‘Curate our own city’: Constructing and Contesting Visions of Place in a Small City

by Richard E. Ocejo

Abstract

Research on small city growth has shown them to be influenced by macro-level, structural factors outside of their control and/or the micro-level decisions of a select group of local actors. We know less about the interplay and conflicts between these two levels of social reality on the ground, and their consequences for small cities’ future trajectories. This paper examines how structural factors and internal conditions have led to a largely resident-led revitalization in Newburgh, a small city north of New York City. Based on qualitative research, it specifically analyzes the attitudes and actions of a group of “creative class” newcomers who moved to Newburgh due to the increasing unaffordability and changing character of large cities, and have been instrumental to its recent growth. In moving there they have come to think of themselves as (and in some cases have become) micro-level growth actors with their own competing visions of place for the city. Based on their identities as creative people and emboldened local actors, newcomers frame Newburgh as a place of “opportunity” and criticize what they see are “status quo” initiatives by existing leaders to grow and address poverty-based problems. The case of Newburgh, I argue, shows how newcomers to small cities, set in motion by macro-level forces, become local place-makers with important implications at the micro level.

Introduction

As Molotch (1976) and later Logan and Molotch (1987) famously asserted, city leaders always debate *how* to best grow their municipality, but not over whether they *should* grow it. To meet this imperative, cities often feature a "growth machine" consisting of a coalition of elected officials, government agencies, real estate actors, and business leaders. There is much research on the roles, relationships, and policies of actors within growth machines (Kimelberg, 2011; Sun and Huang, 2016); the efforts and influence of community-based, "use value"-focused actors who counter pro-growth agendas (Been et al., 2014; Cain, 2014); and the conflicts, compromises, and outcomes that occur when these groups come together over proposed policies or projects (Crowe et al., 2015; Holden et al., 2015; Yung and Chan, 2016). These studies, however, have mostly focused on large cities, with some exceptions, such as suburbs (Miller, 2013) and rural areas (O'Neill, 2011; Gasteyer and Carrera, 2013; Crowe et al., 2015).

Given their scale, small cities are seen as lacking the tools and resources that large cities have to revitalize, such as cutting edge jobs, cultural attractions, and global economic connections (Bell and Jayne, 2009; Rich, 2012). However, small cities face the same imperative to grow (or, like some large cities, deal with decline; see Ryan 2013; Weaver et al., 2016). Fortunately, much of the relatively scant literature on small cities has looked at their growth initiatives (e.g. Burayidi, 2001). These studies tend to focus on the macro-level, external conditions and factors that influence small city growth (e.g. global economy, consumer demand), and/or the micro-level, local actors who set and implement their own, seemingly conflict-free, growth agenda (Paradis, 2002; Ofori-Amoah, 2007; Schlichtman, 2009). For instance, as Mele (2017) shows, city leaders in Chester, Pennsylvania recognized the redevelopment opportunities of entertainment (casinos and sports stadiums), and lured large corporations to help revitalize its waterfront with public spending, tax abatements, and private investors. But what happens when macro-level factors create new micro-level actors, whose visions of place compete with those of existing leaders and community members?

Based on qualitative research conducted in Newburgh, an impoverished small city just north of New York City, this paper shows how disparate visions of place come to coexist at a time when small cities are trying to survive in today's new, global, and urban economy (Sassen, 2001). It focuses on the subjective experiences and meanings (Maurer and Christenson, 1982; Kimelberg, 2011) of a group of middle-class newcomers who work in the creative economy and have moved to the city, mostly from New York City, and the conflicts and potential impacts of their arrival and efforts. While Newburgh has some formal pro-growth actors and initiatives (e.g. a city department for planning and development, an Industrial Development Agency, some financial incentives), they have had a minimal effect on attracting these "creative class" residents and businesses (Jayne, 2004; Lewis and Donald, 2010; Rich, 2012). Instead, macro-level factors (increasing unaffordability in large cities) and internal legacies (poverty-induced affordability, historic architecture), both of which are out of leaders' control, explain why newcomers have moved to Newburgh. I ask: how do newcomers to a small city make sense of its growth imperative and its existing efforts toward growth? Upon arriving in Newburgh, newcomers come to see themselves as actors who can make a difference in the city's revitalization, and many have become local developers. They frame Newburgh as a place of "opportunity," while often criticizing existing leaders' initiatives as "status quo" and inadequate for truly allowing Newburgh to thrive in the twenty-first century. Specifically, newcomers promote "creative city"-style developments (e.g. arts-based initiatives, artisanal manufacturing, "green" architecture) and businesses that appeal to their own urban middle class tastes, and are critical of the city's many poverty-based developments (while claiming their support for the city's low-income residents). Their sense of opportunity, then, is uneven. By revealing these experiences as well as the inherent tensions between the city's stakeholders, this paper shows the adverse impacts that could occur to at-risk communities when the urban middle class migrates to small cities.

Small City Growth

Most incorporated "cities" in the United States are "small," or have fewer than 100,000 residents, and 52% of Americans who live in a "city" live in one with fewer than 250,000 residents (Ofori-Amoah, 2007). New York State, for instance, has 62 incorporated cities, but only five have populations of more than 100,000, and most were incorporated in the 1800s and grew in the industrial era. As Bell and Jayne (2009) note, while there are many studies that have been conducted on phenomena *in* small cities (see May, 2014 and Duck, 2015 for recent examples), not many have been done explicitly *on* them, factoring the significance of their size into the analysis (684). Small cities and towns were integral to earlier eras of social science research on urban and community life, such as the classic Middletown (Lynd and Lynd, 1929; 1937) and Yankee City (Warner, 1963) studies (also see Vidich and Bensman, 1958). But a handful of large metropolises have been the predominant empirical loci and conceptual foci for understanding such integral urban topics as gentrification and revitalization, housing, immigration, globalization, segregation, and inequality.

Several scholars have been recently filling this gap (Burayidi, 2001; Norman, 2013; Brown-Saracino, 2018). Much of the research that is explicitly on small cities has focused on growth, particularly the mechanisms through which they have tried to recover from deindustrialization in today's "new"—service-based, knowledge-driven, and global—economy.

In the industrial era, many small cities grew under thriving manufacturing economies, making consumer goods (Broughton, 2015) or products for larger-scale factories as part of regional networks (Cronon, 1992). But the rise of the new economy has significantly ended this economic foundation and severed these relationships. According to the "global city" thesis (Sassen, 2001), the expansion and concentration of transnational economic activity and elite workers in global cities and city-regions has forged stronger links between them across countries than between them and their own hinterlands. With declining manufacturing and a globally networked urban system based on large, dynamic cities, small cities must find new identities, relationships, and economic foundations to survive.

A notable focus in research on small city growth has been how they are revitalizing their downtowns (Robertson, 1999; Burayidi, 2001). Like in large cities, downtowns in small ones are usually their oldest and most historic areas; economic, social, and cultural hubs; and an important revenue source. Unlike in metropolises, however, small city downtowns are usually at a more human scale, have more independent businesses and fewer corporate actors, and have less potential for large-scale projects (Robertson, 2001). A strategy of many small cities has been to integrate their downtowns into the tourist service economy by making them appealing for visitors. Many small cities have used theming to construct a sense of place and identity for their downtowns and main streets, usually based on local, and largely non-replicable, history (events), heritage (groups), or special features (the natural or built environment) (Engler, 1994). For instance, Paradis (2002) examines how a loosely connected growth coalition in Roswell, New Mexico used its area's recent history of UFO sightings to revamp the city's commercial landscape. Such theming allows small cities to create and commodify unique experiences for visitors while (hopefully) setting the stage for further investment and development (James et al., 2016).

Some small cities follow the formula of big ones and engage in (relatively) large-scale development. For example, Mele (2017) shows how Chester, Pennsylvania redeveloped its waterfront with a corporate-owned casino and a Major League Soccer stadium to lure people from the region to visit. Other small cities have developed their downtowns in an attempt to tap into the global economy. In making sense of this phenomenon, Schlichtman (2009) has coined the term "niche city," or when a city "forges global centrality by creating an economic specialization in a very specific segment of the global service economy" (106). He documents how High Point, North Carolina dealt with the decline of its furniture manufacturing industry by transforming its downtown both spatially and temporally to accommodate the global industry's annual trade show. Under this economic restructuring, buildings remain empty and streets unused most of the year, until needed as showroom spaces for buyers and sellers from around the world. And each of these scholars argues that by catering to outsider actors—whether tourists, regional visitors, or multinational corporations—these economic growth strategies risk alienating the sense of place and community, not to mention the actual needs, of existing residents.

Other researchers have identified a wider array of strategies that small city leaders and growth actors have used to attract new residents, especially the middle class. Many point to "quality of life," or livability, factors as foci for revitalization, such as by showcasing small-scale features (e.g. walkability) and improving areas around natural amenities (e.g. waterfronts) (Robertson, 1999). Florida's (2002) well-known research on the "creative class," or well-educated and highly skilled workers in a broad swath of creativity-based occupations, has had a significant influence on municipalities of all sizes. His thesis contends that such workers are drawn to places with vibrant and diverse cultures and the potential for innovative economic activity, and their presence leads to further economic development. To grow in today's economy cities should therefore try to attract and retain them, the thinking goes. As with large cities, it is unclear whether "creative city"-style policies and initiatives—cultural amenities, artistic events, a culture of entrepreneurship—lead to economic growth in small ones (Erickcek and McKinney, 2004; Jayne, 2004; Reese et al., 2010). And several scholars—including, interestingly, Florida (2017)—have pointed out how intertwined creative city policies are with urban inequality and segregation (Peck, 2005; McCann, 2007). Still, many small city growth actors have latched onto the thesis's main contention. As Rich (2012) shows in her examination of Scranton, Pennsylvania, its leaders sought to rebrand the city from a coalmining town of the "old" economy to a "cool" town of the "new" one with a good quality of life. They engaged in several place-making projects (e.g. spurring the opening of new businesses on Main Street, creating themes and slogans) and funded arts and cultural programs and artist residences in the hopes of luring creative workers to live there.

This literature reveals that a traditional growth machine coalition's policies that are common in large cities do not exist in small ones, particularly since the latter lacks the former's resources. At best, it seems these coalitions are more loosely organized than in large ones. More importantly, research on small cities shows or implies a dynamic of local actors who either set their own (seemingly unchallenged) growth agenda (e.g. themed downtowns), respond to macro-level forces beyond their control (e.g. the global furniture industry), or both. For instance, in examining Roswell, Paradis (2002) directly questions whether micro factors, like agency-based growth coalitions, are what revitalize small cities, or if macro-level ones external to small cities (in this case, demand from a global community of UFO and paranormal enthusiasts) influence their decision-making. He argues that both were at play: a loosely networked growth coalition led to Roswell's theming (with buy-in from local business owners), in response to an expanding tourist economy and a popular interest in aliens. What other dynamics exist in small cities as a result of structural factors and local actors?

The case of Newburgh's revitalization provides a new look at the intertwined relationship between these macro- and micro-level phenomena. Specifically, the increasing unaffordability and changing character of large cities (macro-level forces) has led middle-class urbanites with resources to migrate to smaller, more affordable cities. In doing so, they then become growth actors in their new city (new micro-level forces), presenting visions of place that compete with those of existing city and community leaders.

Research Methods, Participants, and Setting

This paper is based on an ongoing, long-term qualitative research project on small cities in the twenty-first century that I began in February 2017. My methods consist of both ethnographic fieldwork and interviewing. For my fieldwork I have been focusing on several sites throughout the city where residents from all backgrounds gather: cafes and eateries, co-working spaces, churches, arts spaces, and public parks, as well as the regular meetings of city government agencies and community groups and events. I have also joined several organizations—those founded by existing residents, returnees, and newcomers—as a volunteer. I average three trips to the city per week and spend several hours in the field per visit.

The bulk of my analysis in this paper is based on sixty-eight formal, semi-structured interviews with people who live and/or work in Newburgh. Of them, thirty-three are newcomers, or people who have moved there from other cities within the past ten years, which corresponds with the city's recent, newcomer-driven revitalization.[1] Of these thirty-three, twenty-five moved directly from New York City, and seven moved from different cities.[2] Demographically, eighteen are men, fifteen are women, five are black (three women, two men), one is Asian (a woman), and the rest are white. The youngest is 25, the oldest is 75, but the median age is 40 (the average age is 43.9). I obtained my sample from using both convenience and snowball techniques.

While it is a problematic concept (see Markusen 2006), occupationally most newcomers are members of the "creative class" and for the most part work in the creative economy in some form: photographers, artists, musicians, writers, artisans (carpentry, bookbinding, letterpressing, skin products, craft beer), and designers of various types (furniture, graphics, clothing).[3] Most either work for themselves or own a business. They are not solely "artists" or at the start of their careers, like so many gentrifiers in the literature. Rather, they are fairly established and in some cases even quite well-known in their fields. Combined with the relative flexibility and/or digital nature of their occupations, their status allows them to live and work outside of a major metropolis like New York City, even though they live near it. Only three people in my sample commute to New York City for work with any consistency.[4] In fact, most say they go to New

---

[1] I have also interviewed long-term residents who moved to Newburgh more than ten years ago and resemble more recent arrivals socio-demographically, but some of their experiences and attitudes toward the city set them apart. I exclude them from this analysis for this reason.

[2] These other cities are Boston, Providence, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Pasadena, Denver, and Dublin. The people who moved from Boston and Denver had previously lived for many years in New York City, and the person who lived in Philadelphia moved for a short time to his hometown in the same county as Newburgh before moving to the city. Only one newcomer did not come directly from a city, but from elsewhere in the county. He lived for two years in New York City, but two decades ago.

[3] Three of them work in real estate, specifically for companies that cater to newcomers like them, one works as an attorney, and another works for a regional economic development agency.

[4] Two of these three commuters work at an art gallery (the same one), and the other is an adjunct lecturer in photography at the School of Visual Arts, both of which are located in Manhattan. One of the gallery workers commutes five days a week, and the other commutes three days a week. The adjunct lecturer usually only teaches two days per week during the school year. A handful of other newcomers in my sample occasionally go to New York City for work, such as to have a meeting. And after getting married, one of my participants also has an

York City far less often than they anticipated when they decided to move such a relatively short distance away, even though proximity to the city was a factor in why they chose Newburgh.

While these newcomers are the focus of this paper's analysis, the other thirty-five people in my sample include lifelong and long-time residents (thirteen, one of whom is a former mayor); returnees, or people who were born in Newburgh but who moved back after moving away for college and/or work (eight, one of whom is a former city council member); people who work and/or own businesses in the city but who do not live there (twelve); and two people who work for local non-profit development agencies that represent part of the city's very loose growth coalition (and who also do not live in the city).

My interview questions have consisted of the reasons why people move to, remain in, or move back to Newburgh; their impressions of the city, its people, and its reputation; and their hopes for its future. Each interview lasted between one and two hours, and undergraduate research assistants, a transcription service, and I transcribed them. I alone coded them inductively and refined my categories and explanations while analyzing the data (Charmaz, 2001). I used the NVivo qualitative data analysis software program.

The Case

Newburgh is a small city of nearly 30,000 people located sixty miles north of New York City in the mid-Hudson River Valley, a very scenic and historic part of the state. At approximately four square miles, the city is fairly dense, with most streets following a grid pattern and apartment buildings, townhouses, and semi-detached homes representing most of the

---

apartment in Brooklyn with his partner, while another also maintains a home in Brooklyn. They split their time between the two cities.

Commuting to New York City from Newburgh is rather rare among the city's overall workforce. According to the 2009-13 American Community Survey, jobs in New York City represent only 3.7% of employment in Newburgh.

housing stock. It was first settled in the colonial era, and played an integral role in the Revolutionary War. But for this paper's purposes I will provide a brief history of the city from the 20th century to today.

Newburgh began last century as an industrial beacon, an important regional urban center, and an immigration destination. Unlike other small cities with economies based on a single industry (see Broughton, 2014), its manufacturing was diverse, producing everything from textiles and furniture to boilers and engines. It already boasted many Italianate- and Victorian-style mansions and houses built by well-known architects of the day for industrialists and successful merchants, and added more in the last century's early decades. It reached its peak population of 32,000 people in 1950, and was named an "All-American City" by the National Civic League in 1952.

From this point the city faced a gradual decline. The "Great Migration," when African Americans from the rural south moved to northern cities, took place in Newburgh at the same time as deindustrialization began, with many manufacturing businesses ironically moving south. A budget shortfall in the early 1960s led to city leaders declaring a racially-inflected war on welfare recipients, which became an international news story (Mencher, 1962; Ritz, 1966; Neubeck and Cazenave, 2001), followed by race riots later in the decade. New developments—the construction of two interstate highways and a bridge across the Hudson River, the opening of a nearby shopping mall—created arteries and businesses outside the city limits, choking the commerce within. They also ended the city's 220-year-old cross-river ferry service to Beacon, where residents could catch the closest train to New York City, thereby eliminating the city's best public transit option to the country's largest city.[5] All of these factors led to "white flight,"

[5] Ferry service between Newburgh and Beacon was reinstated in 2005 as a way of easing congestion on the bridge. It only runs on weekdays during the morning and evening rush hours.

suburban growth, and economic decline in the city, especially its downtown, main shopping district, and riverfront. From the late 1950s through 1970 the city took advantage of federal urban renewal programs and razed approximately 1,330 buildings, destroying its downtown and riverfront properties in the process.[6] A lack of financing and planning meant they did not start developing these spaces for decades (and most are still undeveloped today). But urban renewal led community activists to fight to protect historic buildings, which resulted in the creation of the East End Historic District, the largest contiguous historic district in the state.

By the 1980s the city was economically devastated, crime-, gang-, and drug-infested, severely blighted, and politically corrupt. But in the 1990s, Newburgh, like other small cities in the Hudson Valley and elsewhere, became a new destination for immigrants, specifically from Latin America (Massey, 2008; Miraftab, 2016; Villarrubia-Mendoza, 2016). These groups partially rejuvenated some of the city's main commercial streets by opening businesses in their empty storefronts. Some recent statistics show the conditions of Newburgh today that residents and city leaders face and try to resolve. Demographically Newburgh is 48% Latino, 28% black, and 19% white. It has a violent crime rate of 18.64 incidents per 1,000 residents, which is more than four times the state average (4.1/1,000), and its overall crime rate is 50% higher than the national average. Newburgh has a poverty rate of 28.7% and 27% of households are on food assistance. The median household income is $33,125 (compared to $73,031 for the county, and $60,850 for the state), and only 13% of the population has a BA or higher. In terms of housing affordability, 59% of renters (who make up 54% of the city) pay at least 30% of their income on rent (and 54% of all households do so, including homeowners), which is usually considered the

[6] I got this number from the current city historian. She reached it by comparing the 1956 tax maps of Newburgh to the ones from 1976, as well as by tallying the street inventory in city directories for that era. She chose these dates because they are the years when maps were available that are the closest to the start and completion of urban renewal (the Newburgh City Council voted to engage in the federal program in 1958, and the final year of significant demolition was 1970). She did not count "outbuildings" like garages and old carriage houses.

maximum amount a household should pay for their home to be “affordable” (Schwartz and Wilson, 2007; Tighe and Mueller, 2013). Finally, the vacancy rate of Newburgh’s housing stock is 19% (representing more than 700 units), which means nearly every street is pockmarked with empty buildings and/or vacant lots, only 7% of its housing was built after 1980, and there is no bank branch within the city’s boundaries. Newburgh, then, has a large population struggling with poverty, a mostly uneducated workforce, a higher-than-average crime rate, a considerable amount of blight and old buildings, and little investment in new developments.

Given these conditions, the prevailing focus among Newburgh’s city government and community leaders is its many urban problems, especially maintaining a substantial number of abandoned and vacant properties in varying states of disrepair, reducing crime, and addressing the needs of its many vulnerable communities (chief among them people living at or below the poverty line, people with addictions and/or mental illness, and the homeless). For decades Newburgh has been a destination for the county to send people in need of social services, such as drug treatment and post-release prisoner reentry, which have only added to its own disadvantaged populations. The city has budgetary issues and a small tax base for a variety of reasons. Primarily, a significant amount of publicly-owned or acquired properties (abandoned buildings, vacant lots, undeveloped land, government buildings) and large non-profit institutions (two colleges and a hospital) and many other tax-exempt entities (places of worship, community-based non-profits) all keep a lot of parcels off the tax rolls. Low tax revenue makes it very difficult for Newburgh to adequately address its problems through public means. Many of the city’s initiatives have therefore been geared toward finding external resources to manage some of its issues, such as non-profit and for-profit developers who specialize in affordable and supportive housing projects, government subsidies (county, state, and federal) for social services and housing, and public grants.

Most of Newburgh's loose coalition of growth actors—city government leaders (elected officials and agency heads), business actors, development agencies, and civic boosters—are well aware of the need to establish a new economic foundation and attract residents and businesses for the city. They have made several efforts in these directions, some of which represent "creative city" strategies. The city has a marketing campaign (called "A River of Opportunities") represented by a website that advertises real estate opportunities and highlights new enterprises, especially for the "creative class" from New York City. In 2015 the planning department made zoning changes to encourage economic growth, such as "live-work" areas that allow mixed-use properties for small-scale entrepreneurs. And Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress, a regional economic think tank (which helped launch the aforementioned marketing campaign), labeled a revitalizing section of the city a "Creative Neighborhood" (accompanied by a $3m loan fund by Rhinebeck Bank, a local financial institution) to generate buzz about it as a promising place to live and work. As Mike, one of its vice presidents, explains this campaign:

> The Creative Neighborhood works off a lot of what Richard Florida's work is on, on creative class and things of that nature. And it works off of the existing resources that are here: historic value, available building stock, walkability, access to transportation, and access to the New York City market, and the asset of people and their ability to come into a neighborhood, set up shop, and really start to shift the paradigm of nothing but bad is going on in the city to something is good.

As Rich (2012) found in Scranton, Newburgh's growth actors like this think tank focus on attracting "good" "creative" newcomers to the city through its marketing.

However, according to new residents and business owners, these efforts are not the reasons why they moved to and invested in Newburgh. None of my interviewees and other contacts cited them, and few had even heard of them before or after they moved there.[7] In terms of time order, such efforts of marketing and branding have also mostly followed from the independent actions of newcomers (e.g. the "Creative Neighborhood" comprises blocks that had already seen new homeowners and businesses). Furthermore, while these initiatives are seen as important, much of city and community leaders' energies have focused on addressing the above urban problems. For instance, Habitat for Humanity, the international, volunteer-driven, non-profit organization that provides affordable housing, is very active in the city in rehabilitating and selling empty houses to local low-income residents. And in 2013 the city took advantage of a New York State initiative to establish the Newburgh Community Land Bank, a non-profit group charged with returning vacant and abandoned properties to the tax rolls. With this focus, a relative lack of resources, policies that have largely been reactive rather than proactive, and a collection of historic and affordable housing for the middle class in a distinctly urban environment, the city presents people with resources (specifically economic, social, and cultural capital and city experience) the chance to make a real difference in Newburgh's future direction. In the city's case, these agents of change have come from outside its boundaries for reasons beyond its control.

The "Opportunity" of Newburgh

All newcomers to Newburgh in my sample cite New York City's unaffordability (see Woldoff et al., 2016; Busa, 2017) and Newburgh's affordability as reasons for moving there—both of which stem from structural, macro-level forces external to Newburgh's boundaries and

[7] Several of the participants who had heard of them had been contacted by the people behind the "A River of Opportunities" website to be interviewed as examples of people who had moved to and opened businesses in Newburgh.

beyond the control of its leaders.[8] The full explanation for their migration is not so rational (Harrison, 2017). Most newcomers also mention other factors, like New York City's changing character and loss of community, and Newburgh's place characteristics (historic architecture—see Paccoud and Mace, 2017—access to nature, diversity), as reasons for migrating. And each of the thirty-three newcomers I interviewed (and even more whom I have met through fieldwork) describes Newburgh as a place of "opportunity" (sometimes expressed as it having "potential," "possibility," or "promise"). Their use of these terms of opportunity differs in two key, non-mutually exclusive ways.

First, they discuss opportunity in personal and professional terms, as in their own growth as individuals and in their careers. In Newburgh they see a chance for themselves to grow in ways they could not elsewhere. For some, the city was a place to fulfill goals of homeownership and creativity. Dick, 43, is a carpenter and artist with his own window repair business. He moved to Newburgh with his wife in 2012:

> I think when we first came to Newburgh and looked at real estate listings there were these houses for like a $100,000, and we're like, we could probably afford that. And it's always been basically a dream of mine to fix up an old house, and I just was never in a position to actually do that. So that seemed like a possibility for us.

For others, the opportunity was more about exposing them to personally enriching environments. Penny, 29, grew up in West Virginia and lived in many cities throughout Europe. She was excited about moving to Newburgh to confront some of her preconceptions about race and class in a diverse urban environment. She describes her time in the city as an opportunity for growing as a person:

[8] That is, all newcomers in my sample who moved to Newburgh from New York City. Some of those who moved from other large cities also cited affordability issues in them, and/or said they did not move to New York City when they were considering moving to the region because they perceived it as unaffordable.

> This is American culture, and so I wanted to live here, because I saw the potential for, in a selfish way, personal growth and experiencing a life that I, unfortunately, I didn't have access to. And I think few people are blessed to have that opportunity, to recognize what they've missed in this kind of very divided ambient culture.

And because of its affordability and recent growth, some newcomers also see Newburgh's potential as a place to start a business, and, simply, make a wise financial investment. Brandon, who opened a craft brewery with his friend, says:

> There's great opportunity in this space as a business. And part of me too, just from an investment standpoint, fell in love with this building and fell in love with Newburgh and the idea of what Newburgh was trending towards at that time, coming back up, being able to make this acquisition of this building at a very affordable price, knowing that at some point in the future would be worth infinitely more than what we paid for it.

Opportunity for some, then, refers to how they can benefit from living and owning (property, a business) in the city, personally, professionally, and/or financially. Based on individualistic pursuits, these actions by the middle class collectively have an impact on Newburgh.

Second, and more importantly, newcomers also use terms of opportunity in reference to the city itself. In short, *the city* has opportunity and potential to grow and improve. As they see it, the main source of this opportunity is legacies from the past, namely architecture that is historic, available, and affordable due to decades of poverty and the city's distinct characteristics and amenities. As Jane, a creative consultant in her 50s, explains:

> There's an opportunity here with the amount of housing that we have, the amount of diversity that we have, the amount of infrastructure that we have. We're near a major railway, we have a major airport, a major highway. We're a tourist destination in that we're in the Hudson Valley.

By "infrastructure," newcomers usually refer to the built environment in terms of its density, the presence of large former manufacturing buildings, and riverfront. As Jane does here, when newcomers mention Newburgh's existing diverse population, they usually refer to it in a generalized sense as a positive locational feature (Brown-Saracino, 2009). And when they talk about the city as a place with potential because of such characteristics and features, newcomers put it in terms that are either personal or relate to others like them—that is, in terms of what they and their peers can do in the city, to the city, and for the city by seizing upon the opportunities that exist. In other words, Newburgh has the elements to revitalize (e.g. historic architecture, diversity), but they—the newcomers—are the people who are helping it do so by taking advantage of them. Michael, 62, is a photographer who moved to Newburgh with his wife after many decades living and working in artist communities in Manhattan. His comment below points to the key role newcomers feel they are playing in Newburgh's growth:

> I think despite all [the problems], [Newburgh]'s going to improve, it *is* improving, and will continue to improve tremendously and become more viable by default. In that we have empty properties, we have people that are coming from other cities, that are looking for some. They are willing to invest themselves and their time, and they are willing to move into neighborhoods that maybe other people that can't see beyond [their problems] wouldn't.

Along with identifying the key role new middle-class residents are playing, in this quote's final sentence Michael reveals an interesting aspect of how newcomers often think of themselves. Given their backgrounds as creative workers and members of creative industries, newcomers feel they can see potential in places that others do not. Others also mention their unique ability as creative people to discover unlikely opportunities. James, 40, who works in film and helps his wife set up her regular pop-up art exhibits in the city, refers to this talent, and his experience using it (especially in New York City), in describing this attribute:

> The potential of this place is so amazing. I think that that's what people in the art world are often able to see that other people can't get past, like realities on the ground. So that's why, in my opinion, we find these opportunities that other people would think is not an opportunity. There are parts where when there's

> nothing happening, you can kind of imagine, 'Oh, I would do *this* here, I would do *that* here.' I remember walking around Williamsburg and Bushwick [in Brooklyn] in the late '90s, and there are some similar aspects to [Newburgh]. Here you see a closed storefront, and you just go 'Oh, what would I do?' And just start imagining it.

This creative vision, combined with Newburgh's affordable and plentiful resources, make the city a perfect place for them to watch their ideas unfold. Having moved from New York City and other large cities, Newburgh is not newcomers' first urban environment. Many also have experience in the creative economy as business owners (including being self-employed) and investors. To them, the city presents opportunities for creative, experienced, and serious professionals to engage in specific forms of development. As Jane, the consultant who also has big plans for local development, says:

> Listen, you know, I lived in Manhattan for 30 years and have done lots of different businesses. A lot of these people who are coming up, they've been buying buildings and renting them. We've done that. We've all done the bootstrap, the startup, the, you know, revitalization thing [in New York City]. We've all taken our energy and businesses and moved them up here. Really the next kind of, like, *vista* for us is to curate our own city. And I'm not saying that in an egotistical way, but like, really, it's not about one building anymore for us.

Usually used in reference to the art world, curating entails masterful and expert selection, organization, and presentation of ideas. By invoking the behavior, Jane reveals the creative penchant of Newburgh's newcomers while hinting at both their aspirations and potential impact on the city. Their ideas revolve around "creative city"-style projects and initiatives that will appeal to people with particular cultural interests and reference points. These include art and music exhibits, performances, and festivals; high-end artisanal endeavors (custom furniture, vegan skin products, boutique accessories for pets); temporary pop-up events and businesses in empty buildings and storefronts; and innovative design. After thinking about and/or engaging in these ideas at low-to-modest scales in big cities like New York City, they now see the chance to in effect use Newburgh—with all of its resources—as a larger canvas. Newburgh presents the potential to develop their ideas and the city simultaneously.

Some newcomers speak more generally about this vision for Newburgh, such as wanting more creative design, dedicated bike lanes, "green" initiatives, and interesting architecture. They have an idea of what they want to see, but either are not working toward it themselves or do not know how to specifically implement it. Others, however, have concrete plans—some modest, some grand—to carry out this vision. For instance, Marvin, 49, began letterpressing and book making as a hobby when he was in high school, and by college had turned it into a little business. By the 2000s, he had grown into a printer of high-end, well-crafted products (books, stationary, paper, wedding invitations) and collected a lot of equipment spread out across multiple locations around the world. Based in Manhattan, he discovered and decided to consolidate his businesses in Newburgh and commute.[9] Marvin bought his main building, a former coat factory, in 2004, before the city's most recent revitalization had begun (and located in what would become the "Creative Neighborhood"). But it was affordable, close enough to New York City, and he loved the architecture and saw the city's potential. Over time he saw it start to be realized by other, like-minded newcomers:

> I'm now seeing a little bit of a shift, finally, after being here for ten years, seeing it kind of as a community that is changing. And it is these kind of young artists, craftspeople, people who make things, who are moving here, and there are all sorts of interesting cultural things going on now.

As others have expressed, Marvin sees Newburgh's transition as a consequence of creative newcomers moving there. Sensing possibilities, he bought many other buildings in the city, most of which are contiguous to his business. The aim, as he puts it, is to create a "makers' village"

[9] He eventually bought a house and moved to Newburgh with his wife, in 2014.

consisting of a variety of spaces for a broad array of creative pursuits. Along with buying, rehabilitating, and renovating real estate, Marvin also started a non-profit organization to help realize this goal:

> Its core, initial intention is to teach and perpetuate these arts and crafts of the written word. But then it also embraces artists in residence, writers in residence—we're renovating these buildings around us to become fellowship housing—and then we have the carriage house across the street, and we're setting that up to be a gallery and an event space with studios upstairs. So what we're finding is that all these people are coming: a guy who tans leather, another person who does amazing wood work, or whether they're architects, web developers, website developers, graphic designers, who are makers—digital makers, but makers—and then you have the guys next door, who had their furniture business in Brooklyn, and they moved here, plus they created other studio spaces. It's not just the fine artists painting their canvases or making sculpture or whatever. It's craftspeople, and it becomes an economy. That's absolutely true: it becomes its own economic engine. When you look at other cities where they have urban revitalization through craft, there's lots of precedent for it. So this can become an interesting place.

Here Marvin alludes to the idea of helping to build an "artisan economy," or a local constellation of craft-based manufacturing and retail businesses (Heying, 2010). Scholars have debated whether such endeavors serve as viable economic foundations in cities or if their impacts are only at the micro (i.e., neighborhood) level or on a place's identity (see Moretti, 2013; Paulsen and Tuller, 2017). The actual economic impact of the expanding artisan economy (or, more broadly, the creative economy) in Newburgh is beyond the scope of this paper. The key is that newcomers see in Newburgh a place where they could enact such endeavors, whether at modest levels, like nurturing their own business, or grand ones, like building a makers' village in a section of the city, among other examples of newcomers' efforts. But like how urban revitalization is often uneven, benefitting some groups and areas of cities more so than others (Mele, 2013), newcomers' perceptions of Newburgh as a place of opportunity are also uneven.

They focus on certain spaces (buildings within the East End Historic District), groups (middle-class newcomers, creative people), and culturally-coded ideas (craft/artisanal products, "green" roofs) (Heying, 2010; Author, 2017) more so than others (low-income populations, anti-poverty initiatives). They are also taking aim at policies at the city level that do not necessarily fit this vision.

Contesting the Status Quo

The urban literature on gentrification portrays the first wave of gentrifiers as "pioneers," or a group that mainly ignores their new neighborhood's existing groups and cultures and does not get involved in local politics (Smith, 1996; Brown-Saracino, 2009). Newburgh's newcomers do not fit this profile. Many stay up-to-date on city government matters, such as by regularly attending and participating in meetings of the city council and other agencies and committees, and some have even joined and formed community and political groups. Even those who are not necessarily implementing their preferred vision for the city's future directly, such as by starting a creativity-based business or event, have become informed and involved. And in most cases, they are aware and active at a level they never were when they lived in a big city. For example, Hugh is an artist who also owns several buildings and runs real estate companies in both Brooklyn and Newburgh. The centerpiece of his plans in Newburgh is to renovate the Liberty Street School, a public school building that has been vacant since 1980, and turn it into a multi-use creative facility with studios for artists and entrepreneurs and gallery, educational, and community spaces. Compared to Brooklyn, his efforts in Newburgh have been different. "I don't know much about city government and how it works," he says. "But I've been learning more and more with every meeting I go to. I didn't get involved in politics or government in Brooklyn, because it's too big. But I'm slowly figuring out how it works [here]." While Hugh had already bought and rehabilitated buildings in Brooklyn for artists and artistic activities, New York City's size was too great and its political system too complex for him to feel like he could truly make big changes through his development efforts. Newburgh is where he feels he can get involved directly and have an influential voice in local government, which mutually reinforces and benefits his development endeavors. "For once in my life I'm somewhere where I can make a positive impact," he says. For some newcomers, experience in the different local ecology of Newburgh compared to large cities has shaped their civic participation and their belief in their ability to make a difference (Brown-Saracino, 2018).

When these new residents do get involved in local affairs, they soon discover what the city has been putting much of its energy toward. An important element of newcomers' vision and efforts for Newburgh is a critical take on the city's existing growth agenda, the leadership who enact it, and the developments being proposed. These projects, which often include affordable housing and social services, generally target the city's relatively large low-income and struggling population. Newcomers criticize these projects and policies as being "much of the same" of what the city has been doing for many decades and not progressive. As Michael, the photographer, says:

> There are definitely still a lot of hurdles here [in the way of growth] and some of the things that are in place because of the past twenty years. The poverty that is here has a certain mentality in the way that politics run, and the way things are funded. Government here has issues with trying to get things moved forward; the way that people invest are in a way that may not benefit the greater population.

Newcomers regularly talk about the city's "poverty industry," or the economy surrounding the provision of services for at-risk groups (Desmond, 2016). They point to the influence of such figures as people in the real estate industry (especially owners of low-rent housing, or “slumlords”), non-profit and religious leaders, and certain elected officials and city agency heads in shaping policies and advocating developments that focus excessively on Newburgh’s disadvantaged populations. These groups, they feel, stand to gain financially, politically, or, in the case of non-profits and religious groups, in terms of community influence off of Newburgh maintaining a large population of poor and at-risk residents. As Steve, 40, a freelance writer and journalist, describes some city council members: “[They] basically just want to keep Newburgh down and vulnerable so that those vulnerable people will have to come to them to have a voice in their government, is the shortest answer.” Kate, 45, a photographer who moved to the city in 2015, criticizes a large affordable housing complex that was built in 2006:

> [It] is not what Newburgh needs. It doesn’t need low-income housing. And people made a lot of money on that project. Now I think it’s on a much better trajectory and they’re trying to broaden it, not just to like have basically a halfway house. And it’s unfortunate that you basically have a halfway house on the most prime location in the city. It’s not exactly the best use. But that was the only thing kind of going [at the time].

As Kate implies, many newcomers feel that initiatives and projects that focused on the disadvantaged were once the uncontested norm in Newburgh, and the city lacked alternative strategies. But they feel such endeavors stubbornly persist in the present, despite an influx of creative residents with new ideas moving to the city and all the opportunity that they see exists. Most newcomers commend the city’s leaders as people and professionals, and single out some (particularly the city manager and head of planning) for their ideas and efforts.[10] Overall, however, they are critical of their decisions and feel the city lacks a clear vision from its leadership. Martha, 43, who is currently transitioning out of the media industry and becoming a

[10] New York State has four broad categories of city government, one of which is the council-manager system whereby an appointed professional manager is the administrative head of the city, and the council serves as the legislative body. Unlike other council-manager systems, Newburgh has a mayor, who gets a vote on the council and presides over meetings, but who is otherwise a figurehead.

creative consultant, has ideas for Newburgh based on environmentally conscious and sustainable (i.e., “green”) architecture and design. Her plans conflict with what she sees city leaders doing:

> I believe they’re stuck in this vision of what has happened here in the past and they don’t really see what is actually possible here. It’s like where you're stuck on working in a certain way it’s hard to change your vision, basically. I am struggling with try[ing] to help educate people on what even good design is. People can’t even discern really how something is going to be good and how something is going to be bad, or what’s the potential. The general population doesn’t know that there can be green roofs that are open to the public on all of these buildings, or don’t know that there can be a parking lot that’s designed to have a park on top of it. I’m quite worried about the development projects that are about to happen. I’m trying to figure out a way to have a positive impact on those somehow, some way.

In other words, newcomers feel Newburgh’s leaders are too focused on the same issues they have been tackling and solutions they have been pursuing for decades. They are either unable or, to some, unwilling to see the city’s potential for an alternative path. A reason some give for why city leaders resort to the same types of projects and policies is that they possess a mentality that the city cannot get or does not deserve anything else, because of its past misfortunes and their long legacy. Stephen, 31, a blues musician and sound recording engineer, captures this perspective:

> People have an incredibly negative idea toward Newburgh. People hang their hats of logic on, ‘Oh, there’s all these abandoned buildings, and there’s this crime problem and drug problem’ blah blah blah….People enjoy, as a general cultural thing, I think people enjoy the suffering. [And] if you want to feed that mentality in yourself, you can find something in Newburgh to support that worldview, *for sure*, no problem.

“Being stuck,” then, sometimes means feeling and acting like a victim of the past.

But newcomers do not oppose the idea of affordable housing or human services (e.g. homeless shelters, drug treatment facilities) as policies. They are generally left of center politically, and recognize how their criticism and opposition could be interpreted. When they are pressed (by others in the city, or by an interviewer) or at risk of coming off as insensitive to the poor and struggling, newcomers generally use NIMBYist (Gibson, 2005) arguments. For instance, after a selection process, in fall 2017 the city's planning department chose a for-profit developer with a track record of projects in low-income urban neighborhoods to develop a mixed-use development on city-owned land. The proposed project would consist of a mix of market-rate as well as affordable and supportive housing, both of which would be publicly subsidized. But residents point out that the project is on a plot of land with beautiful, sweeping views of the Hudson River and Hudson Highlands, the local mountain range. Given the location, they point to the potential for using the land for a bolder project, not to mention a more profitable one (Kate made this point above in reference to a previous affordable housing project).[11] However, newcomers are quick to say they support affordable housing, "just not there," in that location, which is also in the East End Historic District.[12] If the project must go through, they would rather it go in another area of the city, away from the prime real estate (and from where most of them live).

But like their critiques of city leaders, newcomers' sense of NIMBYism is also influenced by their penchant for creativity and visions of place. Local critics of growth and development often do not want *any* projects in their vicinity (Halle and Tiso, 2014). They are not like documented opponents of growth machine initiatives (Been et al., 2014; Cain, 2014) in this regard. They want to see Newburgh grow and revitalize, but on certain terms. Most importantly,

[11] Newcomers' criticism of such policies is not entirely based on their vision of place for Newburgh. As homeowners, they are also concerned about paying high taxes, getting adequate services for their tax dollars, and their properties' long-term value. In other words, they also have a strong personal economic interest in the types and locations of development projects in the city in addition to wanting to see it go in a certain direction developmentally.

[12] I say "residents" earlier instead of just "newcomers" and say "newcomers" here because there are some differences in how newcomer and non-newcomer residents who are against the project have expressed their opposition. Most of those residents who oppose this project are long-timers, returnees, and newcomers who own a home and/or business. Long-timers and returnees are more likely to say that the city already has enough affordable housing and does not need more. Newcomers are more likely to make NIMBYist arguments.

they believe they can serve as the source of the positive development that Newburgh needs. As Jane says:

> I think there are really some good people in the city government now. I do believe that. And they're probably overworked and they're probably underpaid and they probably can't walk down the street without ten people coming up to them and asking them business questions when they just want to maybe take a walk and have lunch. But right now, to be honest you, we're just kinda going ahead without'em.

Conclusion

This paper has examined how macro-level factors influencing urban regions have created new micro-level growth actors in small cities, and the attitudes toward place they construct and contest in their new environment. While most research on small city growth either takes these levels of social reality separately or treats them as intertwined but in varying proportion (i.e., more macro than micro, and vice versa), I have attempted to show a different result of their relationship. In Newburgh, revitalization has not occurred because of the efforts of local actors or because of powerful, but abstract, macro-level forces (i.e., the expansion of a global economy). Rather, macro-level forces have "pushed" actual *people* out of large cities, while internal conditions created by historical legacies have "pulled" them in to a small one. And once there, these newcomers become growth actors with their own visions of place and critical perspectives toward existing policies and leaders. Growth in small cities, then, could occur from the collective efforts of individual actors rather than from a planned effort.

The results from this research offer some important implications for the future directions of small cities like Newburgh that are revitalizing, especially when new residents are significant players in this revitalization. First, it is important for scholars who study small cities to look at what makes them distinct from large ones (Bell and Jayne, 2009). The case of Newburgh shows how size influences how residents, specifically those with large city experience, think of themselves as citizens. The distinct social and political ecology in a place like Newburgh compared to a city the size of New York City influences newcomers to think of themselves as residents with a greater voice and influence than they previously thought (Brown-Saracino, 2018). And given the city's scale, it is likely that their efforts—both everyday activities (owning property or multiple properties, owning a business) as well as direct involvement in politics—will indeed have an influence on Newburgh's future.

Building from this point, newcomers to Newburgh are unique among the urban middle class moving to struggling places (i.e., gentrifiers). The gentrification literature shows how early gentrifiers, especially artists, often get displaced from their neighborhoods as the process proceeds and wealthier groups move there and/or invest (Schlichtman et al., 2017). Social and cultural displacement, or the idea that a neighborhood's character has changed (Shaw and Hagemans, 2015), and the fact that rents increase as a neighborhood gentrifies play roles in their out-migration. But, as I have shown, small cities provide members of the creative class with the opportunity to shore themselves up against their own displacement by becoming owners of their homes and investors in their neighborhoods and city. And this economic opportunity opens the window for them to see and help to realize other opportunities in Newburgh that concern the character of its revitalization. It is possible, then, that this particular group's impacts will be long-term and potentially long-lasting.

References

Been, V., Madar, J., and S. McDonnell (2014) Urban land-use regulation: are homevoters overtaking the growth machine? *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies*, 11.2, 227-265.

Bell, D. and M. Jayne (2009) Small cities? Towards a research agenda. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 33.3, 683-99.

Broughton, C. (2015) *Boom, bust exodus: the Rust Belt, the maquilas, and the tale of two cities*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Brown-Saracino, J. (2018) *How places make us: novel LBQ identities in four small cities.* University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Brown-Saracino, J. (2009) *A neighborhood that never changes: gentrification, social preservation, and the search for authenticity*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.

Burayidi, M. (2001) Introduction: downtowns and small city development. In M. Burayidi (ed.), *Downtowns: Revitalizing the centers of small urban communities*, Garland, New York.

Busa, A. (2017) *The creative destruction of New York City: engineering the city for the elite*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Cain, C. (2014) Negotiating with the growth machine: community benefits agreements and value-conscious growth. *Sociological Forum*, 29.4, 937-958.

Charmaz, K. (2001) Grounded Theory. In R. Emerson (ed.), *Contemporary Field Research: Perspectives and Formulations*, Waveland, Prospect Heights, IL.

Cronon, W. (1992) *Nature's metropolis: Chicago and the great west*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York.

Crowe, J., Silva, T., Ceresola, R.G., Buday, A., C. Leonard (2015) Differences in public perceptions and leaders' perceptions on hydraulic fracturing and shale development. *Sociological Perspectives*, 58.3, 441-463.

Desmond, M. (2016) *Evicted: poverty and profit in the American city*, Crown, New York.

Duck, W. (2015) *No way out: precarious living in the shadow of poverty and drug dealing*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Engler, M. (1994) Theme towns: the pitfalls and alternatives of image making. *Small Town*, January-February, 14–23.

Erickcek, G.A. and H. McKinney (2004) 'Small cities blues': looking for growth factors in small and medium-sized cities. Upjohn Institute Staff Working Paper 04-100, Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, Kalamazoo, MI.

Florida, R. (2002) *The rise of the creative class, and how it's transforming work, leisure, community, and everyday life*, Basic Books, New York.

Florida. (2017) *The new urban crisis: how our cities are increasing inequality, deepening segregation, and failing the middle class-and what we can do about it,* Basic Books, New York.

Gasteyer, S. and J. Carrera (2013) The coal-corn divide: colliding treadmills in rural community energy development. *Rural Sociology*, 78.3, 290-317.

Gibson, T.A. (2005) NIMBY and the civic good. *City & Community*. 4.4, 381-401.

Halle, D. and E. Tiso (2014) *New York's new edge: contemporary art, The High Line, and urban megaprojects on the far west side*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.

Harrison, J.A. (2017) Rust belt boomerang: the pull of place in moving back to a legacy city. *City & Community*, 16.3, 263-83.

Heying, C. (2010) *Brews to bikes: Portland's artisan economy*, Ooligan Press, Portland, OR.

Holden, M., Scerri, A., and A.H. Esfahani (2015) Justifying redevelopment 'failures' within urban 'success stories': dispute, compromise, and a new test of urbanity. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 39.3, 451-70.

James, K., Thompson-Fawcett, M., and C.J. Hansen (2016) Transformations in identity, governance and planning: the case of the small city. *Urban Studies,* 53.6, 1162-77.

Jayne, M. (2004) Culture that works? Creative industries development in a working-class city. *Capital & Class*, 28, 199–210.

Kimelberg, S.M. (2011) Inside the growth machine: real estate professionals on the perceived challenges of urban development. *City & Community*, 10.1, 76-99.

Lewis, N. M., & Donald, B. (2010). A new rubric for "creative city" potential in Canada's smaller cities. *Urban Studies*, 47, 29–54.

Logan, J. and H. Molotch (1987) *Urban fortunes: the political economy of place*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA.

Lynd, R.S. and H.M. Lynd (1929) *Middletown: a study in contemporary American culture*, Harcourt, Brace, and Company, New York.

Lynd, R.S. and H.M. Lynd (1937) *Middletown in transition: a study in cultural conflicts*, Mariner Books, New York.

Markusen, A. (2006) Urban development and the politics of a creative class: evidence from a study of artists. *Environment and Planning A*, 38.10, 1921-40.

Massey, D. (2008) *New faces in new places: the changing geography of American immigration*, Russell Sage, New York.

Maurer, R.C. and J.A. Christenson (1982) Growth and nongrowth orientations of urban, suburban, and rural mayors: reflections on the city as a growth machine. *Social Science Quarterly*, 63.2, 350-8.

May, R.A.B. (2014) *Urban nightlife: entertaining race, class, and culture in public space*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ.

McCann, E. J. (2007). Inequality and politics in the creative city-region: questions of livability and state strategy. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 31, 188–196.

Mele, C. (2017) *Race and the politics of deception: the making of an American city*. NYU Press, New York.

Mele, C. (2013) Neoliberalism, race, and the redefining of urban redevelopment. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 37.2, 598-617.

Mencher, S. (1962) Newburgh: the recurrent crisis of public assistance. *Social Work*, 7.1, 3-11.

Miller, B.J. (2013) Not all suburbs are the same: the role of character in shaping growth and development in three Chicago suburbs. *Urban Affairs Review,* 49.5, 652-77.

Miraftab, F. (2016) *Global heartland: displaced labor, transnational lives, and local placemaking*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN.

Molotch, H. (1976) The city as a growth machine: toward a political economy of place. *American Journal of Sociology*, 82.2, 309–32.

Moretti, E. (2013) *The new geography of jobs*, Mariner Books, New York.

Neubeck, K.J. and N.A. Cazenave (2001) *Welfare racism: playing the race card against America's poor*, Routledge, New York.

Norman, J.R. (2013) *Small cities USA: growth, diversity, and inequality*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ.

Ofori-Amoah, B. (2007) *Beyond the metropolis: urban geography as if small cities mattered*, University Press of America, Lanham, MD.

O'Neill, K.M., Rudel, T.K., M.H. McDermott. (2011) Why environmentally constrained towns choose growth controls. *City & Community*, 10.2, 111-30.

Paccoud, A. and A. Mace (2017) Tenure change in London's suburbs: spreading gentrification or suburban upscaling? *Urban Studies*, 1-16.

Paradis, T. (2002) The political economy of theme development in small urban places: the case of Roswell, New Mexico. *Tourism Geographies*, 4, 22–43.

Paulsen, K.E. and H.E. Tuller (2017) Crafting place: craft beer and authenticity in Jacksonville, Florida. In N.G. Chapman, J.S. Lellock, and C.D. Lippard (eds.), *Untapped: exploring the* *cultural dimensions of craft beer*, West Virginia University Press, Morgantown, WV.

Peck, J. (2005) Struggling with the creative class. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 29.4, 740–770.

Reese, L. A. and M. Ye (2011) Policy versus place luck: achieving local economic prosperity. *Economic Development Quarterly*, 253, 221–236.

Rich, M.A. (2012) 'From coal to cool': the creative class, social capital, and the revitalization of Scranton. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 35.3, 365-84.

Ritz, J.P. (1966) *The despised poor: Newburgh's war on welfare*, Beacon Press, Boston, MA.

Robertson, K.A. (1999) Can small-city downtowns remain viable? A national study of development issues and strategies. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 65.3, 270-83.

Robertson, K.A. (2001) Downtown development principles for small cities. In M. Burayidi (ed.), *Downtowns: revitalizing the centers of small urban communities*, Routledge, New York.

Ryan, B.D. (2013) *Design after decline: how America rebuilds shrinking cities*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, PA.

Sassen, S. (2001) *The global city: New York, London, Tokyo*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.

Schlichtman, J.J. (2009) The niche city idea: how a declining manufacturing center exploited the opportunities of globalization. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 31.1, 105-25.

Schlichtman J.J., Patch, J., and M.L. Hill (2017) *Gentrifier*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, CA.

Schwartz, M. and E. Wilson (2007) Who can afford to live in a home? A look at data from the 2006 American Community Survey. U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, D.C.

Shaw, K.S. and I.W. Hagemans (2015) 'Gentrification without displacement' and the consequent loss of place: the effects of class transition on low-income residents of secure housing in gentrifying areas. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 39.2, 323-41.

Smith, N. (1996) *The new urban frontier: gentrification and the revanchist city*, Routledge, New York.

Sun, X. and R. Huang (2016) Extension of state-led growth coalition and grassroots management. *Urban Affairs Review*, 52.6, 917-43.

Tighe, J.R. and E. Mueller (2013) *The affordable housing reader*, Routledge, New York.

Vidich, A.J. and J. Bensman (1958) *Small town in mass society: class, power, and religion in a rural community*, University of Illinois Press, Champagne, IL.

Villarrubia-Mendoza, J. (2016) Tú velas por los tuyos: weak labor markets and the importance of social networks. *International Migration and Integration*, 17, 631-48.

Warner, W.L. (1963) *Yankee city*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT.

Weaver, R., Bagchi-Sen, S., Knight, J., and A. Frazier (2016) *Shrinking cities: understanding urban decline in the United States*, Routledge, London.

Woldoff, R., Morrison, L.M., and M.R. Glass (2016) *Priced out: Stuyvesant Town and the loss of middle-class neighborhoods*, NYU Press, New York.

Yung, E.H.K. and E.H. Chan (2016) Re-examining the growth machine ideology of cities. *Urban Affairs Review*, 52.2, 182-210.