1957, 1964 to 1969, and 1970 to 1975. Since the distribution of sales did not differ significantly from a Poisson distribution in Algiers Point, no period experienced clustering of sales there. These results lend credence to the hypothesis that rehabilitation of houses occurred in a contagious fashion producing clusters of such structures in Lower Marigny. In Algiers Point, no discernible trend away from a random point distribution has yet taken place.

This analysis of property transactions in the two neighborhoods undergoing renovation leads us to conclude that the spatial pattern of sales, and rehabilitation, is one of contagion in much the same manner as housing abandonment.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

New Orleans has been a consistent leader in historic preservation and in retaining middle-class residents in the inner city. Neighborhoods in that city such as Lower Marigny and Algiers Point which have suffered through decades of gradual decay are now experiencing the rehabilitation already enjoyed by the more prestigious Vieux Carré, St. Charles Avenue, and Garden District areas. Analysis of residents' attitudes and preferences indicated the consistent emphasis placed on the "urban village" aspects of Algiers Point while at the same time decrying the reason for this village-like atmosphere, its locational isolation. Newcomers to Lower Marigny stressed its historic character and its proximity to essential services and downtown attractions but were concerned about its perceived high crime rate and rundown appearance.

A spatial dimension should be added to the characteristics of the stages of rehabilitation outlined by Travis [46]. A street survey by the authors in June 1976 found that 53 percent of the buildings in Algiers Point had undergone significant renovation and 44 percent of the housing

stock in Lower Marigny had also experienced rehabilitation. Clusters of renovated properties develop in a contagious fashion and coalesce as preservation gains momentum. In Lower Marigny these clusters are well defined especially in the southern end of the neighborhood. As yet, the core of rehabilitation is not marked in Algiers Point. The cumulative nature of housing renovation in each neighborhood attracts further attention and investment, just as the contagious spread of housing abandonment quickly leads to disinvestment and neglect. If present trends continue, both areas may experience the excesses of speculation, commercialization, and elitism presently associated with the Vieux Carré.

Rundown neighborhoods close to central business districts become too valuable to remain as slums. Families looking for home locations convenient to downtown and freed from the need to consider child-related activities as a paramount consideration in location are moving to these former slums in increasing numbers. Cities with strong central cores in terms of employment and entertainment are most likely to experience central revival while cities with weak cores (such as Dallas, Cleveland, or Newark) cannot compete with their suburbs for middle-class residents [28]. While "gentrification" has been hailed for its obvious advantages, particularly for its preservation of a significant part of America's urban legacy, conflict between the newcomers and the indigenous population over scarce housing threatens to become a major urban policy issue in the coming decade. Areas undergoing preservation vary from tightly-knit ethnic neighborhoods to disorganized slums, and the attitudes of residents to newcomers vary considerably. Cybrisky [9] has analyzed the social relations in one well-defined conflict zone; similar studies are needed of areas that are not so inimical to outsiders and whose housing stock is in poor condition.

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