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# Power in Cities

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Power in Cities

by

Michael DeCrosta

A Thesis

Presented to the Graduate and Research Committee of Lehigh University

in Candidacy for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in

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Michael DeCrosta

Thesis is accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Sociology.

Power and Cities  
Michael DeCrosta

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## Abstract

This analysis aims to reveal the power dynamics that exist within communities between individual agents who control space looking at a downtown district in a city in eastern Pennsylvania. What are the ways in which agents involved in land use decisions use levels of social and economic capital to influence decisions and what are the consequences? Data was acquired through participant observation at city council and community meetings as well through semi-structured interviews with local planners, city officials, business owners and developers. Historical documents such as newspaper articles and city planning documents were also analyzed. Bourdieu's *field theory* is applied to themes that emerged from the data, including the presence of a "Game-Changer" mindset, the tax-rateable mindset, the role of place and the value of community. Public policy recommendations are provided, offering a way to more equitably distribute resources within a community.

## Introduction

In June of 2013, it was announced that the south side of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania was losing one of its most important small businesses, a home furnishings store that served as an anchor to the neighborhood's commercial district.<sup>1</sup> In the next two years, several other businesses would also announce their departure from the south side of Bethlehem, with many relocating to the downtown of nearby Easton. Other businesses chose to remain in the south side while opening a second location elsewhere. When interviewed by local news outlets, the business owners cited the decline of the south side, the unfulfilled promises of economic development projects and a lack of support by local officials of the small business community.<sup>2</sup> These views ran counter to other broad discourses in the community on economic development, as the opening of a casino in May of 2009 and the designation of a tax-incentive program for development in December of 2013 offered visions of an economic renaissance for the south side.<sup>3</sup>

Economic development and recovery have been a major theme of discussion in the city of Bethlehem since the decline of its economic engine, the Bethlehem Steel Corporation. The city itself has a population of 74,982, making it the ninth largest in the state. Of particular interest to this research is the portion of the city where the Bethlehem Steel's plant was located, considered the "south side". Comprised of Northampton

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<sup>1</sup> Express-Times, "Bethlehem's Home & Planet Store Closing after 15 Years."

<sup>2</sup> Express-Times, "Billy's Downtown Diner Coming to Easton City Hall Complex"; Marblestone, "Downtown Easton's RE"; Express-Times, "Homebase Skateshop Opening in Easton, Home to 'Pride in Small Business'"; Express-Times, "Blue Sky Cafe to Open New Location in Easton"; Express-Times, "Loose Threads Boutique to Move from Bethlehem to Easton."

<sup>3</sup> "Bethlehem Wins CRIZ Tax Zone Designation"; Friess, "A Casino Rises in the Place of a Fallen Steel Giant."

County census tracts 109, 110, 111, 112 and 113, the south side represents the geographic portion of the city separated from the “north side” by the Lehigh River. Within these census tracts reside 20,082 (Census 2010) individuals, representing roughly 27% of the population of the city of Bethlehem. These census tracts also represent the most racially diverse areas of Bethlehem. Since 1970, the South Side has undergone a drastic demographic shift. At that time, 85% of the population was reported as white, non-Hispanic. By 1990, only 64% of the population was white, with only a modest increase in total population. By 2010, the South Side had become a majority-minority community, with only 43.5% of population considered non-Hispanic white. As whites left the south side, Hispanic and Latino, Asian and African American individuals arrived. Since 1970, the percentage of Hispanic or Latino individuals has nearly quadrupled, increasing from 11.4% to 41.8%. In addition, the African American population has roughly doubled, increasing to 10% of the population in 2010. A rising Asian population now comprises 5% of the South Side population.<sup>4</sup>

One can view the south side as enduring intense economic and social change, and economic development as a response to those changes. Such economic development practices raise several questions. Specifically, why did the aforementioned business owners on the south side of Bethlehem no longer view Bethlehem as a viable primary location for their businesses? What are the factors that influenced their decisions? Additionally, how does one reconcile the simultaneity of large economic development endeavors and fleeing small business?

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<sup>4</sup> United States Census, 2010

Through inquiry of these questions, one can arrive at a more fundamental understanding of the forces that exist within a community and the ways in which they impact debates on land use, business and economic development. In this way, I am suggesting that within a community exist agents who use their influence to affect decisions on land use and economic development, with varying motives. Agents can include small businesses, city officials and real estate developers, each simultaneously acting with and against each other for influence.

This analysis aims to unveil some of the ways in which these forces operate, the motives that influence action and the amount of power or autonomy these agents have at their disposal. With this framework, I propose a Bourdieusian approach to understanding how economic development and land use decisions are made in municipalities, applying Bourdieu's notion of the *field* and *doxa*. Such applications will be made to themes identified by acting as a participant observer at meetings where economic development and land use are discussed, by conducting semi-structured interviews with agents and by reviewing newspaper articles and planning documents. This analysis hopes to arrive at conclusions that can be used to both understand power dynamics and provide policy recommendations that result in more equitable patterns of economic development.

## Literature Review

This analysis contributes to bodies of research within urban sociology, urban planning and field theory. As such, it attempts to engage these bodies of literature in such a way that sheds new light on the ways in which urban places are created and the power dynamics that exist amongst agents in urban environments.

Theories on urbanism in the United States trace back to the Chicago School, whose intellectual presence became most prominent sometime around 1915. This school of thought was led by Robert Park, Louis Wirth and Ernest Burgess who, working at the University of Chicago, began to develop theories about urban life using the city of Chicago as a social laboratory. The first work associated with the Chicago school, and perhaps the most influential, is Burgess and Park's "The City: Some Suggestions for the Study of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment".<sup>5</sup> In this work, Burgess and Park posit a moral order that exists within cities, engaging in a recursive relationship with the physical space that defines the city. This theoretical underpinning set the stage for the creation of the ecological view of cities, where the physical conditions within a city and the ways in which space was divided for different functions are important because of the ways they shape individuals' experience of living in the city. In this way, Burgess and Park set out to understand the ways in which each part of a city interacted with each other part of that city, how the delineation of these parts came to be, and the social consequences of the segmented city.

The city comes to be through the market, and its creation and existence is seen as a "convenience of commerce". To Burgess and Park, there exists a market within cities for individual talent. This market selects the individuals "best-suited" for these tasks and

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<sup>5</sup> Sennett, *Classic Essays on the Culture of Cities*.

places them in their appropriate place within the functioning city. In this way, vocation and specialization are the forces by which cities become organized as the organizational force of the market begins to overcome the organizational forces of family, culture and status.

With this understanding of how cities are formed, Burgess and Park then go on to understand the social consequences of this arrangement. As cities grow, primary contact becomes replaced with secondary contact, which is described as indirect, intermediate and unreflecting. Social control begins to take the form as positive law, replacing adherence to cultural norms and home mores. Additionally, the municipality begins to gain responsibilities that were formerly the burden of individual initiative, including the administration of space. As the administration of space and social control begin to reflect rational thought as opposed to social mores, expert knowledge and advice on rational processes like law and city planning become the means by which space is often formed and individuals are controlled socially.<sup>6</sup>

Louis Wirth expanded upon these notions in “Urbanism as a Way of Life”, released in 1938. Wirth describes the ways in which cities form as a transition from community-based relations to societal-based relations. Communities are natural and unplanned, forming through the realization of functional relationships and forms of ecological interdependence. A society, conversely, is the result of “willful and contractual relationships” which are more a function of spatial relation than organic. As groups shift from a community to a society, social control occurs in a more deliberate way, analogous to the explanation provided by Burgess and Park.

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<sup>6</sup> Park, *The City*.

Wirth goes on to describe the characteristics of cities, which he identifies as particularly problematic for social relation and function. The city Wirth describes is a Durkheimian ideal type, characterized by large size, high density and social heterogeneity. Large size results in social and personal differentiation, which further results in voluntary segregation of different social groups. This segregation weakens social bonds between groups. Because of such large size, formal social controls such as law and bureaucracy are required to coordinate and facilitate relations between groups. It is large size that leads to Burgess and Park's notions of impersonality and secondary contact. These forms of contact also increase the importance of rationality in society because of the ways in which individuals view others as serving a function or fulfilling a need or role. These impersonal, role fulfilling relationships become institutionalized in cities through other forms of rational social control, such as professional codes of conduct amongst a group of workers or trade and corporate bureaucracy.

Density, the second problematic characteristic of cities, is also partially to blame for the rise of secondary contact as individuals become physically closer but not more socially intimate. Whereas more people are occupying a place at a given time, bumping shoulders and crossing paths on the sidewalk, they are not talking to each other or taking part in cultural activity that strengthens social bonds. Density is also to blame for the competitive nature of individuals in cities as well as the exploitation of individuals for the sake of competition.

Wirth goes on to explain the consequences of social heterogeneity within cities. As interaction between individuals from different backgrounds increases, individuals seek others who are more like themselves and become affiliated with social groups.

These social groups often have conflicting values and fundamental beliefs, which work to impede political organization as well as a “common social understanding”. As these contradictions in thinking between social groups become more prominent, crime and delinquency as a means to deal with these social differences becomes more and more frequent. Ultimately, the work of Wirth is very much an extension of the work of Park and Burgess, with Wirth furthering the ecological understanding of the city and the social consequences of the spatial makeup of the city.

Sociologists, as well as other social thinkers, began to focus their attention towards the individuals who planned cities in the 1960's, at time when urban renewal drastically changed the landscape of many of the largest American cities. Richard Sennett, writing about psychological development in relation to the ways in which cities are planned, arrived at a criticism of these individuals. To Sennett, psychological growth occurs throughout life as individuals face conflict that helps to generate understanding. This growth occurs sequentially as one goes through life and is dependent upon experiencing and negotiating social conflict. Alienation, it follows, is what occurs when one limits the possibility of conflict in life. Communities and individuals do this often through the creation of purified communities, which Sennett describes as coping mechanisms that allow one to avoid social pain. Examples of this can include a suburban neighborhood or even the concept of a close-knit family. Sennett criticizes cities for falling into this trap by becoming less heterogeneous than in previous centuries. Contemporary cities don't have the vitality of classical cities because modern cities don't



allow for diverse human contacts in the same way that classical cities did.<sup>7</sup> Sennett's work on families and familial structure in the suburbs of Chicago showed that, in many cases, families struggled to prepare their children for the realities of urban life as they allowed their children to avoid conflict, replacing social experience with the comfort of a close-knit family.<sup>8</sup>

Material abundance allows for cities to evolve into a series of homogenous areas. As families become more financially secure, they gain the mobility to move from one place to another, preferably where other similar people are also located. Once moved, families have the resources to remain in those homogenous areas and don't have to rely on individuals from other walks of life for anything of great importance. This allows for home life to become separate from all other aspects of life.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, Sennett arrives at a critique of city planning and the ways in which cities are rationally organized. To Sennett, the goal of city planners is to insulate individuals from the social conflict that is necessary to experience psychological growth. This occurs through single use zoning that separates uses of space as well as groups of individuals by demographic characteristics. In this way, city planners create purified communities that are homogenized and stunted.

Sennett critiques three specific aspects of city planning. Firstly, city planners create plans for cities that then become reified in such a way that they become more "real" to city planners than the inhabitants of the city themselves. As planners attempt to

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<sup>7</sup> Smith, *The City and Social Theory*; Sennett, *The Uses of Disorder*.

<sup>8</sup> Sennett, *Families Against the City*.

<sup>9</sup> Sennett, *The Uses of Disorder*.

identify and solve social problems through planning, they are depriving society the opportunity to create their own solutions to the problems of their time.

Sennett also criticizes city planning for being too reliant on the past and not a process by which cities prepare for the future. This is because city plans are often created based on data and trends from the past that are then projected into the future in such a way that assumes linear growth. It is this assumption of linear growth that is the basis for many city plans and, in many cases, it is a fallacy.

Lastly, city planning is seen as too holistic. To Sennett, planners attempt to control every aspect of city life by creating each individual section which are supposed to fit into a conceived final vision of the city. To create both the parts of the city and the vision of the city is not a natural process that Sennett describes as having “inhumane” results.<sup>10</sup>

Herbert Gans, also writing after the urban renewal of the 1950’s and 1960’s, criticized city planning and development as an attack on culture.. In “The Urban Villagers”, Gans describes the West End of Boston. This neighborhood was an ethnic, Italian neighborhood that had been identified as a slum by the City of Boston and was to be part of an urban renewal project. Gans writes of the cultural ties in the community and the ways in which the community functioned because of familial structures and values. Yet politicians, city officials and planners failed to recognize these social networks the ways in which the community functioned and saw only a “blighted” neighborhood. It is

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<sup>10</sup> Smith, *The City and Social Theory*.

this critique that Gans levels against not only urban renewal projects in the West End of Boston but urban renewal all across the country. <sup>11</sup>

It was during this time that Jane Jacobs wrote the highly influential *Death and Life of Great American Cities*, detailing the ways cities functioned and the ways in which city planners lacked comprehension of these complexities. To Jacobs, city planners were to blame for creating spaces that could not function as cities were meant to because the new spaces were homogenized, stripped of density and organized to allow for the separation of uses. To Jacobs, the city functions insofar as it is dense, diverse and allows for a range of uses over a space. Density, diversity and mixed use strengthens social bonds as primary contact increases, helps assimilate children to space and each other and helps to maintain social order, amongst other things. Urban renewal programs and city planners who zoned space for specific purposes were, in Jacobs' view, creating unnatural urban spaces that could not function as truly urban places because they were not urban in design. Jacobs also provides examples of the ways in which cities should and could be constructed – always with a mix and high density of uses. Jacobs criticizes urban renewal for creating “cataclysmic” change and completely redeveloping neighborhoods. In her view, such redevelopment is “cataclysmic” both socially and economically, as is the removal of aged buildings and total replacement with new construction. <sup>12</sup>

## Economic Development

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<sup>11</sup> Gans, *Urban Villagers*.

<sup>12</sup> Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.

This work also engages literature on economic development. Economic development strategies are broadly described as emphasizing either human capital or business capital and recommending growth through development of internal resources or through attainment of resources outside of a place. These strategies can be implemented at either the state or local government level, depending on the legal necessities of the strategies and the extent to which a state government has given its local municipalities the legal autonomy to implement such strategies.

One way states or municipalities seek to bring resources into a community in the name of economic development can be described as “chasing”. Chasing assumes that whatever is brought into a community, whether it be new construction or new business, will create jobs and expand the tax base through an increase in population or an increase in the number of buildings on a municipality’s tax rolls. Places can choose to chase different sorts of enterprises, people or businesses using an array of tools. Traditional chasing is characterized by the desire to acquire industrial or manufacturing companies that require large warehouses or factories and provide large numbers of jobs. As the nation has experienced a significant decrease in manufacturing alongside a significant increase in service sector jobs, municipalities often times find themselves chasing firms that require office space rather than manufacturing space.<sup>13</sup>

States and local governments have devised a number of strategies for wooing a firm away from its current location. These include marketing campaigns designed to catch the attention of a firm looking to move, where the product being marketed is a

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<sup>13</sup> A. M. Isserman, “State Economic Development Policy and Practice in the United States: A Survey Article,” 67.

particular state or community. For example, the City of Allentown portrays itself as “the place to be”, informing potential business of the vibrancy and momentum present in the downtown. Places may be portrayed “good” for business regardless of any business realities that exist within that place. Often times, these marketing campaigns are paired with legislation that make moving to a certain place financially attractive. These sorts of financial incentives include loans with subsidized interest rates, tax subsidies and abatements, relaxed construction or zoning regulations, grants of land or other funds. Tax increment financing (TIF) is a common tool used to provide funds for construction through the issuance of municipal bonds backed by expected increases in future taxes. In these ways, states and local municipalities can offer firms a place where taxes, rents and construction costs are lower and regulations are fewer in return for the creation of jobs and the increase of tax revenues.

Michael Porter offers an alternative understanding of the ways in which a place can implement business-centered economic development strategies. Porter looks to the inherent comparative advantages of cities and offers those advantages as the starting point for development. Understanding the success of the suburbs as the realization of market forces, where suburban development is often cheaper and more advantageous to business, Porter argues that cities must also recognize market forces and use their comparative advantages to expand existing clusters of industry. Using such incentives as tax or construction subsidies may attract business, but such strategies are not sustainable if the market forces to support those new businesses do not exist. Thus, cities must look

to their inherent advantages, including their location, human resources and local, unmet demand as the catalysts of growth. <sup>14</sup>

Other economic development strategies focus not on larger corporations but rather on groups of individuals as the key asset that induces development. This strategy, which focuses on developing human capital, follows the notion that where groups of highly educated or skilled individuals live, business that can hire those individuals will follow, resulting in an accumulation of wealth and resources in that area. Lucas, an economist, notes that of the primary factors of production, the force that best explains the economic viability of cities is not land or raw materials, often cheaper outside of the city, but the available labor and talent within the city.

Richard Florida takes this argument one step further, arguing not for human capital but for creative capital, a certain sort of human capital. Florida identifies his “three T’s to economic development” – talent, technology and tolerance that assist in understanding why some cities are economically vibrant while others are economically depressed. To Florida, cities that are performing economically house a large percentage of high-tech industry, cluster talented people through the presence of “thick” labor markets where an individual may have several different opportunities for employment in the same place, and are tolerant to outsiders, allowing for a wide range of individuals to enter and assimilate into a space with relative ease. Cities that attract the creative class attract people who start businesses and file for patents, and whose presence lifts up the economy through the creation of jobs and the strengthening of the market. Today, chasing the creative class has become the ubiquitous strategy amongst municipalities

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<sup>14</sup> M. E. Porter, “New Strategies for Inner-City Economic Development.”

looking to grow economically, having replaced Michael Porter's notions of creating industrial clusters within places based on inherent comparative advantages.<sup>15</sup>

Sharon Zukin has written about the nature of contemporary cities and some of the more recent economic development strategies that can be found in American cities. . She writes about the fetishization of artists as a form of economic development in Manhattan, and the ways in which local and federal government policies as well as the service sector, banks and developers worked to transform parts of Manhattan from industrial-sectors to service sectors. Zukin describes the ways in which government incentives allowed for industrial areas to be rezoned and rebuilt as lofts for artists and then the ways in which these lofts would become the future luxury condos of Manhattan. In this way, Zukin explains the role of capitalism, the market and government in drastically transforming a place.<sup>16</sup>

Zukin goes on to explain the ways in which certain neighborhoods transform from centers of production to centers of consumption and the social consequences of this. To Zukin, as places develop and income increases, construction often means the destruction of not only old places but old cultural values. In an attempt to recreate these values despite the construction of chain stores and other places of mass consumption, cities create inauthentic places that serve to reflect the values of the past. These values are not valued for their meaning but for the perception that they are "cool" or "hip". These inauthentic places allow for residents to consume a lifestyle that they desire but that are

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<sup>15</sup> Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*

<sup>16</sup> Zukin, *Loft Living*.

ultimately rooted not in culture but in consumerism and capitalism. Zukin finds this problematic, as it leads to the creation of Jacobs' unnatural urban space.<sup>17</sup>

## Field Theory

I will be applying Bourdieu's notions of field and doxa to better understand the ways in which power dynamics emerge within communities employing different economic development strategies. Field theory is an analytical tool with which one can describe how power relations dictate relative levels of autonomy and mobility. In many ways the purpose of this work is to extend and surpass the thinking of Marx, who explained power primarily through social classes informed by economic capital. To Bourdieu, this explanation lacked a clear understanding of the role that culture and experience play in determining power structures within a society. To reconcile the reality of distinctions of power and the influence of culture and experience, Bourdieu defined a series of terms that together describe the ways in which people operate depending on the space they are in, the people they are inhabiting that space with and the rules that are attached to that given space. These terms are habitus, field and doxa.

The notion of the habitus first appeared in sociology in the works of Marcel Mauss and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Mauss used the term to describe the ways in which bodily techniques were influenced by society and thus were social acts occurring within the context of a larger space, not simply individual decisions. "These habits do not just vary with individuals and their imitations, they vary especially between societies, educations, proprieties and fashions, prestiges. In them we should see the techniques and

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<sup>17</sup> Zukin, *Naked City*.



work of collective and individual practical reason rather than, in the ordinary way, merely the soul and its repetitive faculties,” (Mauss 1968). Merleau-Ponty also wrote of the habitus in his attempt to determine “how the psychic determining factors and the physiological determining factors gear into each other,” (Merleau-Ponty 1962). Bourdieu combined these thoughts and questions when considering the habitus and how the habitus related to field and doxa.

To Bourdieu, the habitus is a “structured and structuring structure” that informs behavior and hierarchy based on knowledge and experience while at the same time being informed by societal norms and values. The habitus is the “feel for the game”, the conscious and unconscious ability to know how to act and to act (without any distinction between those two processes) in a certain manner, as dictated by society.

For example, one may be said to have internalized the habitus of a college student. This habitus is one that has been determined by society but also acts in a dialectic way with society. Society determines the ways in which a student will act, the spaces that a student will enter and the skills and techniques that one would expect of a student. All of this information becomes internalized when someone has the appropriate social, cultural and economic capital and experience. Thus, it will be more difficult and perhaps impossible for a first generation college student to internalize the habitus of the college student, and along the way that individual will have to learn the ways in which a student acts. However, an upper class individual from a well-educated family may be surrounded by such things as books, structure, philosophy and other elements of the academic habitus. Thus, that individual will have an easier time internalizing the habitus

of the college student and likely have already acquired the social capital essential to that habitus.

If the habitus is an individual's internalization and expression, then the field is the space that the habitus acts on and in. Much like the literal fields that athletes take to for soccer, baseball and the like, fields are socially constructed spaces, each with its own unique set of rules, norms and hierarchies. Furthering the example of the habitus of the student, one can say that particular habitus acts in the field of academia or higher education. Within this field, students are to interact with professors in a different way than professors interact with other professors, professors with tenure are seen as having more "power" than junior faculty and it is assumed that everyone can write using the Chicago style.

Fields are also places where power operates to preserve or change norms, rules and values. Within a field, actors take their place in a hierarchy determined by the field. The rules of a field act in such a way as to preserve that hierarchy and order of power. When an individual wants to subvert this power structure, they may act against the rules in order to gain power for themselves or remove power from others. However, as they are acting out of accordance with the rules of the field, they will be challenged by those whom the rules exist for. These forces that maintain or subvert divisions of power are an important aspect of Bourdieu's field (Fowler 2000).

Within a given field, doxa are unquestioned, obvious facts that are widely accepted. In some ways, they are accepted without any formal act because of how commonsensical they seem. These unquestioned rules exist to maintain power structures in a field through objectification. The more objectified one's habitus becomes within a

given field (that is to say, the more aligned with objective notions of doxa one's habitus becomes), the less ability that habitus has to subvert power through agency. In this way, doxa seeks to make static the hierarchy of society through the creation of unquestioned beliefs and ways of doing things.

## Methodology

The purpose of this research is to understand the ways in which power dictates the relative autonomy of agents making decisions on land use and economic development within a community, using the south side of Bethlehem as a case study. To this end, I have employed three primary methods of collecting qualitative data, which was then analyzed for thematic content. Data was gathered through acting as a participant observer at meetings where land use and economic development decisions were discussed. These meetings included formal meetings of city council, the South Bethlehem Historic Commission, the Planning Commission, the Zoning Board as well as informal meetings of the South Side Task Force, a group of small business owners who convene regularly, and the South Side Institute. These experiences were supplemented by informal, semi-structured interviews with city officials, small business owners, real estate developers, planners and residents.

It is important to note my own relation to the community in question, Bethlehem. Bernard discusses questions of objectivity and the extent to which one can be objective as a participant observer. Bernard offers that to assume complete objectivity is unrealistic. We cannot remove ourselves from the context of our life experiences, but we can

acknowledge the ways in which these experiences bias our viewpoints. By doing so, we can approach participant observation with a greater level of objectivity.<sup>18</sup> I have chosen to act as a participant observer in my own community, as I was born and raised in Bethlehem. As a member of the community, I am afforded both advantages that have assisted in my research as well as conflicts that required reconciliation and self-reflection. Being a member of the community made it much easier to talk to individuals. Levels of trust were achieved with relative ease, as members of the community could vouch for my legitimacy to others. This granted me access to informal meetings and to individuals that would have been more difficult to obtain otherwise. However, this also forced me to overcome biases created by being so familiar to some community members. At times, I felt pressured to have a viewpoint that aligned with a specific side when taking part in discussions on economic development. The truth of the matter is that I do have opinions on land use and economic development in Bethlehem. I also am particularly empathetic to the small business community as the son of two small business owners. However, by acknowledging these personal contexts, I believe I have allowed myself to arrive at an analysis that minimally reflects these biases.

The data obtained through participant observation and semi-structured interviews were also supplemented by planning and economic development documents contracted by the City of Bethlehem. Such plans are a tool used by cities to ensure that growth follows some sense of form and results in order and convenience for its users<sup>19</sup>. Planning documents included *the South Side Bethlehem Master Plan (2001)*, *the South*

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<sup>18</sup> Bernard, *Research Methods in Anthropology*, 278.

<sup>19</sup> Garvin, *The American City*, 504.

*Bethlehem Historic Conservation Commission Design Guidelines, the South Bethlehem Eastern Gateway Vision Study, the Plan for a Community Benefit District for South Bethlehem, Southside Vision 2012, Southside Vision 2014, Southside Vision 2020, the City of Bethlehem Comprehensive Plan, the Plan for the Western Gateway, the South Bethlehem Greenway Master Plan and the City of Bethlehem's City Revitalization and Improvement Zone Application.* In addition, newspaper articles regarding land use and economic development provided additional content that was analyzed to support the themes identified in other sources of data.

#### Data and Analysis: Themes

Themes were identified in the discourses observed at various meetings as well as in the data provided through semi-structured interviews and in the planning documents for the city. These themes provided insight into the factors that influence economic development and land use decisions, the autonomy of agents involved in economic development and land use decisions, the relative levels of different types of capital held by agents and the consequences of these processes. Agents were primarily identified as small business owners, city officials and real estate developers, the prominent actors at meetings where decisions on economic development and land use were made.

## The Silver Bullet

The phrase *silver bullet* is used idiomatically to mean “something that acts as a magical weapon; especially: one that instantly solves a long-standing problem”<sup>20</sup> This phrase can also refer to the ways in which officials in local government and planners view and value economic development projects. In this case, the long-standing problem is the lack of economic development and loss of jobs in the south side of Bethlehem resulting from the decline of the Bethlehem Steel. As one city official put it, “the south side has been waiting for something like this [economic development] for thirty years”. The silver bullet itself are the economic development projects and policies put in place to solve the identified problem, the lack of economic development occurring in the city.

The *silver bullet* or *game changer* discourse is present when discussing projects and policies that are large in scale, both in terms of physical land use but also dollars invested, tax dollars generated and jobs created. In Bethlehem, there is perhaps no better exemplar of this than the discourse surrounding two of the largest economic development initiatives, the Community Revitalization and Investment Zone (CRIZ) and the Sands Casino. Perhaps the most substantial economic development tool provided to Bethlehem, the CRIZ is a 130 acre designation from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that allows for new construction to be subsidized with public funds backed by future taxes generated, providing financial incentives for developers to construct new buildings that attract firms and generate new jobs. States such as Pennsylvania enact such legislation with the hopes of attracting new jobs to the state, (or *chasing*) a requirement to receive tax incentives for

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<sup>20</sup> “Silver Bullet | Something That Very Quickly and Easily Solves a Serious Problem.”

a project. The designation can be described as project oriented, with funds supporting large-scale construction of commercial or mixed-use buildings. CRIZ-subsidized projects include the Greenway Park Revitalization, a complex whose mixed uses include office space, restaurants, retail space and luxury apartments, another series of luxury apartments and restaurants on Third Street, a parking garage, an office complex at the western gateway to the south side, and the development of a major retail outlet on the former Bethlehem Steel site.

The *silver bullet* discourse has been applied to both the CRIZ itself as well as to individual projects within the CRIZ. Macroscopically, city officials cited the aggregate effect of CRIZ associated projects as replacing the Bethlehem Steel Corporation as the economic engine of the south side. Microscopically, individual projects were cited as *game-changers* for the individual streets and blocks that they belonged to. This included a thirty-seven-apartment high-rise planned for 4<sup>th</sup> Street, praised for returning *feet to the street* that would support struggling merchants. A proposed Bass Pro Shops was also described by city officials as a *game changer* that would allow the city to redevelop land vacated by the Bethlehem Steel Corporation while providing over 400 new jobs<sup>21</sup>.

Beyond the CRIZ is the Sands Casino, which opened in 2009. The casino, with an adjoining hotel, shopping complex and entertainment center are located on the 126-acre former Bethlehem Steel site. The Sands has been in operation long enough that members of the community and agents of change regarding land use have reflected on the project's influence on the area. It was this complex that was the original *game changer* for the

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<sup>21</sup> "Bass Pro Shops Angling for Store at Bethlehem Steel Plant"; Express-Times, "Bass Pro Shops Would Bring 433 Full-Time Jobs to Bethlehem, Mayor Announces"; "Bethlehem Bass Pro Shop Highlighted in State of City Address."

south side of Bethlehem, promising visitors that would not only patronize the casino but would also provide an economic impact for the south side neighborhood-based commercial district.

### The Tax Rate-able Mindset

Viewing economic development projects as *silver bullets* occurs through the lens of a tax rate-able mindset, held by many city officials and real estate developers. The tax rate-able mindset emphasizes the quantifiable factors of economic development and land use, such as job creation, dollars of private investment, and additional tax revenue, and judges the merit of projects and policies on the metrics they promise. This discourse associates projects and numbers, which are often cited together when discussed. This includes the 433 jobs to be created by the Bass Pro Shops, thirty seven apartments on 4<sup>th</sup> Street at a cost of thirty million dollars, another 110 apartments at a cost of thirty-five million dollars and 507 parking spots in a proposed parking structure.

This perspective was observed at several local government meetings where leaders voted on certificates of appropriateness necessary for building construction. Discussion on these matters included the justification of “yes” votes by citing the expected addition of taxes through land development and job creation associated with the construction. These factors were cited as highly influential, being one of the most important factors if not the single most important factor in a public official’s decision to approve construction of new buildings.



## Relation to/Abstraction from Place

Small businesses, city officials and real estate developers all exhibited varying levels of connectedness or abstraction from the actual place they were impacting through land use and economic development decisions. This observation is multi-faceted. Firstly, individuals exhibited varying levels of connectedness to the south side, defined by the literal geographic location of their place of business or of the property they owned. Some individuals owned businesses in the south side, with these businesses being their primary (and in some cases only) form of income, while others owned businesses or properties in various locations. Secondly, individuals cited the importance of place to their decisions in different ways. That is, while some recognize place in terms of connectedness to a market, others recognize place in terms of community and personal relationships.

One particular project, the redevelopment of a former Bethlehem Steel building by a big-box chain store, exhibited the greatest level of abstraction from the place that constitutes the south side of Bethlehem. This level of abstraction was displayed at monthly task force meetings held by well-informed residents with the intent of informing other residents of ongoing development and general happenings in the south side. At these meetings, updates were provided on projects including the aforementioned redevelopment project. These updates often included little information, amounting to a declaration that the city was “still waiting” to receive feedback and information on decisions being made by parties in other states. These negotiations, between the particular big-box chain and the Sands casino, were characterized as “whatever they’re talking about over in Las Vegas”. Updates on the project given by city officials also exhibited the

project's level of abstraction from the south side. Progress was described as "ongoing discussions between the Sands Casino and Bass Pro Shops".

Abstraction was also evident when real estate developers discussed the construction of new office or commercial space in the south side. Such spaces are constructed with the intent of luring tenants to the locations, with developers receiving rent and the business receiving a place to conduct business. These businesses had varying levels of connectedness to the south side itself. Some proposed tenants included businesses owned by individuals who could be considered "local". That is, while not currently owners of space or business in the south side, they were owners of businesses or space within the surrounding areas, including the Lehigh Valley. These tenants cited the lowered rents provided through CRIZ incentives as reasons for choosing the south side, but also wanting to be a part of the cultural and economic renaissance they believed would occur through proposed economic development efforts. Other proposed tenants were businesses owned by individuals located farther from the south side, in one case as far as the west coast. This business cited the CRIZ incentives as the primary reason for locating their first east coast store in the south side.<sup>22</sup>

Current small businesses on the south side can be considered the most embedded commercial ventures there, literally taking up land and space in the community. These businesses also included many of the businesses that chose to move or open a second location in another downtown. When discussing reasons for coming to the south side, for wanting to stay on the south side or for wanting to leave the south side, small business

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<sup>22</sup> Express-Times, "Bethlehem Looking to Spice up South Side with New Mexican Restaurant and Microbrewery"; Express-Times, "Second Distillery Proposed on Bethlehem's South Side."

owners responded with explanations that exhibited different sorts of connectedness to place. The factors that both pulled and retained small businesses to the south side as well as the factors that pushed small businesses out of the south side (and subsequently pulled them into other communities) primarily included positive attributes of the local community, including the *vibe* (heavily tied to a sense of the south side as an arts district), the small business culture of the south side, the strength of relations between small business owners and the general atmosphere of the community. These are also the conditions cited in downtowns where south side businesses are currently relocating or opening second businesses in. One such business owner was quoted as saying, *“Right now in Bethlehem you're seeing great businesses, small businesses, leave or create an exit plan. They see Easton as a place that takes pride in its small business community. In South Bethlehem, the growing sentiment is people aren't looking out for the small business community.”* Other business owners expressed these same sentiments during interviews, at meetings and to members of the press. As another business owner stated, *““The South Side is just not doing that great. The casino has sort of taken some of the shopping business away. I just feel Easton is the new Bethlehem and I hate that 'cause I love the city.”*

Real estate developers also exhibited their own sort of relation to place. In the same way that small business owners moved their shops or relocated to other downtowns, real estate developers proposed projects in places other than the south side. However, an important difference was noted in the discourses between real estate developers and small business owners. Small business owners talked about leaving in terms of push and pull factors. Both were closely embedded in the actual places they were discussing. In

Bethlehem, the lack of support for small business by city officials, deterioration of the small business community and network and importance of large projects associated with the CRIZ and Sands Casino were cited as forces that pushed small businesses out of the space. Pull factors included the emergence of new networks of small business owners, a sense of pride held by other downtowns in regards to small business and a closer relationship with supportive local officials. Real estate developers discussed moving between some of the very same locations. However, discussions were often more closely related with the tax-rateable mindset. While “vibe” and community were mentioned by some developers, places were talked about in broad economic terms. The ability to take advantage of a market ripe for urban redevelopment was cited most often, as well as the presence of tax-incentives that would allow for lowered construction costs.

### Field Theory

The themes identified in local discourse on economic development and land use, including the silver bullet and tax-rateable mindsets, abstraction from place, and application of formal and informal social rules each identify individuals acting with and against each other, with varying resources, to develop land, run a profitable business or improve the economic viability of the city. With this in mind, we can begin to analyze the power dynamics that exist within this framework by applying Bourdieu’s notion of the *field*. Bourdieu defines the field as “[A] structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and others who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside this space, which at the same time

*becomes a space in which the various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field. All the individuals in this universe bring to the competition all the (relative) power at their disposal. It is this power that defines their position in the field and, as a result, their strategies”*<sup>23</sup>

The field in question operates as a space where agents, particularly real estate developers, city officials and business owners, use their relative levels of social, human and economic capital to better their position in the field. This may mean ownership of a particular parcel of land, designation or receipt of a tax-incentive, profit, creation of jobs or creation of tax revenue. In this way, each dominates and is dominated by one another depending on their position in the field, relative to their role and level of capital.

A theme present throughout my discussions with residents and small business owners was the role of money and its ability to dominate. This includes the ways in which individuals can use money to improve their place in the field, but also the ways in which money dictates what improving one’s place in the field looks like. In particular, large corporations such as the Sands Casino and Bass Pro Shops and wealthy developers were viewed as having a distinct advantage because of their economic resources. Phrases such as “*money talks*” and “*you have to follow the money*” were commonly used to understand the ways in which land-use decisions were made by city officials. At several meetings of city council, residents in opposition to certain projects seen as out-of-scale with the historic district cited campaign contributions made by developers to members of city council as a primary explanatory factor in “yes” votes. However, to understand development decisions as occurring because of the presence of money would be to lose

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<sup>23</sup> Bourdieu, *On Television*, 42.

sight of the forces that counteract economic capital and allow for relative levels of autonomy. These include formal rules and laws that define land use.

Certain rules apply to everyone within the field regardless of economic influence. The most formal of these rules is the local zoning ordinance. Zoning ordinances provide the legal justification for building form and function, dictating the ways in which land is to be used within a municipality and the guidelines that must be followed for new construction. Real estate developers looking to build must follow zoning ordinances to receive the necessary building permits that allow construction to take place. These zoning codes were often cited as the justification for building heights. When local residents and small business owners viewed some of the proposed construction as out-of-scale with the neighborhood, real estate developers cited their compliance with the local zoning ordinance as legal justification for their development.

Zoning ordinances do exhibit a level of flexibility, allowing agents to adhere to the rules of the game while also challenging the rules through the proposition of zoning variances. Zoning variances allow new construction to go against certain facets of the zoning code. Often these variances relate to small details of construction as opposed to more fundamental components like building height or use. It was observed that, for the most part, these rules of the game were equally applied to agents in the field. Individuals seeking variances are allowed to petition the zoning board for those requests regardless of their position profession (or position in the field). Additionally, requests from small business owners and real estate developers rarely attempted to transcend the zoning code in any fundamental way. Quite the opposite was found, as new construction was justified and praised by real estate developers for adhering to the zoning code.

Another set of rules – those regulating new construction and rehabilitation work within the South Side’s historic conservation district – were more obviously unequally applied to agents in the field. The south side of Bethlehem was designated a historic conservation district by the Pennsylvania Bureau of Historic Preservation in 1999. This designation resulted in the creation of a historic review board that would review all new construction or alterations to historic structures within the district. Additionally, design guidelines were adopted to guide property owners’ work.

I observed two sorts of decisions that were most often faced by the historic commission. Most often, proposals were brought forth to the commission by small businesses or residents looking to make slight alterations to the exteriors of their building or to place signs in their windows. These proposals were viewed with great scrutiny and strict adherence to the historic guidelines. One business owner was forced to appear before the board on two separate occasions for permission to place additional signage in their window. Another had been before the board on more than one occasion for permission to replace an awning and sign, and is yet to receive approval as of the writing of this paper. Questions of color, scale, material and placement were asked with great detail, with the board unafraid to require adherence to the historic guidelines even if these affected the duration or cost of improvements.

Another set of decisions involved the construction of CRIZ-subsidized projects and related demolitions. These projects included a nine-story apartment building and a seven-story mixed used complex. Historic commission members’ discussions surrounding these decisions displayed a different tone than discussions on smaller-scale building alterations and signage.

Additionally, those meetings at which larger projects were considered included the voices of multiple agents in the field. Whereas an average historic commission meeting is attended only by those individuals with active applications before the board, historic commission meetings on new construction were attended by resident, small business owners and city officials. At these meetings, public comment was allowed (it is always allowed, but normally no one from the public attends or wishes to comment) and comprised a substantial portion of the meeting.

Commission members' response to the various players illustrated key power dynamics within the field. Public comment often consisted of residents and small business owners asking the historic commission to heavily scrutinize or vote "no" to the proposed construction projects. One small business owner questioned whether or not his own building, a historic structure located adjacent to the proposed construction site, could physically withstand the construction of such a large building. Other small business owners cited the ways in which the building was incongruous to the rest of the block and would disrupt the "feel" and "vibe" of the south side. Still others voiced concerns about the ways the building would detract from the historic value of the district, seen as a valuable neighborhood amenity by small business owners.

One particular meeting displayed the dynamics of power more clearly than others. At this meeting, one city official chose to speak during public comment. This individual, representing other individuals from the city, noted that the project in question was fully supported by city administration and would likely be approved regardless of the opinion of the historic commission (Here, it is important to note that historic commission decisions are not final – they are simply recommendations to approve certificates of



appropriateness that are later voted on for final approval by city council). As such, the individual suggested the historic commission approve the proposal so that, in the future and throughout the construction process, the commission could continue to comment and have control over some of the small details of the development, such as window treatments, cornices and materials. At this meeting, the historic commission voted to approve the demolition of one building, cited as historically significant but in need of repair, as well as the construction of a nine-story apartment building.

In this meeting, the dynamics of the field were on full display. The local government official, as an agent, considered the particular project important to the economic vitality of the south side, citing the number of people added to that area as well as the tax revenue from the building. The public employee used her position in the field to force the historic commission to vote “yes”. The efficacy of her approach was reflected in the discussions by historic commission members that followed. Several members clearly stated that if voting no meant having no further say in the matter, then they should vote yes even if it meant only having a minimal say in design decisions. Small business owners spoke out against the proposal and greatly outnumbered city officials present at the meeting. However, against the resources and influence of city officials, their words fell on deaf ears.

The rules of the game are not only inequitably applied to agents in the field, but are also subject to change. The clearest example of this is the CRIZ legislation. When the city of Bethlehem was approved for CRIZ acreage in 2013, its projects were described (in its application to the state) as “shovel-ready”. However, after nearly two years with the designation, only one project has been completed. When asked to describe why these

“shovel-ready” projects were not advancing, city officials and real estate developers described the lack of clarity in the legislation and the manner in which new information regarding the legislation was still being released. This related mostly to what sorts of tenants would be eligible for CRIZ incentives and how much those incentives would be. As these rules of the game have changed or been slowly unveiled, real estate developers and city officials have acted accordingly by stalling projects or changing plans.

This is all to identify a field, the agents in that field, the relative levels of capital amongst agents, the ways in which agents are dominated by or dominate other agents through force and the relative levels of autonomy available that allow one to better their position in the field. I find it difficult to name this exact field, as it includes several professional titles and decision-makers. However, it most broadly can be defined by how decisions on land use are made, and thus can be called the field of Land Use. The most prominent agents in the field, present at meetings and responsible for most of the decisions made on land use as well as the actual owners of land were identified as small business owners, real estate developers and city officials.

Bourdieu defined three primary types of capital – economic, social and cultural. He also identifies symbolic capital, or the way in which other forms of capital become legitimized through social recognition and respect. All play a role in determining the dynamics of power with the field. Real estate developers (particularly the developers of bigger projects) are powerful because they can invest at levels that are (in theory) bound to generate tax revenues and new jobs and new residents in ways that significantly impact city coffers. That is, real estate developers rely on high amounts of economic capital as well as social capital that includes relationships with local

governments based on the tax-rateable desires of local governments and the ability of real estate developers to meet those desires while also bettering their own position in the field through profit and rent seeking. City officials enjoy the position of being the final decision maker, being persuaded by real estate developers to make decisions that benefit both the city and the developer, in theory. Additionally, city officials gain economic capital through tax incentive programs designated by the state. Small business owners and residents can, to some extent, change who the city officials are through voting. They also are capable of making smaller scale investments in the neighborhoods they're attached to, but these acts don't translate into the same amount of power as the other players wield. These small businesses rely primarily on high levels of social capital. Connectivity between small businesses that creates a network of owners is viewed as the most powerful tool by which small businesses can succeed, creating what is referred to as the "small business environment". All of these sources of capital become legitimized by symbolic capital as well as by levels of respectability between players. City officials respect the word of developers because of prior projects or promises beyond the scale offered by small business owners, whereas the historic commission respects the words of the city official because of their level of authority as well as their ability to take authority from the commission.

### Field Theory and Place

It is important to note the relation of the field to the physical place known as the south side of Bethlehem, and the ways in which those with a weaker connection to a

physical space can come to have great power over decisions made with regards to those spaces. As Mike Savage posits, field theory can provide a “de-centered” urban sociology that “recognizes how power operates through abstraction from location, and which is attentive to the resulting dialectic of de- and re-territorialization”<sup>24</sup>. That is, individuals assert their power over space despite varying levels of abstraction from space. I hope that my discussion on the relative levels of abstraction from space can help to clarify the ways in which agents are connected to space as well as how space can change in relation to the actions of those agents.

Further work can be done to better understand the ways that these processes work. That is, does proof of the ways in which developers do (or do not) change the landscape –and a city’s tax revenues – affect the power dynamics around land use decisions? Can the city of Bethlehem and the South Side offer insights to other small, post-industrial cities that are looking to revitalize after the loss of major industry? Are there lessons to extrapolate for other types of cities? A further exploration of other case studies – different types of cities, of varying size, land mass, density and industry – can help further define the field of land use as well as help further define sub-fields, including rent seekers, small business owners and gentrifiers.

### Policy Recommendation

The city of Bethlehem is currently at a turning point in its economic history. Never before, since the decline of the steel, has the city been more poised to experience

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<sup>24</sup> “Wiley,” 518.

economic growth. As I have observed, economic growth is very closely tied to land use decisions and economic development strategies, and the forces that influence them. As I have observed, these forces and the decisions they impact do not equitably reflect the residents or small business owners in the community. Although small business owners can use their relative amounts of social and economic capital to create successful businesses as well as a network of businesses that support each other, there exist fundamental gaps between the clout of these networks and the clout that real estate developers bring to City Hall.

Theoretically, one can posit that more equitable economic development can only occur through a fundamental change in the forces that control it. This could mean a stronger relationship between small business owners and local officials as a form of social capital, greater incentives for small businesses to grow as a form of economic capital or more access to information for small business owners as a form of cultural capital. This also requires city officials to place greater value on the capital that small business owners provide to a community.

I propose that these changes take place through changes to the city's Community and Revitalization Investment Zone (CRIZ). The CRIZ currently operates as a form of economic and, to some extent, cultural capital for city officials and real estate developers. Indeed, small business owners seem to have little relation to the happenings of the CRIZ. Currently, CRIZ designations are given project-by-project. That is, designations are given to particular buildings or parcels of land. In this way, city officials act as a gatekeeper to CRIZ benefits. Because of the tax-rateable mindset and desire for *silver bullets* by city

officials, benefits are given to projects that meet those criteria, which most often are proposed by real estate developers.

It has also been said that such large projects, including the Sands Casino, have provided little to no benefit to small business owners and residents on the south side. Reasons cited for this have ranged from the nature of such destinations as one-stop-shops, and the physical abstraction of these projects from the neighborhood commercial district. To address this and the aforementioned concern with the CRIZ, one can propose altering the CRIZ designation from parcel specific to place specific. That is, the entire 130-acre zone can be applied to the south side of Bethlehem. Because of the diversity of structures within the zone, from large lots of land owned by real estate developers to smaller buildings, both real estate developers and small businesses can apply for tax incentives. In addition, this would provide tax incentives for not just the south side downtown district or the Bethlehem Steel redevelopment, but also for the spaces in between those spaces, connecting the two commercial districts in a way eliminates the physical abstractions cited by both small business owners and city officials.

In addition, such incentives could allow for the retrofitting of the suburban form that development on the Bethlehem Steel site has taken. While development in the suburban form may be more attractive for developers, it may not be the most beneficial to the surrounding community. Duany et al identify five components of suburban sprawl. They are housing subdivisions, shopping centers, office parks, civic institutions and roadways and they account for most of the development that has occurred in the area

north of Route 412<sup>25</sup>. This includes four office parks, two entertainment complexes, a hotel, a casino and an outlet mall that currently exist and additional office parks and a big-box chain store that are planned as components of the CRIZ. Each of these units exhibits key characteristics that effect their physical and social contributions to the overall landscape of the south side. Firstly, each unit self contains activity of a single use. If a person is going to an office park, they are most likely doing so because they work at a company housed there. While entertainment complexes like Steelstacks and the Sands Casino technically allow a visitor several entertainment options, they are self-contained within the walls of that unit of space. For all intents and purposes, their “use” is simply *going to the Sands* or *going to Steelstacks*. This is of paramount important because of the ways in which single use development may benefit land developers despite the detrimental affects it has on the surrounding community and the ways in which it is more difficult for these developments to become a part of the greater community. Secondly, these units are meant to be traveled to via automobile, as is evident by their distance from and orientation toward other units and the presence of infrastructure conducive to traveling in a car. This includes the presence of large surface lots adjacent to buildings in order to meet zoning codes that require developers to provide a certain number of parking spaces depending on the size and use of their development. Thirdly, these units operate independently of each other. Office parks rely on their own workforces who commute in automobiles, park in designated spots outside of their respective buildings and conduct their business within the walls of their complex. In the same way, entertainment complexes such as Steelstacks and the Sands Casino don’t rely on each other for

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<sup>25</sup> Duany, *Suburban Nation*, 6.

clientele. Each creates their own space to supply their own demand good to customers who can park in a lot designated for their destination. This situation creates no demand for infrastructure between units, allowing the status quo of large parking lots and excessive building set backs to remain.

Dividing the traditional south side neighborhoods and new development is Route 412, a north-south state route that directs traffic from Interstate 78 in Hellertown to Route 378 in Bethlehem and stretches five lanes wide. Community divisions along the lines of highways have been documented since the Federal Highway Act of 1956. These divisions often occurred along lines of race and class. Highways constructed as part of the FHA allowed whites a literal route by which to flee the city. Those left behind would be isolated in economically marginalized communities, bounded by lanes of asphalt <sup>26</sup>. In a similar fashion, Route 412 has come to represent the physical and social dividing line between new development in the south side and traditional neighborhoods. That is to say, power operates differently on either side of that road, affecting land use decisions and debates.

## Conclusion

I have attempted to describe the power dynamics that exist in communities as agents of change make decisions about land use and economic development. Through an analysis of the dynamics present in the south side of Bethlehem, I have identified themes – the tax-rateable mindset, the silver bullet approach, the abstraction from community

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<sup>26</sup> Cashin, *The Failures Of Integration*, 103.



and the formality of rules – that represent the ways in which agents use relative levels of economic, social and cultural capital to dominate and advance their position in the field. This application of field theory can help one understand the dynamics of the south side of Bethlehem, but can also further Savage’s inquiry into the lost urban sociology of Bourdieu, using Field Theory as a way to de-center urban sociology while also acknowledging the role played by place and the ways in which place and space are altered by forces in the field while also altering forces in the field.

As it applies to Bethlehem, I have used these observations and analyses to create policy recommendations, primarily regarding the Community Revitalization and Investment Zone, that redistribute resources such that small businesses and agents more closely embedded in the community are allowed greater autonomy in terms of making decisions on land use and influencing decisions on land use. I do this with the hope that Bethlehem can flourish economically and socially, allowing the city to reap the benefits of both transformative projects proposed by real estate developers as well as of a strong network of local, small business.

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