The space that time forgot: Temporal narratives of racially integrated neighborhoods

Megan Faust
Tulane University

ABSTRACT
This paper offers an initial theoretical examination of the discourse surrounding racially-mixed neighborhoods. Using scholarly work on time, space, and power as its foundation, this study develops the concept of residential time, or the perception and experience of a neighborhood's demographic and cultural lifespan, and traces its deployment in narratives surrounding racially-integrated neighborhoods. I draw on both the academic literature concerning race and space as well as select news articles on neighborhoods in New Orleans, Louisiana, as examples of the discursive relegation of racially-mixed neighborhoods, demonstrating how public discourse characterizes them as unstable and fleeting. I argue that this temporal relegation ultimately serves white spatial politics, or the differential construction of residential time in a manner that propels the aims of racial capitalism. The implications of such a widespread characterization of residential time in mixed-race neighborhoods are similarly discussed.

Introduction

As racialized spaces, the demographic composition of neighborhoods receives a great deal of public and academic attention. Issues such as segregation and gentrification dominate news headlines and consume scholarly attention, focusing on the profound maintenance of geographic color lines as well as commercial interests’ often insidious transformation of historically nonwhite communities. These conversations typically center on racially homogenous neighborhoods, reflecting both the stark racial divisiveness of segregation and the displacement of longtime residents of color from gentrifying neighborhoods (Badger et al., 2019a, 2019b; Gotham, 2014; Lipsitz, 2007; D. S. Massey, 2020). As a result, racially-mixed neighborhoods occupy a more ambiguous space in the literature, for sometimes they are studied explicitly (Collins & Galster, 1995; Helper, 1986; Landman, 2013; Lee & Wood, 1990), yet often conversations of demographic change dominate. The scholarly definition of mixed-race neighborhoods is itself ambiguous and inconsistent (R. Wright et al., 2020). For the purposes of this paper, a racially-mixed neighborhood refers to one in which a substantial (anywhere from 30–70%) minority racial group of any identity resides, adopting a more inclusive threshold than demographers often delineate for the purposes of this discourse-focused analysis. I use the terms “racially-mixed,” “racially-heterogenous,” “mixed-race,” and synonymous terms interchangeably in my discussion of such neighborhoods. Instead of focusing on demographic measures, I argue that the discourse
surrounding racially integrated neighborhoods often speaks of racially-mixed spaces as purely temporary, making their existence appear tenuous at best. Academics and journalists alike frequently discuss mixed-race residential areas as spaces that are inherently in flux, subject to the stubborn survival of racism or the wiles of the free market. Racially-mixed neighborhoods are rarely discussed outside of one of these two narratives, casting them as little more than transitional stages in the processes of segregation and gentrification.

To better understand the temporal nature of mixed-race neighborhood discourse, I turn to theories of time, space, and power. Work by scholars of race, space, and time reveal the myriad ways time is experienced differentially by people occupying disparate positions in the social structure (Mahadeo, 2019; Sharma, 2014; M. M. Wright, 2015). These theorists shed light on the processes at work when academics and journalists downplay the stability of mixed-race neighborhoods, indicating that this tendency is intimately tied to the maintenance of existing power hierarchies. I turn to scholarly writing on time as racialized and time as commodified to reveal how local discourse on integrated neighborhoods hinges on the fundamental assumption that racially heterogenous neighborhoods are temporary states despite evidence that many integrated neighborhoods maintain their diversity over time (Zhang & Logan, 2016). The differential deployment of temporal narratives based on the racialization of a given neighborhood and the market pressures associated with its development therein comprise the focus of my analysis.

With the literatures of time, space, and power as orienting frameworks, I develop the theories of residential time and white spatial politics. I argue for the theoretical consideration of residential time, which I define as the conceptualization and experience of a neighborhood’s ontological timeline, in conversations of demographic neighborhood change. I explore the manifestation of residential time in academic work and draw on select illustrative case examples from news media to support my theoretical point. I look first at the scholarly literature on segregation, gentrification, and integration to understand the academic deployment of residential time. Through this critical literature review, I demonstrate that the academic work on racialized space tends to position racially-diverse neighborhoods as a stage in the gentrification process, underplaying the subversive potential of their stability within spatial politics. I then present a pilot study of news media discourse surrounding New Orleans neighborhoods, analyzing demographic shifts over recent decades and highlighting illustrative news articles from local publications that demonstrate how journalists mobilize residential time discursively. The distinctive demographic composition and contemporary urban challenges facing New Orleans positions it as a particularly illuminating place to study the popular representation of residential time, allowing me to investigate the narratives surrounding both racially-diverse and racially-homogenous spaces. Through close readings of news articles surrounding New Orleans neighborhoods, I demonstrate how local popular discourse can reify expectations surrounding mixed-race areas as either segregating or gentrifying. Finally, I suggest how this rendering of residential time influences the housing market and those tasked with its maintenance, demonstrating the material impact such conversations have on the social landscape.

Though this paper primarily seeks to sharpen temporal theorizations of segregation and gentrification, the inclusion of exemplary empirical data in the form of select newspaper articles offers an initial grounding of residential time in popular discourse. The selection of news articles I present are by no means a comprehensive review of journalistic writing on
racialized neighborhoods in New Orleans. Rather, I selected pieces published between 2010 and 2017 in the most prominent local news source, The Times-Picayune. To narrow my sample, I searched the news database using the keywords such as “segregation,” “gentrification,” and variations on the concept of “integration” and selected articles that (a) discussed the racial composition of New Orleans neighborhoods and (b) positioned spatial politics as their focus. After reading all news articles that met these criteria, I then conducted a close reading of those that were most relevant to my consideration of time and temporality, noting how the authors construe residential time and portray neighborhood residents depending on the demographic composition of the space under consideration. As previous scholarship attests, these examples can offer important insights into the deployment of residential time in everyday life, but they are by no means representative of the general media representation of residential time writ large (Brown-Saracino & Rumpf, 2011). Their inclusion, however, aids the theoretical work with which the paper is primarily concerned while also demonstrating that such conversations are taking place outside the academy and consequently influencing the ongoing construction of the social landscape.

**Time, space, and power**

Writing on the intersection of time, space, and power reveals the complexity that faces geographical studies when time becomes the lens of analysis (and, of course, vice versa). Immediately, one must reckon with the multiplicity of temporal experiences, even those that occur within the same space. Scholars have shown how considering these multiplicities—be they due to differing scales, systems, relationships, or imaginaries—reveals oftentimes invisible rhythms and functions of space as they are experienced (Bastian, 2014; May et al., 2001). More importantly, these differing temporalities of space are political, subject to structures of power and domination like all other realms of the social world (Innis, 2004; D. B. Massey, 1994). This study considers two such structurations of time, arguing for their intertwined and differential effects on neighborhood space: time as racialized and time as commodified. These temporal traits inform the discursive rendering of neighborhoods, specifically as it relates to their ontological lifespan, or the duration of time that a neighborhood maintains its particular demographic, cultural, and economic character. The racialization and commodification of time comprise the theoretical framework through which this study hopes to examine neighborhood temporalities.

**Time as racialized**

Evolving understandings of race front the profound importance of time in understanding race and racial phenomena. Time and temporality are crucial components of ontological understandings of race, as theorist Michelle Wright outlines in her 2015 book *Physics of Blackness*. In her search of a wholly inclusive definition of Blackness, one that does not shy away from the multiplicity and yet deep ambiguity of the concept’s meaning, Wright insists that asking “what” Blackness is generates a fixity that is damaging to the intellectual project of the question itself. Instead, Wright suggests asking “when” and “where,” positioning Blackness as a phenomenological construct existing in the multiverse of spacetime. By constantly accounting for what she terms Epiphenomenal time, or the now that exists in
relation to but without any direct causal linkage to the past, the dizzying array of Blackness’ ontological possibilities can be accounted for, allowing for an appropriately broad, nuanced, and full definition of the concept that holds across time and space. The racialization process is therefore bound up in time, making the temporal a crucial element of the meaning of race in every moment, past and present.

Race also informs temporalities that shape experience and expectation. Put more simply, time and particular timelines are experienced differently depending on the racialization of the person within time. Scholarly work on racialized temporalities points to the imposition of white timelines upon communities of color as well as the robbery of temporal resources from these communities. People of color are subject to the temporal expectations of white supremacy, expectations that position whiteness as bound up in futurity and progress while relegating all others to antiquation or a regressive preoccupation with the present (Ahmed, 2007; Mahadeo, 2019). Furthermore, people and communities of color are disproportionately subject to social and material conditions that exact time from them. Of the many examples empirically documented include the lower life expectancy of Black people compared to those of their white counterparts, the longer than average commutes people of color (women in particular) undergo to reach their workplaces, and the extreme racial disparities that in incarceration and sentencing lengths (Alexander, 2012; Harper et al., 2014; Hunt et al., 2015; Kovera, 2019; McLafferty & Preston, 2019; Preston & McLafferty, 2016). Time is therefore differentially relegated and extracted from racialized communities, creating divergent temporal experiences depending on one’s place in the social strata.

**Time as commodified**

These racialized temporalities intersect with the construction of time in economic, political, and sociocultural realms. Scholars theorizing the manner in which time is commodified seek to untangle these knotted temporal pressures, demonstrating how social power and capitalist economic structures work together to extract time from less privileged groups. Sarah Sharma’s (2014) work stands as a particularly illuminating analysis of this intersection, her investigation of those living outside of the normalized nine-to-five workday, including taxi drivers, yoga instructors, and itinerate workers, extending existing theories on time-space. Sharma develops the notion of a *power-chronography*, or “time as lived experience, always political, produced at the intersection of a range of social differences and institutions, and of which the clock is only one chronometer” (p. 15). This concept emphasizes how an individual’s place in the social, economic, and geographical strata determines their differential experience of time, directly articulating the intersection of time, positionality, and market pressures. Moreover, Sharma argues that temporal discourses both construct a society’s understanding of time and impose hegemonic timelines on people, places, and events. These discourses determine the socially-appropriate timing of everything from business transactions and mealtimes to reproduction and death. The cultural construction of time enforces a temporal order to which all must adhere if they are to remain in an acceptable rhythm with society. The power-chronography reveals who is in and out of time, who must adjust their time management to keep up with labor demands, and those whose time is altered and/or taken away so that others may operate on a “regular” schedule. This relational understanding of time demonstrates the interweaving pattern of
temporality that entangles all within its matrix as well as the political manipulations of time that force some to live on highly-adjusted schedules to better serve more privileged members of society.

Sharma details the political manipulation of time in the commercial sector to expose how such discourses force people to recalibrate their personal experiences of the temporal to meet the demands of contemporary labor systems that project the notion of a “speed up” in society (Sharma, 2014, p. 17). In this recalibration, individual time is subordinated to societal narratives of time; social structures such as capitalistic work environments and media discourse insist upon an understanding of time as fleeting, swift, and out of one’s control. The individual must speed up their own time to adhere properly to such expectations of time, recalibrating their temporal experience to match that of the dominant narrative. Leveraging understandings of time allows economic and media entities to control individual action as well as the market. The idiom “time is money” becomes especially revealing when adopting Sharma’s view of politicized time. The commodification of all time, even that spent on non-work-related activities, pressures people to consider their own temporalities as having a certain market value. Every moment of one’s adult life therefore becomes potentially economically productive, so one must capitalize on this fact, recalibrate one’s personal clock, and exploit one’s time as if it is a renewable resource. Such a rate of production allows the growth of the market at the expense of those who shoulder the burden of the necessitated night shifts, service industry hours, and general maintenance of those privileged enough to work in the daytime.

These economized temporal pressures extend beyond the individual laborer, encompassing organizational timelines and development schedules as well. Raco et al. (2008) demonstrate how the politics of space-time weigh heavily in urban redevelopment projects, affecting whose spatial needs are prioritized and when divergent interests might expect their needs to be met. Differing timeframes often come into conflict with one another, creating situations in which those with more resources and influence leverage each to actualize their temporal needs. “Time,” Raco later argues, “is a resource within the development process and [like] other resources it represents a source of both power and control” (Raco et al., 2018, p. 1190). Simone Abram (2014) similarly views planning as a way that time is materialized within space, arguing that conflicting temporal frameworks between the planner as future-oriented and “ordinary people”—residents, business owners, protestors—as embodied reminders of the past are a central source of tension and strife within urban planning. These urban political temporalities overlap, often chafing against one another as they also meld and morph with the dynamism of those who hold them (Moore-Cherry & Bonnin, 2020). Time and power therefore intimately entangle, shaping the social and material worlds from the intimate, lived experience of racialization to the molding of the built environment.

**Residential time and white spatial politics**

From these theoretical precepts on temporal power, I examine neighborhoods and racialized space, extending these conversations to encompass normalizing discourses of what I term *residential time*. I use the concept of residential time to describe the conceptualization and experience of a neighborhood’s lifespan, adding another element of lived time to Sharma’s power-chronography. The differing peoples and entities that come into contact
with a particular neighborhood differentially experience time within that neighborhood. For instance, a resident whose family has spent generations living on a cherished neighborhood block is likely to perceive their neighborhood for its abiding history. Their perception of residential time is therein long, as they project the area’s personally storied past onto its imagined future. A visitor might move through the same streets and appreciate the obduracy of neighborhood characteristics, but their experience of residential time focuses less on the past and more on the lived present. The future they perceive for the neighborhood has fewer ties to a personal history, and so they have less stake in imagining its social continuity. These perceptions are shaped not only by the tenure status of the beholder (longtime resident versus visitor), but also by the racialization of the space and person themselves. Expectations surrounding the endurance of a neighborhood’s particular demographic makeup and ontological character are harbored by all who have contact with the area: residents of the neighborhood, agents within the housing and real estate industry, even casual observers of the space. Narratives that form around perceived residential time similarly vary, as some might highlight the tenuous lifespan of a neighborhood’s composition while others focus on the seeming endurance of its character. However, the power of these narratives is not evenly distributed, for each is situated in the power-chronography depending on the social position of its creator. The narrative of the longtime resident, despite having perhaps the most de jure authority, may not have as much de facto influence as the developer, the historian, or the journalist. This might be especially true if the longtime resident is a member of a racial group whose political voice has been historically relegated. Residential time therein seeks to encompass and describe how social power shapes the temporal narratives created about neighborhood space.

The rendering of neighborhood residential time in popular discourse is based on the neighborhood’s social positioning within the power-chronography. Neighborhoods with more social power, namely those that are affluent and white, enjoy a residential time that is usually unthreatened by disruption. Sara Ahmed describes this perceptual phenomenon when she writes, “Whiteness gets reproduced by being seen as a form of positive residence: as if it were a property of persons, cultures and places” (Ahmed, 2007, p. 154). The “positive residence” of whiteness, via its political, economic, and material power, characterizes these spaces and affords them temporal power, or the ability to render their residential time as enduring, stable, and productive. These spaces therefore benefit from the commercialization of time, for the market value of the neighborhoods increases as they remain characterologically the same. They are in alignment with hegemonic spatial politics, those that serve capitalist objectives of profit accumulation. However, as the theorists on racialized temporalities assert—and in connection with Cedric Robinson’s (1983) conception of racial capitalism, or the capitalist system’s functional reliance on the existence of racial stratification and resultant valuation of human beings on the basis of their ascribed race—these temporal objectives are inherently racialized. As such, hegemonic understandings and objectives for spacetime are manipulated to benefit the aims of white supremacy and racial domination. Here, I borrow from Katherine McKittrick’s (2006) theorization of geographies of domination as well as George Lipsitz’s (2011) notion of the white spatial imaginary to assert the influence of a white spatial politics, or the differential construal of neighborhoods’ residential time in accordance with the aims of racial capitalism. The power-chronography, then, functions to force neighborhoods’ residential time into a hegemonic temporal order for the ultimate benefit of the most powerful. Perceptions of residential time are highly
political, the elongation or stunting of a neighborhood’s perceived lifespan often serving the extractive aims of white spatial politics. The deployment of narratives surrounding residential time through both popular discourse and mass media therefore demand attention for their validation of some timelines and dismissal of others, as these discursive moves are often in service of racialized power structures.

**The residential time of racially-mixed neighborhoods**

The differential deployment of residential time is most readily apparent in the discourse surrounding racially-diverse neighborhoods, the focus of my analysis. I argue that popular discourse portrays racially-mixed neighborhoods’ residential time as tenuous, fleeting, and unavoidably short-lived. This discourse promotes the belief that racially-mixed spaces are unstable and doomed to transition into homogenous areas through either segregation or gentrification. In other words, dominant narratives typically characterize a racially-mixed neighborhood as either a soon-to-be victim of white flight, or the departure of white households due to an increase in residents of color, or a space that is gentrifying, defined here as the displacement of longtime residents (typically persons of color) through an influx of socioeconomically-privileged people. These narratives downplay the possibility of demographic stability within diverse neighborhoods, advancing the sentiment that such mixed populations are the product of a transitory stage of either segregation or gentrification. Dismissing integrated neighborhoods’ residential time reinforces the position of racially-mixed neighborhoods in the power-chronography in such a way that furthers white spatial domination by further embedding inequality into the landscape. The denigration of mixed neighborhoods’ residential time naturalizes the consolidation of capital into white neighborhoods and the evacuation of resources from nonwhite neighborhoods as temporal inevitabilities. Conversely, rendering mixed neighborhoods as possessing meaningful residential time subverts the seemingly inexorable capitalist processes of white domination outlined by canonical urban theorists, namely the commercialization of land, unequal development, rent gaps, and redlining (Harvey, 2001; Smith, 1984; Sugrue, 1996; Taylor, 2019). It is therefore in the interest of capitalist elites and white spatial politics writ large to advance the narrative of mixed neighborhoods’ residential time as inherently temporary so that these processes unfold with relative ease and little surprise.

These narratives place immense pressure on the neighborhoods’ residents to reorient their own temporalities to conform to the story of invariably dissolving neighborhoods, largely to the benefit of those profiting most from the housing industry. Arbiters of popular discourse, such as the academy and news media, often tell people living in increasingly heterogenous neighborhoods that the changes they see taking place are temporary, for eventually certain groups will leave. Ultimately, those who profit from the recalibration of residential time are those who capitalize on increasing property values, tourism, and commercial investment. While gentrification appears to the minority resident as an imminent threat, it is a lasting source of material gain for the real estate investor. The institutions and individuals with the power to dictate market trends diminish the temporal experiences of particular spaces to expand the commercial potential of their preferred residential time. For instance, real estate agents wield interpersonal interactions with homebuying clients to shape housing preferences, generally by steering neighborhood preference and persuading
buyers to spend more than they originally intend (Besbris, 2020). Such market intermediaries craft place-based narratives that both reify social structure and derive the greatest personal profit.

Similarly, media outlets are active or, in the very least, complicit in the maintenance of the power-chronography and white spatial politics. Scholars have demonstrated how journalists perpetuate negative stigmas of racialized urban space through analyses of news articles (Baranauskas, 2020; Petersen, 2016). Consumers absorb these narratives and make residential choices based on their content (Korver-Glenn et al., 2020). Most pressing, however, is news outlets’ role in urban development and gentrification, described in detail by Wilson and Mueller (2004). They point to newspapers as key actors in growth coalitions as well as foundational constructors of public reality, making their construal of neighborhood space highly influential on development projects. Studying the representation of gentrification in a St. Louis newspaper, the authors conclude that reporters deploy salvationist metaphors to legitimate the gentrification of redeveloping sites. The same language was not applied to low-income neighborhoods with little chance of gentrifying, which the authors surmise relegates these spaces as “functional ‘reservations for the poor’” (p. 290). Such findings are supported by many other studies of gentrification depictions in news media (Slater, 2006; Tolfo & Doucet, 2020) and challenged by others (Brown-Saracino & Rumpf, 2011). However, even the more critical representations of gentrification in these latter cases do not challenge the notion of neighborhood change as inevitable, critiquing instead the inequitable impact of these still unavoidable urban transformations.

I study the deployment of this discourse in two ways: through academic writing on racially-diverse neighborhoods and through a pilot study of New Orleans. The narrative of integration’s brevity finds its legitimacy first through the academy, for scholars prefer to study the oftentimes polarizing processes of segregation and gentrification, rarely fixating on neighborhoods that maintain a racially-diverse population. Foundational theoretical work such as the mosaic theory of urban space (Park, 1952), the racial tipping point (Schelling, 1971; Wood & Lee, 1991), and hypersegregation (D. S. Massey & Denton, 1989) inform the academic proclivity for downplaying mixed neighborhoods’ residential time. It is important to readily note that this is not necessarily done with the intention of furthering white spatial politics. Segregation and gentrification wreak havoc on communities of color, causing suffering from structural neglect, displacement, and erasure. Fierce attention to these phenomena and the harm they cause is more than warranted and must continue. However, racially-diverse neighborhoods’ residential time is a casualty of this scholarly focus, and the implications of this likely unintended consequence must be given similar attention. With this appreciation for the inequities of segregation and gentrification at the forefront, I then look to New Orleans to follow the discursive rendering of residential time into a specific geographical space.

Residential time in academic literature

Discussions of neighborhood space characterize the origin of formal social science. The community studies of the Chicago School orienting sociologists’ analytic lens toward the neighborhood unit, leading to a long lineage of work focusing on the nuances of these spaces (Park, 1952; Park & Burgess, 1925). As a result, segregation has occupied a great deal of scholarly thought, Du Bois (1903) famously appraising the color line as the fundamental
problem of the 20th century. Desperately little has changed as the 21st century progresses, the endurance of segregation occupying much of contemporary sociological and geographical study (Clark, 2015, p. 201; Gibbons, 2018; M. Hall et al., 2015; D. S. Massey, 2020). The obduracy of these inequities and spatial structures characterize American urban geographies, as evidenced by a recent study’s conclusion that “more than one-half of all metropolitan African Americans continued to live under conditions of high segregation or hypersegregation in 2010” (D. S. Massey & Tannen, 2015, p. 1030). The fact that racial division continues to form the texture of the socio-physical world requires continued attention and effort to understand its composition and implications. However, this empirical reality pushes academics to portray racially-heterogenous neighborhoods’ residential time as fleeting and inconsequential in the face of segregation’s staunch persistence.

The unfolding legacy of racial segregation has steep implications for the populations it marginalizes, namely communities of color. Scholars have carefully articulated how urban planning and development practices weave racial exclusion into their policies and physical products, excluding marginalized groups from accessing resources while concentrating them in low-valued areas (Adelman & Mele, 2015; Clark, 2015; Freeman, 2019; Páez et al., 2014). Despite laws that ostensibly prohibit this pattern of exclusion, city officials and real estate companies continue to compress people of color into sequestered spaces. On top of the harm discriminatory housing practices inflict, areas of racial segregation are inordinately affected by economic disasters such as the housing crisis of 2008, leading to even higher rates of residential segregation (M. Hall et al., 2015). Studies have also linked segregation to decreased economic mobility, deleterious health impacts, and higher mortality rates among people of color (Li et al., 2013; Roberts, 2009; Sudano et al., 2013). These outcomes are products of the large-scale divestment and neglect by municipal, state, and federal governments coupled with the exploitation of private industry and development (Austen, 2018; Gotham, 2014; Taylor, 2019). The latter sector—though typically supported in part by public subsidies—is the primary beneficiary of the power-chronography. The private and public deprioritization of timelines for Black and Brown spaces’ urban maintenance enables such powerful urban stakeholders to concentrate funding and resources in spaces that might accrue capital (Logan & Molotch, 2012). As a product and key ingredient of uneven development, the endurance of stark racial lines becomes a crucial function of white spatial politics (Harvey, 2009). The perpetuation of the color line both relies upon and reinforces the aims of racial capitalism.

Yet segregated neighborhoods can also be critical spaces where white spatial politics are challenged and subverted (Rodriguez & Ward, 2018). Historically Black and Brown neighborhoods across the United States have served as bedrocks of culture, community, and crucial networks of material and social support. New Orleans’s own Tremé neighborhood is a poignant example, for it is locally celebrated as one of the oldest Black neighborhoods in the United States and a formative cradle of jazz (Crutcher, 2010; Parekh, 2015). Neighborhoods such as the Tremé demonstrate how prolonged residential time can greatly aid the social and cultural wellbeing of a space even as its economic and political power is undercut. It is important to hold and appreciate the nuance of these spaces, for their success fundamentally subverts the ravages of white spatial politics. Thus, my intention is not to position integrated neighborhoods as a better or singular solution to the oppressions of the power-chronography. Instead, I hope to show how dismissing the residential time of integrated neighborhoods furthers the aims of white spatial politics in much the same
way as dismissing the cultural impact and historical resonance of racial or ethnic enclaves. Ultimately, both types of neighborhoods can accomplish much of the same work, leading each to be discursively devalued in their own ways.

Discussions of segregation dominate the academic literature largely because the dominant theories surrounding segregation diminish the possibility of sustained residential time in racially-integrated neighborhoods. One of the most impactful theories is the racial tipping point. Known colloquially as white flight, this theory posits that as a neighborhood’s minority population grows, white residents are increasingly likely to flee, causing a once mixed neighborhood to turn into a racially-homogenous area (Schelling, 1971; Wood & Lee, 1991). This conceptualization of neighborhood change is inherently a temporal one, one that denies any possibility for a neighborhood to sustain its racial diversity. Although such theories have come under attack (Easterly, 2009), their influence over contemporary scholarly discourse remains strong (Banzhaf & Walsh, 2013; Card et al., 2008; Galster, 1990; Kye, 2018; Mulder, 2015; Wang, 2011). In these studies, the future of the neighborhood as an integrated space is erased, the existence of racial diversity a mere transitional phase in a seemingly inevitable demographic process.

Similarly, renewed attention to gentrification overshadows conversations on racially-integrated neighborhoods’ stability. Though definitions of gentrification vary (Brown-Saracino, 2017), the term generally refers to the influx of a more affluent group of people into a poorer area. Oftentimes, this process is characterized by elevated racial tensions; gentrifiers are associated with high-income white people with the means to overtake and renovate a lower-income, nonwhite area. For example, central city areas across the United States are currently experiencing a return of white, affluent residents, disrupting the patterns of racial settlement that have characterized the metropolitan spaces for decades (Hwang, 2016). The concerns surrounding gentrification are more than warranted, for the displacement of low-income residents into even poorer neighborhoods leads to an increase in racial segregation and a disruption of neighborhood history, culture, and identity (Betancur, 2011; Ding et al., 2016; Freeman, 2009). Gentrification, then, presents the converse timeline to that of white flight but with the same end: the integrated neighborhood is only a step in the process of spatial domination by race—and class-privileged peoples.

The primary threat gentrification poses to equitable spatial relationships is the potential obliteration of a neighborhood’s culture and identity, resulting in the displacement of vulnerable residents (Fullilove, 2001). As such, gentrification scholars do not usually consider the mixed neighborhoods that result from this process as stable (Lee & Wood, 1990). Many scholars consider mixed-race neighborhoods solely as areas that are gentrifying (Hyra, 2015; Lee, Firebaugh, Iceland, Matthews, Freeman et al., 2015; Lee, Firebaugh, Iceland, Matthews, Hwang et al., 2015), while some have shown that racially-heterogenous neighborhoods are more likely to gentrify than monoracial areas (Hwang & Sampson, 2014). This discourse renders integrated neighborhoods as invisible or lacking an identity outside of that given to them by gentrification. The power and actions of real estate agents, exploitative landlords, and the upper-class newcomers receive more scholarly attention than the stable longtime residents who manage to sustain their living situations despite the ongoing changes (Parekh, 2015). As such, these neighborhoods are rendered helpless to the whims of the market or invisible for their distinct character.
While some researchers do speak of the complexity of gentrification’s effects and consider how such integrated spaces can be maintained (Brown-Saracino, 2017; Helper, 1986; Saltman, 1990), most favor assessing these spaces through the lens of either segregation or gentrification.

Such a lens is not always appropriate, for researchers have identified several racially-integrated areas with relative temporal stability. For instance, Evelyn Perry’s (2017) recent ethnographic study of Riverwest, Wisconsin, revealed a racially- and economically-diverse neighborhood that has maintained its heterogeneity for over thirty years. Similarly, Andrew Deener’s (2012) ethno-ography of Venice, California, details the wildly disparate people and cultural identities that coexist in the coastal city. Although his findings ultimately adhere to Park’s mosaic theory of cultural space, Elijah Anderson’s (2011) study of Philadelphia’s cosmopolitan canopies, or areas such as shopping areas and parks where people of many backgrounds and social standings comingle and learn about one another, demonstrates that integrated areas can uphold their diversity through time. Moreover, as segregation lessens, there is necessarily an increase in integrated neighborhoods. Using Census tract information from 1990 to 2010, Ellen et al. (2012) have confirmed that mixed-race neighborhoods are on the rise and can remain stable. They also point out that areas that maintained integration were “those integrated neighborhoods that households believed would remain stable in the future based on past trends,” reinforcing the impact of discourse on perceived residential time (p. 50; emphasis added).

The scholarly minimization of mixed-race neighborhoods’ residential time despite empirical evidence that suggests these spaces can have long lifespans presents what Sharma would call a “very powerful, discursive mobilization of time” (Sharma, 2014, p. 13). The academic rendering of hegemonic residential time imposes an order and expiration date on neighborhoods, directing researchers and laypeople alike to conceive of a natural chain of events. Scholars promote the restrictive narrative that neighborhoods either start out as segregated, poor, nonwhite spaces, progressing into temporarily mixed areas before reaching their final forms as majority-white and affluent, or this process is reversed and white residents flee as minority membership within a neighborhood increases. Not only does this discourse naturalize the capitalistic and racist forces that catalyze such changes, it also pushes a particular narrative of mixed-race neighborhoods that influences social understandings of integration. Namely, researchers’ use of exclusively transitional frameworks to conceptualize racially-diverse areas promotes the hegemonic residential narrative that such areas have an inevitably limited lifespan and are therefore unsustainable and undesirable. The erasure of such spaces through segregation and gentrification is still part of the insidious workings of white spatial power with which any conversation around integration must contend. Integrated neighborhoods do not stand as the only challenge to the oppressive hegemony of the power-chronography and white spatial politics, but rather they can also serve a subversive function to such spatial domination if they are given temporal legitimacy. To view them as a stage in the process of white flight or gentrification discredits this subversive power. However, the potentially inequitable power relations they erect in space means that they are by no means inherently or wholly productively subversive (Anderson, 2015; Freeman, 2011; Helmuth, 2019). The day-to-day lived experiences within them must still be treated with a critical eye. My argument therein centers around the discursive representation of their temporality while holding this reality as a constant consideration, as my discussion of New Orleans neighborhoods reveals.
Residential time in New Orleans: A case example

The history and contemporary conflicts of New Orleans provide a poignant place for the study of race and neighborhood residential time. A city often lauded for its unusually mixed racial makeup, New Orleans hosts neighborhoods of all kinds: historically Black, predominately white, racially-mixed, gentrifying, and so on. The narratives surrounding the residential time of these neighborhoods therein offer a glimpse into how these temporal stories play out in local discourse and influence the racial landscape. Like many other cities with extensive histories, these narratives are produced in a long local context with a vast array of players. However, the paradigm-shifting experience of Hurricane Katrina also sets the tone for many conversations about race, space, and the city. To better contextualize the racial geography of contemporary New Orleans and the anxieties around particular neighborhoods’ residential time, I begin with a brief history of demographic shifts before and after the storm before I turn to local conversations surrounding segregation, gentrification, and racially-mixed spaces.

New Orleans at the beginning of the 21st century was regaled as both a historically-mixed and historically-Black city. Celebrated for its multicultural ancestry, New Orleans long hosted a population with a wider racial breadth than the binary racial categorization of white-Black that characterized British colonial America. Many historians label the local racial hierarchy as a “tripartite” racial system that emphasized the racially-mixed social group oftentimes referred to as Creoles of color or free people of color (G. M. Hall, 1992; Hirsch et al., 1992). These Creoles of color had a particular spatial identity as well as a cultural one, the Seventh Ward (a neighborhood northeast of the French Quarter, bounded by Broad Street to the north, St. Claude Avenue to the south, and Elysian Fields and Esplanade Avenues to the east and west) locally associated with the particular racial group even today. However, as increased urbanization and the civil rights movement’s pressures for racial unity amongst Black peoples intensified, this mixed-race identity slowly faded from prominence. Instead, the identification of New Orleans as a “Chocolate City” began to dominate (Hirsch, 2007). By 2000, the African American population comprised nearly 70% of the city’s demographic makeup, marking it as a vibrant and fairly unequivocal Black space (SocialExplorer). That is until 29 August 2005, when Hurricane Katrina made landfall.

The lead up and after-effects of the hurricane were devastating, based in structural inequalities well documented and thoroughly discussed in countless works, both academic and public (Freudenburg, 2009; Horowitz, 2020; Woods, 2017). One of the most notable effects of the storm was the widespread displacement of New Orleanians and the often-insurmountable obstacles many faced in their efforts to return. Federal, state, and municipal disaster response and policy implementation, characterized by the neoliberal reliance on private contractors, were woefully insufficient to support an equitable return of displaced residents or ensure the rebuilding process did not further carve inequality into the landscape (Johnson, 2011). As a result, the population of New Orleans was quantitatively whiter and wealthier a decade after the storm, and a disproportionate amount of permanently displaced residents were poor and Black (Campanella, 2008). In some ways, the city as a whole gentrified post-Katrina, making the issue of neighborhood change and the preservation of Black communities particularly fraught.
Though these demographic changes occurred city-wide, they were acutely felt in particular neighborhoods, namely those with a rich history as Black spaces. Foremost in public consciousness is the Tremé, one of (if not the) oldest Black neighborhood in the continental United States (Elie et al., 2008). Residing immediately beyond Rampart Street, the northernmost boundary of the French Quarter, the Tremé developed as a space teeming with Black culture and life. Birthing jazz music, attracting artists of all genres, and hosting professional opportunities such as printmaking and retail, the Tremé offered a site where Black people and art could thrive. However, the neighborhood faced a multitude of spatial threats throughout its storied history. Urban renewal projects dating back to the early 20th century demolished numerous neighborhood blocks, displacing residents for the sake of a cultural center that sat empty for years (Crutcher, 2010). Later on, the construction of the I-10 overpass would cut through the neighborhood’s heart, destroying the vibrant Claiborne Avenue that had long served as a social, commercial, and cultural corridor for Black Tremé residents. The rich cultural history of the Tremé therein shaped the neighborhood’s spatial makeup as much as the contentious urban conflicts that sought to chip away at its character.

Katrina dealt the most devastating blow to the neighborhood’s Black demographic identity, the 93% African American population pre-Katrina reduced to 64% by 2017 (SocialExplorer). Trushna Parekh’s (2015) ethnographic study of Tremé reveals how this dramatic demographic eroded elements of community life. Many newcomers associated noise and crime with cherished local practices such as second lining, leading to tensions between neighbors over public conduct. Local bars that long nurtured New Orleans’ prized musicians closed as complaints about late night loud music surged. As these complaints increased, the police presence in the neighborhood escalated. The decades-long character of the space began to shift, to the great dismay of longtime residents whose families had peopled the area for generations. The cultural erasure and displacement experienced by many Tremé residents underscored the inequitable experience of Katrina recovery for New Orleanians. The Tremé became a synecdoche for the social and cultural threats demographic change presented to New Orleanians as a whole.

In other neighborhoods, ongoing gentrification escalated during post-Katrina rebuilding. The Marigny, located just east of the French Quarter, began shifting as early as the 1960s when highly educated professionals, many of whom were gay men, began moving into the otherwise disinvested area (Knopp, 1997). They were soon followed by developers and historical preservationists, while increasing numbers of middle-class folks purchased the then low-valued housing stock. By the turn of the century, the Marigny was an affluent white space with a teeming gay community and strong real estate interests consistently redeveloping the landscape. The nonwhite population, comprising only about a quarter of the neighborhood community in 2000, dropped to a little over 15% by 2017 (SocialExplorer, n.d.). However, the public narrative about the Marigny’s population shifts post-Katrina held relatively less anxiety, for its implications did not threaten the already amended cultural identity of the space so fundamentally. The Marigny stands as a prime example of how different neighborhoods’ experiences with residential change and gentrification occupy different timelines, demonstrating the importance of these spaces’ historical context in any consideration of the narratives surrounding their residential lifespan.
The city of New Orleans is therefore no stranger to either racially ambiguous spaces or shifting racialized identities. In its centuries-long history, New Orleans experienced a wide range of demographic realities, including many non-normative to the majority of the continental United States. The historical resonance of a more fluid racial categorization system and identities that emerged from this system, such as the Creoles of color, continues to influence the public discourse within and about New Orleans, as do politicized conversations surrounding racialized space. The implications of such historical resonance directly inform the issue of residential time with which I am concerned. For instance, the history of racial mixing might leave more discursive space for the ontological legitimacy of racially-integrated spaces’ residential time. Similarly, the reckoning Hurricane Katrina dealt the city and the demographic changes the recovery incurred heighten the significance of later neighborhood shifts, for they irritate a collective and still unresolved wound. The public discourse surrounding residential time operates in this context, revealing ongoing tensions surrounding race and space within the city as well as the manifestation of the power-chronography in the urban space itself. Residents have grappled firsthand with the denigration and abbreviation of treasured neighborhoods’ residential time, witnessing how elites mold these spaces to manifest the aims of white spatial politics. The public is therein primed for narratives surrounding the further entrenchment of racial segregation or the continually mounting threat of gentrification. In this space, narratives surrounding residential time can hold incredible weight, as they brush injuries still raw from Katrina’s ravages.

The resonance of these narratives is readily discernable in news articles discussing neighborhood demographic change. An article from The Times-Picayune that features the title “St. Roch: Gentrification Ground Zero in New Orleans” presents a telling example of the power of such temporal narratives (Webster, 2015). In the piece, the author discusses how the historically Black neighborhood of St. Roch is transforming slowly as a more affluent, presumably white population moves into the area. Located east of Elysian Fields Avenue and north of St. Claude Avenue, early 20th century St. Roch maintained a rather racially-mixed population, with African Americans and Creoles of color residing in the section of the neighborhood closest to Lake Pontchartrain (Greater New Orleans Community Data Center (GNOCDC), 2002; SocialExplorer, n.d.). As the century carried on, the Black population grew and moved closer to St. Claude Avenue. By 2010, the neighborhood had hosted a majority-African American population for over 30 years (SocialExplorer). Recently, however, the demographics of the neighborhood have begun to shift as the area’s younger, whiter population grows, a change the article assigns to gentrification’s displacing effects. Local fears of being priced out of the neighborhood abound, as one woman is quoted as saying outsiders are “jacking up the [housing] prices to make it unaffordable for Black people.” Concerns about gentrification are by no means unwarranted; as previously discussed, the gentrification of Black neighborhoods extends the trauma of Katrina in many ways. However, the extent to which the article promulgates this fear and casts it as an inevitability reveals the maintenance of a particular temporal narrative surrounding integrated spaces. Paranoia permeates the piece, casting the longtime, majority-Black residents as in imminent danger of losing their houses. For instance, Webster quotes a man who claims, “it’s possible St. Roch will no longer exist in five years,” implying that total erasure of the community is looming. Similarly, a local realtor states, “It’s sad because these are people who have lived there their whole lives, and now it’s going to
become an area that they can’t afford to live in anymore. And so they’re going to have to move from their homes.” Such rhetoric makes Black resident displacement and the transition of the neighborhood into one that is rich and white seem inevitable and unstoppable. St. Roch’s residential time is transformed from steady and enduring as a Black neighborhood to incontrovertibly elapsing as a mixed one.

A similar rendering of residential time takes place in “Racial Divides Among New Orleans Neighborhoods Expand” (Krupa, 2011). The article reviews the increased levels of segregation within the city since Hurricane Katrina, citing research by Richard Campanella. A discussion of the increasing white population in both traditionally white and gentrifying neighborhoods like the Marigny and the Bywater conforms to typical discussions of exclusionary white settlement patterns. Discursive power begins to show itself as the author reports the movement of Black people into traditionally white spaces. During the reporting of increased African American and Hispanic populations in the majority-white, outermost New Orleans neighborhoods of Lakeview, West End, and Metairie, the article quotes Campanella as saying, “The suburbs are diversifying in every way imaginable.” Instead of lingering on the integrative possibilities this trend presents, the piece posits that a “new demographic order” is in place. “Though the region’s political allegiances historically have cleaved along black-white lines, Chervenak [a local political scientist] said officials might now face a ‘black, white and brown divide,’” Krupa reports.

Not only do these two articles skim over or erase all conversation of the racially-heterogenous spaces such demographic shifts create, the pieces cling to the narrative of unavoidable segregation. Krupa postulates that such areas will conform to this “new order” of three-pronged segregation. Yet New Orleans is a space in which such an order would not be so novel given its history as a racially tripartite society. This rhetorical move therein erases the existence of both past and future racially-diverse spaces. Through this erasure, the hegemonic temporal order of the power-chronography goes unthreatened by a neighborhood composition with more ambiguous commercial benefits. These articles quickly reformulate the integrative potential of their observed phenomena into a transitional phase in the reconstitution of a stratified system. The mixing occurring within St. Roch, the Marigny, and Metairie does not conform to the larger narratives of normative residential time, for it is incompatible with a social hierarchy built upon exclusive, binary understandings of race and racialized space. Therefore, when racial diversification does receive attention, these journalists present it as a temporary moment in a neighborhood’s timeline, immediately depriving the integrated areas of any sense of stability. This discursive move serves white spatial politics by supporting the ideas of an unmitigated capitalist rewriting of places like St. Roch and a spatially malleable yet ardently strict system of difference and stratification.

The characterization of residential time for the benefit of white spatial political gains pressures residents to fall in line and attenuate their own temporal experiences. When residents resist recalibrating their personal temporalities, local news media’s responses vary depending on who is resisting, revealing the undercurrent of racial bias and the influence of a group’s position in the power-chronography. For instance, the *Times-Picayune* article “Suburban Church Pushes Hollygrove Community Center, Sparks Racially Charged Opposition,” positions the majority-Black population of Hollygrove as unreasonably resistant to the institution of a predominately-white church’s community center in the neighborhood (McClendon, 2016). Hollygrove, a neighborhood on the very western edge of New
Orleans bounded by Palmetto Street and South Claiborne Avenue, has maintained a large Black population since the mid-20th century. Like St. Roch, the neighborhood has experienced a slight decrease in this population in recent years (SocialExplorer, n.d.). Given that gentrification’s threat permeates city discourse, residents’ resistance to this trend may not be in and of itself surprising. However, the article characterizes this resistance as irrational. The suburban mega-church’s members claimed that their polite outreach efforts were met with “doors slammed in their face.” McClendon quotes Planning Commissioner Nolan Marshall III as saying, “The idea that people who don’t look like us want to invest in our neighborhood is bad is really troubling to me,” and that “quite honestly, we don’t invest enough in our neighborhoods ourselves.” Depicting oppositional Hollygrove residents as unnecessarily adverse to the church congregation members and their proposed development project as well as unmotivated to take care of their own area casts those who resist the recalibration demanded by increased commercialization as unreasonable and self-segregating. This representation also ignores the context of post-Katrina gentrification of historically Black spaces as well as the fact that the mega-church possesses significantly more resources to spend on neighborhood projects than lower-income Hollygrove residents. Both serve the market needs revealed in prior articles, implicitly encouraging readers and residents to be open to the wills and timelines of capitalistic ventures.

On the other hand, when locals include a substantial white population, news writers are much gentler yet continue to downplay discussions of integration. Some New Orleans neighborhoods struggle with the new form of gentrification that Airbnb and the short-term rental market introduce. “How Airbnb Is Pushing Locals Out of New Orleans’ Coolest Neighborhoods,” an investigative piece produced in partnership with the Huffington Post and The Lens, reviews the controversy surrounding historic neighborhoods and the newest tourism aid (Peck & Maldonado, 2017). The article does a thorough job of working through the issues short-term rentals cause, such as the abrasive presence of tourists, surging property values, and the further commodification of neighborhood culture. It also points out a key difference between Airbnb-fueled gentrification and that occurring in other parts of the city: short-term rentals are most prevalent in neighborhoods that are already gentrifying. The Tremé, Marigny, and Bywater are changing as a result of the new trend, but, as previously mentioned, they were already experiencing an influx of affluent white people. “The neighborhoods with the highest concentration of Airbnbs are nearly 50% white, compared with 34% in the city as a whole,” the article reports, labeling the short-term rental phenomenon as “a second wave of gentrification.” Instead of referring to these neighborhoods as racially-mixed, the article sticks to the rhetoric of gentrification, promoting the transitional state of the areas over the endangerment Airbnbs pose to potentially stable integrated spaces. The neighborhoods take on a whiter reputation, yet the article does not characterize the racially-heterogenous residents arguing against the continued gentrification as irrationally defending their racialized space. Instead, the piece presents them as “historic preservation advocate[s],” defenders of New Orleans’ culture, and invested community members.

The white folks fighting alongside their Black neighbors to limit short-term rentals and preserve New Orleans’ history and cultural texture do not receive nearly as much criticism or doubt as the African American Hollygrove residents who may well be aiming for the same goals. Institutionalized racial prejudices are responsible for a large portion of the differences in rhetoric, but I argue that the differing groups’
places within the power-chronography account for much of the disconnect. The Tremé as a gentrifying neighborhood possesses a residential time that such public discourse renders fleeting already, the composition of the neighborhood in transition in accordance with the wills of racial capitalism, one that views the space as valuable only in the ways it serves white spatial politics. The righteous anger and sympathetic pity that characterize the article’s depiction of Tremé residents presents them as reasonable victims of a compassionless process, justifying their concerns yet still reinforcing the fleeting nature of Tremé’s residential time. In other words, this depiction of Tremé residents’ fear and frustration ultimately feeds the narrative of gentrifying, racially-heterogenous neighborhoods’ inherent instability. Their fear is appropriately placed because the residential time of the Tremé is necessarily short; no alternative outcome receives credence or even attention. The article ends on a dark note, detailing the replacement of a longtime resident who moved out of the neighborhood due to the intrusion of Airbnbs by a buyer who immediately turned the property into a short-term rental. While the article presents a critical tone toward this “second” gentrification, it still positions the neighborhood as helplessly lost to the tides of the free market.

Meanwhile, the relative stability of Hollygrove and its predominately African American racial makeup positions it elsewhere in the network of time, space, and power. The news media highlights the Blackness of Hollygrove residents to lessen their claim on their own spatial and temporal existences, recalling a long history of oppressive state control over the Black spaces segregation and white spatial politics dictate. Additionally, in accordance with the power-chronography, academic and news discourse casts homogenous neighborhoods as static despite resident concerns. As such, the news article depicts Hollygrove residents as unreasonably resisting a benign community center—a residential change that would ostensibly have little to no impact on the cultural makeup of the area—instead of gallantly defending their threatened community. The differential treatment of Hollygrove residents demonstrates the profound impact inequitable positions in the power-chronography have on racialized spaces and the people who inhabit them. As Sharma points out, “discourses about time maintain lines of temporal normalization that elevate certain practices and relationships to time while devaluing others” (Sharma, 2014, p. 15). The article devalues Hollygrove residents’ perception of their neighborhood’s residential time and normalizes the conception of segregation’s endurance. Here again, any possibility of heterogenous space is ultimately out of the question, although for quite different reasons.

Depictions of New Orleans neighborhoods in public discourse are therein intimately shaped by the power-chronography. When racially-mixed neighborhoods are presented in the news, they are consistently characterized by their inherent instability. The relationships residents hold to these spaces is similarly contingent on the neighborhoods’ assigned residential time, media depictions of their temporal anxieties directly tied to their alignment with their position in the power-chronography. Yet the history and nuance of these neighborhoods demonstrate that such narratives are not necessarily warranted or accurate. New Orleans neighborhoods, for their racially-mixed and dynamic heritage, could be sites that directly challenge and subvert hegemonic narratives of residential time. Alongside the strength and endurance of historically Black spaces, local racially-diverse neighborhoods
similarly disrupt the material objectives of white spatial politics. New Orleans’ possession of both makes it a city equipped to alter traditionally exploitative relationships between race, space, and time. The stories that emerge from it serve as a starting point for such a relationship to be reimagined.

**Conclusion**

The stories that powerful institutions such as the academy and mainstream news craft about neighborhoods can intimately influence the composition of these spaces, bolstering social, political, and economic processes that spur spatial turnover. In this article, I traced how the narratives surrounding racially-mixed neighborhoods depict these spaces as temporary and unstable. Using theories of time, space, and power as my conceptual framework, I develop the concept of residential time, or the conceptualization and experience of a neighborhood’s lifecycle. I demonstrate how scholars and journalists deploy residential time to affirm certain spaces’ position in the power-chronography, ultimately downplaying the temporal legitimacy of neighborhoods, such as historically Black and mixed-race neighborhoods, that challenge this hegemonic structure of time. In this way, such portrayals of residential time serve what I call white spatial politics, or the spatialized objectives of racial capitalism. With New Orleans as a case example, I show how such portrayals differentially characterize racialized spaces and project different temporal realities depending on their composition. Overall, I hope to show how the conceptualization of residential time matters greatly to the viability of particular neighborhoods, especially those that challenge hegemonic structures of time and space.

This study is beset by a number of limitations. As a piece primarily concerned with contributing novel ideas to existing theorizations of temporal power, it uses a small sample of news articles as illustrative examples to aid in the development of such postulations. This article does not amount to an empirical study as it is concerned solely with the development of residential time and white spatial politics as theoretical concepts. Instead, it functions as a theoretical pilot study from which more empirically rigorous projects might emerge. A systematic and comprehensive review of news media is needed to ground these theories more firmly in empirical data. Additionally, extending the geographic application of the concepts beyond New Orleans will add nuance and complexity while ensuring their application in other settings.

However, as the evidence presented in this piece and prior works show, the narratives surrounding residential time can have crucial material implications. Public discourse influences the decisions of actors, such as real estate agents, who are themselves critical in shaping neighborhood space (Besbris, 2020; Korver-Glenn et al., 2020). Where non-normative demographic realities such as racially-mixed neighborhoods are concerned, discourse that paints a picture of the neighborhoods’ lifespan as untenable impacts the physical, lived texture of the neighborhoods themselves. Delegitimizing subversive neighborhood space through abbreviated temporal narratives ensures that the harmful effects of segregation, gentrification, and other forms of spatialized racism will continue to afflict urban residents and communities of color. As such, scholars of race and space would be well served to pay close attention
to the ways in which residential time manifests in public narratives surrounding mixed-race neighborhoods—as well as within the narratives they themselves tell.

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About the author

Megan Faust is a PhD candidate in Tulane University’s interdisciplinary City, Culture, and Community PhD Program, specializing in Urban Studies. Her dissertation research focuses on spatialized racial harm, studying obdurate material, cultural, and affective effects across space and through time.

ORCID

Megan Faust http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5495-3961

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