**Transforming Green Walls into Green Places: Black middle class boundary work,
multidirectional miscommunication and greenspace accessibility in southwest Atlanta**

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1. Introduction

Whose greenspace is it anyway? Who has access to a particular greenspace, and what does access even mean? These questions trouble many geographers, city planners, social justice advocates, environmentalists and policymakers tasked with managing urban parks and other public “green” spaces (Williams, 2006; Brownlow, 2006; Barbosa et al., 2007; Boone et al., 2009; Carlson et al., 2010; Dai, 2011; Gilbert, 2014; Wolch et al., 2014; Sandberg et al., 2015; Davoudi and Brooks, 2016). Within the scholarly literature, greenspace accessibility generally refers to the spatial proximity of parks and other public greenspaces to an individual’s place of residence. Consequently, accessibility is often measured in terms of physical distance, acreage, walkability, and/or travel time (Bole, 2012). Researchers, planners and policymakers often debate the extent to which economically and racially marginalized communities disproportionately suffer from “greenspace deficit” compared to their wealthier counterparts (Pauleit et al., 2003; Joassart-Marcelli et al., 2011; Lapham et al., 2015).

Greenspace accessibility studies are likewise often complicated by the reality that redevelopment of underutilized urban wooded parks reconfigures human-environment relationships in unanticipated ways. City officials can also potentially aggravate existing equity deficits when they discuss “sustainable” greenspace redevelopment. Such discourse can actually contribute to the privatization of environmental resources and gentrification of city centers. Often, city officials must (re)consider the extent to which the right to the greening city can be equitably distributed across socioeconomic, gender, ‘racial’, and generational divides (Comber et al., 2008; Dai, 2011; Bole, 2012; Wolch et al., 2014; Sandberg et al., 2015).

With these broader points in mind, the critical questions that drive our greenspace research include the following: first, how do racialized structural socioeconomic inequalities impact accessibility to a southwest Atlanta nature preserve? Second, to what extent do the stories and memories elicited by the preserve's contemporary redevelopment fit into a larger legacy of community disinvestment and neglect? Our work uncovers multidirectional miscommunication and communicative neglect within urban greenspace management and thus contributes a more holistic discussion to greenspace accessibility and governance literature. We also draw insight from multidisciplinary social science literature and the collective memory of local residents to collaboratively construct a more complete theoretical and practical knowledge of greenspace accessibility and encourage greenspace managers to pursue strategies of "place-keeping" in addition to "place-making" (Dempsey and Burton, 2012; Finney, 2014).

Our community geography study also aims to explore the possibility for increased and more meaningful local resident participation in greenspace decision-making and alternative governance structures juxtaposed with widespread resident safety concerns, confusion and miscommunication with local officials. Community geography as an emerging interdisciplinary subfield embraces a participatory action research (PAR) methodological orientation to challenge top-down decision-making and democratize scientific investigation that normally validates the expertise of university researchers and delegitimizes the local knowledge of research participants (Freire, 1968). The embrace of mixed methods including community mapping and public participation geographic information systems (PPGIS) also situates community geography under a tradition of radical geography and citizen science. According to Robinson (2010) and

Hawthorne et al. (2014), community geography builds relationships between universities, nonprofits, local governments and community groups in order to encourage resident empowerment, support multi-stakeholder community planning and address social and environmental disparities. Yet, our work proposes a more critical community geography framework that moves beyond “pluralistic assumptions of governance” to embrace political ecology and environmental justice perspectives on greenspace governance (Sandberg et al., 2015).

Furthermore, we conceptually investigate the mutually constitutive relation between the social and spatial via our discussion of multidirectional miscommunication. Multidirectional miscommunication as a form of communicative neglect impacts local residents’ constructions of fear and confusion, and by extension, underutilization of urban greenspace that function as “green walls” as opposed to “green magnets.” We use the term “green walls” to refer to boundary landscapes that separate neighborhoods of distinct socioeconomic or racial/ethnic characteristics (Solecki and Welch, 1995; Gobster, 1998; Stodolska et al., 2011). In addition, we argue that “green walls” develop in response to symbolic boundary-work on the part of socially and spatially distant residents and other greenspace stakeholders. Symbolic boundary processes interact to produce multidimensional collective identities for local residents who strategically employ commonality and/or difference to resist denigration of claims to full citizenship, negotiate survival and promote upward social mobility (Pachucki et al., 2007; Lacy, 2007; Rollock et al., 2011). As our research ultimately demonstrates, differing levels of social and cultural capital intersect with various boundary-making strategies to both constrain and expand

opportunities for greenspace managers and volunteers, who must also counter marginalization in their everyday lives and equitably participate in environmental decision-making. Research on boundary-making strategies pursued by diverse stakeholders to differentiate social status and closeness to symbolic power has yet to be thoroughly and conceptually explicated in greenspace accessibility research outside of the present study.

1.1 Who Governs Atlanta's Greenspaces?

In this study, we focus our analysis on local residents from five neighborhoods surrounding the Beecher Hills Lionel Hampton Nature Preserve (hereinafter called Hampton Beecher), a historically undeveloped greenspace located in southwest Atlanta. Given our desire to uphold the participatory aims of community geography research, we worked collaboratively with a local community-based organization, the West Atlanta Watershed Alliance (WAWA). WAWA is an environmental nonprofit dedicated to community empowerment via watershed management, environmental education, and equitable inclusion in environmental decision-making (WAWA, 2014). Our collaboration helped uncover what many researchers term uneven community participation in environmental decision-making and shared greenspace governance (Hosseini et al., 2011; Sandberg et al., 2015; Davoudi and Brooks, 2016). Our collaboration also enabled us to meet WAWA's goals to identify community priorities for infrastructural change within the nature preserve and devise practical solutions to increase usage of the greenspace by local residents.

We also interfaced with a multitude of greenspace managers and stakeholders within metropolitan Atlanta. These stakeholders, in addition to WAWA, influenced the conceptual

direction of this study as they both witness and participate in boundary work processes that create “green walls” in southwest Atlanta (see Table 1). Although greenspace management has historically fallen under the jurisdiction of the state, nonprofits and other non-state actors are increasingly tasked with managing urban greenspaces. Multi-Stakeholder Involvement (MSI) in greenspace management thus offers opportunity for informal and formal collaboration (Hossein et al., 2011). Philanthropies also play an increasingly important role in land donation and fund raising efforts. Nonetheless, governments are singularly important stakeholders due to their role in coordinating and controlling management activities as well as their unique ability to set policy and provide legal frameworks (Hossein et al., 2011). Moreover, “MSI does not always contribute to better urban green space performance” if collaboration between state and society is not adequately balanced with sufficient regulation and implementation (Hossein et al. 2011: 808).

The complexity, contradiction and dynamism of shared greenspace governance in metropolitan Atlanta resists static or linear modeling as the jurisdiction of individual managers often overlap and their impact on local power relations changes over space and time. Nonetheless, most critical geography research finds that the rise in nonprofit environmental governance absolves the state of “former welfarist managerial functions” and “redistributes responsibilities, not power” (Roy, 2011: 91). Roy (2011: 91-92) specifically writes:

Market-driven states facilitate the privatisation of urban environmental resources, specifically at the hands of non-profits in the name of enhancing community participation, empowerment and individual rights and responsibilities.... non-profits have often been primarily described as service providers, peripheral outsiders at the table and agents incapable of contributing to decision-making processes within neo-liberal urban-environmental governance.

As such, we find that the city of Atlanta’s policies and regulations for greenspace management privatize environmental resources and relegate community nonprofits such as WAWA to the periphery of decision-making (Roy, 2011; Wallace, Roberts & Todd, LLC, 2008). Due to space constraints, however, we focus less on untangling the “who”, “when”, “where” and “how” of neoliberalization and counter-neoliberalization within shared, yet fragmented, greenspace governance in metropolitan Atlanta. We instead focus more on the efforts of our community partner, WAWA, to influence local decision-making and facilitate “place-keeping” in underserved and underutilized urban greenspaces, despite rampant multidirectional miscommunication.

Greenspace Stakeholder	Examples	Governance Roles and Responsibilities
Local Universities and Academic Researchers	(To be included after publication)	Conduct (community based) research; build capacity of understaffed community groups and nonprofits; legitimize expertise of scientists and non-scientists; help define local redevelopment priorities
Landowners	Cemetery and golf course owners	Support greenspace acquisition and maintenance efforts
Community Groups	Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU), Friends of Park groups, church groups, block associations, recreationists and bicyclist groups	Resist regulatory failures; create sense of belonging and ownership; provide volunteers for nonprofits; define local interest and concerns
Nonprofits	Trees Atlanta, PATH Foundation, Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, Atlanta Beltline Inc., Trust for Public Land, PARK Pride, West Atlanta Watershed Alliance (WAWA), etc.	Write grants; fund and steward greenspace initiatives; interface with governmental officials; empower local communities; bring together volunteers; foster collaboration
Local, Federal and State Government	Atlanta Department of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs, Atlanta Regional Commission, Department of Public Works, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), City of Atlanta Department of	Critical role in urban greenspace performance via coordination of multiple stakeholders and long term visioning; fund initiatives; create and enforce policy and legal frameworks; manage “environmental subjects”

	Watershed Management, Department of Planning and Community Development, Atlanta Mayor's Office of Sustainability, USDA Forestry Service, Atlanta Public Schools, Atlanta Development Office, Atlanta Housing Authority, Georgia Community Greenspace Program, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, National Park Service, etc.	
Law Enforcement	Atlanta Police	Provide security and ensure safety for greenspace users; surveil and protect private property; criminalize homelessness
Philanthropies and Charities	Arthur M. Blake Foundation, the Conservation Fund, etc.	Provide funds for redevelopment and property acquisition; nurture sense of belonging
Corporate Interests, Developers and Private Businesses	Home Depot, Atlanta Beltline, etc.	Contribute physical infrastructure such as park facilities and amenities; provide charitable donations; displace long term residents via gentrification; privatize natural resources

Table 1. *Example Atlanta Greenspace Governance Stakeholder Schematic. Roles and responsibilities overlap for different stakeholders, with fluctuating types and scope of collaboration.*

2. Greenspace Accessibility Explored within Geography and Social Science

Geographers and other social scientists draw from cultural landscape, environmental justice, and political ecology studies to elucidate macro-level power inequalities inherent within racialized landscapes including greenspaces (Brownlow, 2006; Cutts et al., 2009; Byrne and Wolch, 2009). According to Byrne and Wolch (2009), geographers pay close attention to historical and contemporary political, socioeconomic and spatial barriers to park usage. These processes explicate, for example, the development of early British and American urban parks as technologies of social control, discipline and exclusion; they failed to promote democratic inclusiveness (Byrne and Wolch, 2009). Nonetheless, research on greenspace quality and the

political economy of greenspace management lags in comparison to research on proximity and acreage of greenspace (Pauleit et al., 2003; Joassart-Marcelli et al., 2011).

Moreover, differing epistemological frameworks and diverse methodologies undoubtedly account for contradictory research findings related to demographic difference in greenspace accessibility. For example, some researchers identify greater greenspace accessibility and walkability amongst ethnic minorities, the elderly and the socioeconomically disadvantaged (Barbosa et al., 2007; Cutts et al., 2009; Boone et al., 2009). Others note a lack of correlation between greenspace access and race/ethnicity (Carlson et al., 2010). Yet, other researchers consistently report infrequent or lower greenspace usage rates and a “greenspace deficit” amongst ethnic minorities, women, low income communities, and the elderly (Pauleit et al., 2003; Comber et al., 2008; Dai, 2011; Joassart-Marcelli et al., 2011; Byrne, 2012). Dai (2011) specifically correlates racial/ethnic and socioeconomic disparities in metropolitan Atlanta to environmental justice issues. These divergent research findings highlight the inherent complexity in researching greenspace accessibility and the need for highly nuanced greenspace models that account for a variety of socio-physical, historical, economic, political, and spatial variables (Boone et al., 2009; Jones et al., 2009; Byrne and Wolch, 2009; Gidlow et al., 2012; Smith and Floyd, 2013).

Finally, government disinvestment as a form of social control undoubtedly plays a large role in gender, class and “racial” barriers to greenspace usage and leads to urban ecologies of fear, alienation, and disorder (Brownlow, 2006). Such disinvestment contributes to a top-down “culture of neglect” in many Black urban communities, such as Philadelphia, Baltimore, and

Atlanta. A “culture of neglect” also detrimentally impacts public expenditures on much needed park maintenance and activities (Brownlow, 2006; Boone et al., 2009; Dai, 2011). Fiscal restructuring, suburban sprawl, White flight, middle class Black flight, spatial segregation, and declines in public funding also lead to disinvestment in urban greenspaces, inner city “ghettoization” and, by consequence, decreased community usage of public spaces (Combs, 2010). These public spaces can be perceived as unsavory, unsafe, or for primary use by “ecological others” (i.e. the homeless, loitering youth, inebriated individuals, gang members, the mentally ill, and substance abusers) (Joassart-Marcelli et al., 2011; Jorgensen et al., 2013; Ray, 2013). Governmental and community neglect of parks can also facilitate the emergence of parks as “green walls” and symbolize racialized ecologies of disinvestment. “Green walls” are evidenced by a lack of park police surveillance, lack of passive community surveillance, low rates of park usage, minimal foot traffic, little weed maintenance, turf overgrowth and/or trees in poor condition (Solecki and Welch, 1995). Finally, the racialization of urban greenspaces contributes to the “paradox of parks” i.e. the ideal function of parks as a place of refuge and the unfortunate reality that some parks function as an oasis of crime, fear, victimization, and exclusion (Brownlow, 2006; Williams, 2006).

2.1 Governance as a Communicative Relationship

According to Kellogg and Mathur (2003:573), community-based organizations and concerned citizens are better able to advocate for safer environments once state agencies support these communities’ equitable and democratic inclusion in environmental decision-making and access to “agency-generated environmental information.” Kellogg and Mathur (2003) highlight

the importance of iterative, multidirectional dialogue between governmental officials, greenspace managers, and local communities. Moreover, the science and art of communication is quite relevant for greenspace managers concerned with increasing public knowledge of and appreciation for urban greenspaces (Pauleit et al., 2003; Green et al., 2009). Community-based nonprofits are increasingly tasked with providing environmental and public health services traditionally provided by more bureaucratic local governments and information sharing is particularly crucial to their success as effective greenspace managers (Joassart-Marcelli et al., 2011; Roy, 2011). Interestingly enough, an increase in access to information through mediums such as the internet can paradoxically decrease or restrict more traditional mechanisms for information dissemination such as telephones and neighborhood canvassing (Kellogg and Mathur, 2003: 578). For these reasons, greenspace managers must pay closer attention to the impact of an “information underclass” on urban greenspace usage and accessibility.

Critical greenspace research must further analyze the dynamics of social capital within marginalized communities so that local residents may successfully access, use, generate, and manage information and build local organizing capacity. Greenspace managers should pay closer attention to the values, knowledges, and attitudes of local constituents, and strategically employ residents’ preferred communication channels and media sources (Nisbet and Scheufele, 2009). Such targeted marketing of environmental information not only addresses the impact of an “information underclass” on greenspace usage, but also contributes to “place-keeping” within urban public spaces. According to Dempsey and Burton (2012: 13), “place-keeping” refers to ongoing, long-term management of public spaces through planning, design, maintenance,

governance, funding, partnerships, policy and evaluation that combines physical and social dimensions. “Place-keeping” must include underserved environmental justice communities in greenspace management, not solely focus on technocratic solutions and unpack the various forces that conspire together to produce racialized, unjust landscapes.

In addition, common communication barriers (including physical/environmental barriers, choice of register, choice of medium, attitude, and cultural perception) can be exacerbated by structural power inequalities and a lack of intentional care and skill on the part of those overseeing, facilitating and implementing governance projects (Ansell and Gash, 2008; Inness and Booher, 2003). Communicative neglect, and associated communicative oversight, omission, misdirection, dismissing, downplaying, denying, delaying, pretending and miscommunication can lead to minimal resources allocated to building and sustaining emotional infrastructures of trust, accountability, reflexivity and cooperation (Anolli et al., 2002; Ansell and Gash, 2008). Communicative neglect thus reflects and contributes to the objectification, abstraction, othering and dehumanization of folk excluded from and marginally included within participatory processes and relevant policy dialogue.

Consequently, communication amongst diversely situated stakeholders is rarely authentic. Such communication becomes ritualized, rhetoricized, fractured, siloed and rendered practically nonexistent amongst intersectional, spatiotemporal communities of oppositional identity and affiliation (Inness and Booher, 2003). Multidirectional miscommunication, a phenomenon birthed by communicative neglect, conceptually identifies power inequalities embedded within hierarchical negotiations and interpretations of social meaning. Moreover,

multidirectional miscommunication (along a verbal- nonverbal scale) occurs when information transmission, sharing, and selection of meaning, and by extension the right to participate in collaborative governance, fragments both temporally and spatially amongst diverse stakeholders (Thackeray and Neiger, 2009). While morally ambiguous, multidirectional miscommunication can theoretically and materially function as a "successful" communication strategy that both contests and perpetuates social injustice depending on the social location of the interlocutor(s) (Anolli et al., 2002). Nonetheless, multidirectional miscommunication generally sustains a status quo of epistemic (specifically testimonial) injustice done to discredited speakers/knowledge holders/listeners who are generally expected to receive “deposits” of carefully managed and selected information (i.e. unidirectional communication) as opposed to contribute to information creation, sharing and management (i.e. authentic multidirectional collaborative dialogue) (Freire 1970; Fricker 2007).

In contrast, we use our case study to argue the benefits of authentic multidirectional collaborative dialogue (AMCD), characterized by long-term relationships, consensus-building, debate, productive tension, commitment to interdependence, improvisation, and face-to-face interaction amongst diverse stakeholders. Such benefits include: a) minimizing confusion, suspicion and misunderstanding, b) taking a proactive, holistic and preventative approach to conflict, c) improving accessibility of public goods and services for historically disenfranchised and marginalized residents and d) contributing to transformative, emancipatory knowledge (Innes and Booher, 2003; Ansell and Gash, 2008). AMCD as praxis exemplifies a certain type of moral social interaction that ultimately values intelligent, reciprocal and adaptive learning i.e.

reflexivity that allows stakeholders to rethink, reconsider and reframe problems, interests, shared meanings and proposed solutions (Freire, 1968; Inness and Booher, 2003; Ansell and Gash, 2008; Thackeray and Neiger, 2009).

Moreover, we believe that AMCD holds the potential to address frustration caused by the fuzzy boundaries of social meaning and unify discrepancies between expression and content, or what is said and what is meant (Anolli et al., 2002). Finally, AMCD embraces the complex nature of communication, as well as the continued existence and "goodness" of synergistic, diagonal (upward, downward and horizontal) feedback between materially, temporally and conceptually multi-sited listener-speakers (Thackeray and Neiger, 2009).

According to Innes and Booher (2003: 37):

Most of us are so unaccustomed to authentic dialogue in public situations that to create and manage it typically requires the help of a professional facilitator and special training for participants. Stakeholders have been accustomed to concealing their interests and engaging in positional bargaining rather than in discursive inquiry and speculative discussion or interest-based bargaining. They tune out those with whom they assume they disagree rather than explore for common ground.

The current state of greenspace governance in places such as Atlanta is best then conceptualized as a communicative relationship in which multidirectional miscommunication can be seen as a simultaneous "success" and failure. More specifically, a state failure in that it dispossesses and under-develops certain hyper-racialized communities of environmental resources, access to opportunity and capacity as knowledge holders, and a state-building "success" in that it effectively accumulates environmental resources, access to opportunity and capacity as knowledge holders within other, more privileged, landscapes (Gilmore 2002; Ansell and Gash, 2008). With these points in mind, we further examine how many of the social-

physical processes of communicative neglect and multidirectional miscommunication play out in Atlanta through our case study.

3. Case Study Site

Our work is situated in and around the Hampton Beecher Nature Preserve in southwest Atlanta. Southwest Atlanta boasts a predominantly Black American population with several neighborhoods of mixed income levels. Southwest Atlanta also suffers from a greenspace deficit compared to other more affluent areas of the city as exclusionary racially-infused politics continue to plague local neighborhoods. Nonetheless, many residents and non-profit organizations in southwest Atlanta continually take action to enhance their communities.

During the early 1990s, a group of diverse Atlanta community groups coalesced to combat discriminatory wastewater treatment planning practices and unequal participation in environmental decision-making (Jelks, 2008). In 1995, the Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper sued the City of Atlanta over the damage the city's outdated sewer system caused to human health and the health of the Chattahoochee River watershed. As a result of this settlement and EPA enforcement, the city of Atlanta was forced to purchase \$25 million worth of greenspace along riparian corridors through a conservation easement or fee simple program called the Greenway Acquisition Project (City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management, 2014). Southwest Atlanta residents (later founding members of WAWA), in turn, were able to partner with the city's Greenway Acquisition Project in 2002 to aid the purchase of the Lionel Hampton Tract and the Beecher Hills Tract (separated by a Georgia Power land easement) through a grant from the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation (GREEN, 2004; Saporta, 2013; WAWA, 2014).

WAWA formalized as a nonprofit in 2006 through the work of these same dedicated grassroots community volunteers to promote watershed quality, protect greenspace, and address environmental injustice (WAWA, 2014). WAWA today continues to work with the city of Atlanta to manage park/forest space and promote watershed protection in the Utoy, Proctor and Sandy creek watersheds (WAWA, 2014).

3.1 Historical Boundary Landscapes as “Green Walls” in Southwest Atlanta

Prior to the Civil Rights gains of the 1950s and 1960s, Black Americans in Atlanta were historically concentrated in the least desirable real estate due to racialized discriminatory lending practices. These areas included flood zones and areas adjacent to streams carrying raw sewage (Ambrose, 1992; Jelks, 2008). Residential segregation ordinances and interracial violence and terrorism also encouraged housing segregation and prohibited the full extent of Black middle class growth outside of the Auburn Street corridor and later the Black West Side (Ambrose, 1992). Urban renewal schemes, public housing projects, and interstate highway construction in Atlanta also displaced many Black families during this era (Ambrose, 1992; Combs, 2010). Many Black families were forced to move into neighborhoods characterized by deteriorating housing conditions and housing shortages. Highways ultimately became the new racial barriers that separated Black from White communities (Ambrose, 1992; Cashin, 2001; Lacy, 2007; Combs, 2010; Landry and March, 2011). Other racial barriers included fences, cemeteries, unpaved roads and parks (Ambrose, 1992).

During the 1950s and 1960s, wealthy Black Americans were finally allowed to cross the Peyton Line and move into neighborhoods formerly designated as Whites only (Crater, 2011).

This was accomplished through political concessions from then “progressive” Mayor Ivan Allen on the back of many protests, compromises and negotiations (Ambrose, 1992). As more affluent Black families moved into formerly prohibited neighborhoods, White residents left these same neighborhoods in droves, essentially contributing to more concentrated poverty and segregation in abandoned Black neighborhoods. A barricade of Peyton and Harlan Roads was later used by Mayor Allen in an attempt to stabilize “the racial situation” and sooth White fears of integration, mass sellouts and lost property values. The Peyton Wall, later known as Atlanta’s “Berlin Wall”, was designed to stop upwardly mobile Black families from buying homes in the affluent Peyton Forest subdivision of the Whites only Cascade Heights neighborhood. It was finally dismantled in 1963 due to bad publicity and municipal court lawsuits which ruled the barricade unconstitutional (Crater, 2011). At the same time, however, over 100 acres of undeveloped land located near the White middle class Cascade Heights neighborhood was specifically left as a buffer zone, or “green wall”, between the two ends of Willis Mill Road to limit connectivity between Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive (known at that time as Gordon Road) and Cascade Road (Ambrose, 1992). Hence, the undeveloped forested land that eventually coalesced into Hampton Beecher is undeniably a legacy of Civil Rights era racial barriers.

Today, Hampton Beecher boasts five entrances bordered by five predominantly Black neighborhoods of varying socioeconomic statuses: Westwood Terrace, Beecher Hills, Chalet Peyton Woods, Florida Heights, and Audubon Forest. The preserve is mostly undeveloped and filled with mature hardwood forests as well as dirt and gravel trails at the Peyton Woods Park

entrance. Park facilities and amenities include a small playground, one picnic table, and less than a handful of park benches and fitness stations scattered throughout the 220-acre property.

4. Methodology

Our research team worked collaboratively with WAWA in order to investigate access to urban greenspace in southwest Atlanta and specifically explore barriers to park usage within Hampton Beecher. Our project ran for approximately six weeks during the second year of a three year National Science Foundation (NSF) funded project. The NSF grant focused on social and environmental justice issues in southwest Atlanta using a participatory community geography framework. Our team brought backgrounds and expertise in human geography, public health, environmental science, geographic information systems (GIS), sociology, and Black feminist anthropology.

Digital surveys, semi-structured interviews and participant observation at community events and meetings comprised the bulk of our research methods. After eighty 5 to 10-minute-long surveys were completed, we interviewed fifteen community residents in sessions lasting 30 to 60 minutes. In collaboration with WAWA, we hosted a meet-and-greet event in Hampton Beecher. This event was advertised to residents using flyers during our neighborhood canvassing and on WAWA's Facebook event page. This event also served the purpose of an informal focus group and allowed us to document residents' reactions, thoughts, feelings and suggestions as they hiked into the preserve from the various entrances.

We obtained 80 responses from residents surrounding the preserve using door-to-door canvassing and emails sent to homeowner association contact lists. A total of 182 homes were

visited with an overall response rate of 32%. 96% of individuals surveyed identified as Black or African American and 65% of survey respondents identified as women. Approximately 2/3 of survey respondents indicated that they were between 49 and 86 years of age. The average respondent reported 54 years of age. 25 individuals, or 31% of survey respondents, chose not to answer when asked about total household income. Of the 55 respondents who did answer when asked about total household income, approximately 70% of these respondents earned at least \$45,000 annually; 35% of individuals earned more than \$75,000 annually. Of these 55 respondents, 16% reported annual incomes between \$30,000 and \$45,000 and 5% of individuals reported annual incomes less than \$15,000. When asked about homeownership status, 4% chose not to answer, and 81% of survey respondents indicated that they owned their homes.

5. Results

Through analysis of data gained from conversations with the community participants mentioned above, our team was able to examine the relationships between greenspace management/design and physical barriers to greenspace usage and accessibility. In response to a shifting research agenda influenced by the needs of our community partners and our own observations, we also explored how local residents' safety concerns and fears reflect a state of communicative neglect and multidirectional miscommunication. Fractured communication amongst diverse greenspace managers and community residents leads to inequitable environmental decision-making and by extension, injustice in urban governance. Our results highlight opportunities for addressing greenspace accessibility once greenspace managers reject monolithic views of community and embrace the socioeconomic heterogeneity of local

neighborhoods surrounding boundary landscapes. Moreover, our results lead us to conclude that more time, commitment and funds need to be geared towards community and nonprofit capacity building (and intergenerational/cross-class communicative community healing) so that local residents have the tools and know-how to advocate for increased park budgets, democratized environmental decision-making and more equitable shared greenspace governance.

5.1 Survey and Neighborhood Canvassing Data

While 79% of individuals surveyed had heard the name Beecher Hills Lionel Hampton Nature Preserve, 76% of surveyed individuals had either never visited the park or had visited the park less than five times per year. Residents from the Westwood Terrace neighborhood generally visited the park more often than their counterparts in the Audubon Forest, Peyton/Chalet Woods, and Beecher Hills neighborhoods. Although the Florida Heights residents also generally frequented the park at a higher rate than their neighbors, our visit to the Florida Heights park entrance and conversations with local neighbors informed us that visitation was still restricted by a) the presence of barking, unfriendly dogs at the Willis Mills Road entrance and b) the fact that the road leading to the Florida Heights entrance is unpaved.

When asked about barriers to park visits, a large majority of respondents mentioned fear/safety concerns and a lack of information over park location and existence. Respondents discussed specifically fear of criminals and perceived dangerous wildlife inhabiting the preserve, as well as a lack of foot traffic within the preserve. Most survey participants indicated that they felt moderately to very safe walking in their own neighborhoods, moderately to less safe walking in greenspaces in general, and slightly safe walking inside of Hampton Beecher. Once these data

were disaggregated by neighborhood, we discovered that most residents from less affluent Westwood Terrace found the preserve to be extremely welcoming and safe, while most residents from more affluent Audubon Forest did not find Hampton Beecher to be very inviting or safe.

Survey respondents were then asked to prioritize what changes would encourage them to use the preserve more often. 63% of survey respondents named emergency call posts (blue light phones) as their top priority. More signage, more programming/organized community activities and better facilities (restrooms, picnic tables, trash bins, etc.) tied for the second most reported top priority (24%). When asked what programming/organized activities they would like to see, respondents most frequently indicated walking programs and informational hikes, followed by sports and finally areas for barbecues, cookouts, picnics and block parties. Most survey respondents indicated that they generally visit parks for relaxation (59%), family time (56%), health (53%) and solitude (43%).

5.2 Interview Data

Our interviews allowed us to obtain more detailed information and discover new themes inadequately captured by our short 5-10 minute surveys. The results of these interviews often reinforced our survey findings, but also allowed for the emergence of new ideas and themes for analysis. Typical of the responses regarding knowledge of the preserve, one female interviewee explained, “Well, I just know there’s a trail down there. I know of it because of all of the construction, and, you know, the stuff that they had, but I really don’t know too much about it.” She went on to say that the neighborhood residents from the Beecher Hills neighborhood did not receive any notifications of what was happening before, during, or after the construction of a

new trail at the end of her street; she was very upset about the lack of communication. Similarly, a male interviewee from the same neighborhood commented that long-term residents who had lived in neighborhoods adjacent to the preserve their whole lives were still unaware that the park existed.

Once coded using ATLAS.ti qualitative data analysis and research software, comments such as those above ultimately shed light on the construction of present day “green wall” boundary landscapes as a result of multidirectional miscommunication and communicative neglect. These themes, explored in further detail below, suggest that communication and information management play a defining role in local environmental governance and greenspace accessibility. Boundary work and communicative neglect on the part of multiple stakeholders synergistically shape and amplify socio-ecological landscapes of multidirectional miscommunication, distrust and exclusion.

5.2.1. Theme 1: Boundary Work and Multidirectional Miscommunication

“Hampton Beecher is the story of Black Atlanta upward mobility. It is our moving on up from the Eastside to the Westside story.” – WAWA staff member

To understand the creation of Hampton Beecher as a 21st century Atlanta greenspace or “green wall”, one must also understand Hampton Beecher as a product of sociohistorical and economic forces that contributed to post-Civil Rights Black upward mobility (Landry and March, 2011). According to scholars, spatial segregation and status differentiation (via family status and socioeconomic status) arguably increased within the Atlanta Black community during the post-Civil Rights era as more wealthy Black families strove to emulate their White

counterparts in terms of building intergenerational wealth and achieving the “American Dream.” By acquiring private property in formerly exclusively White enclaves, some upwardly mobile Black families intentionally and unintentionally disassociated themselves from their less upwardly mobile Black neighbors (Ambrose, 1992; Lacy, 2007; Combs, 2010; Landry and March, 2011). As a result, affluent Black families within metropolitan Atlanta today often reside within isolated suburban enclaves on the outskirts of the city or within middle class neighborhoods that are closer to downtown. Affluent Black neighborhoods are also often located adjacent to more impoverished Black neighborhoods, while their White counterparts generally do not live in such close proximity to low-income neighborhoods (Cashin, 2001; Lacy, 2007). Unfortunately, the 2007 foreclosure crisis and subprime lending left many Black southwest Atlanta properties abandoned and/or neglected; together, these phenomena gutted years of accumulated Black middle class wealth (Combs, 2010).

As such, interviewed residents in neighborhoods surrounding Hampton Beecher often discussed their frustrations with city officials and neighborhood neglect, in addition to proposing solutions to address the underutilization of the Hampton Beecher property. This is evident in much of the interview data, including a quote from this long-time resident: “Yeah, so this neighborhood and most of the neighborhoods around here are just really old and declining. There's not really new life in them. People might rent in the neighborhood, but there's no real invested interest in the neighborhood. That's the case in a lot of black communities, at least poor ones....” Another resident suggests “no one patrols here. No one invests in southwest Atlanta. It's like we're begging but no one is investing here.” Local residents likewise discussed their need

to maintain a sense of community despite perceived neglect and lack of concern from city officials (Brownlow, 2006). For example, one resident described his inability to contribute time and manpower to community concerns such as greenspace management or neighborhood planning unit (NPU) meetings, but his unwavering commitment to support his neighborhood financially. As he stated, “If you don’t have the time to contribute physically, then contribute with your finances.... They [the neighborhood association] are absolutely amazing. I was so inspired by them. They look out for everybody. There are a lot of properties that nobody owns- **they will clean up where the city dare not go**” (bold font added for emphasis).

Community members also expressed hope that neighborhood associations, clubs and groups could be used to spur increased usage of the Hampton Beecher property by facilitating community cohesion, integration, multidirectional communication and sense of place (Combs, 2010; Seaman et al., 2010). Nonetheless, the current economic reality in Atlanta for many retirees and declining mobility amongst the precarious “New Black middle class” led some Black interviewed homeowners to harbor bias and fear against Black renters who occupy foreclosed homes and are perceived to decrease property values (Combs, 2010). Under these economic circumstances, it is therefore no surprise that residents from neighborhoods surrounding the Hampton Beecher property often discussed their fear of newcomers, particularly low income renters, during our interviews. Barely coded criticisms aimed at city officials were often entangled with disparaging remarks aimed towards economically insecure local residents. For example, one resident asserts:

Streets over there- they have a real high crime rate.... This neighborhood was primarily a bunch of older people who took care of their stuff and everything like that. And I guess

they have family members who are no longer here. So basically they are renting out to section eight people. And it's not really been...they aren't being interviewed as well. You get any type of riff raff coming in and out of your neighborhoods.....The house on the left through the dirt road, that's a section eight home. They've been causing a lot of issues.

Moreover, discussions over fear of stray, feral or unleashed dogs and homeless individuals became symbolic proxies for larger structural inequalities and regional processes that demonstrate economic disinvestment in Black southwest Atlanta neighborhoods, as evident by the below quote:

I saw a couple of guys there and they had really huge dogs..... they didn't look like 'oh, I'm just taking my dogs for a walk. The dogs looked vicious.' They were what I call the street dogs. I hate to be stereotypical, but a lot of people in the lower socioeconomic grade maybe tend to buy dogs like bulldogs. I wasn't attacked but there was the feeling that I probably would have been. I feel like it goes back to the safety - we need patrolling. We need lights. We need more benches. I know that people's sentiments are that, 'oh well, homeless people are going to sleep on the benches' - [but] they're people as well, you know. Not that I want them to sleep on the benches but you can't exempt them...

Many elderly residents seemingly enjoyed the limited connectivity provided by the formerly underdeveloped and underpublicized Hampton Beecher property. They were upset about the potential for increased crime once redevelopment of the wooded park space was initiated. Nonetheless, as the interview data below suggests, just as many, if not more, current residents ultimately decided that the park was an overall asset for the surrounding neighborhoods once confusion and suspicion were replaced with authentic dialogue:

With this particular park, I was one of those who viciously complained in a civil manner about it going forth. I was thinking about the negative element. Crime, strange people coming through and so forth. But then when I saw the orthographic projections, I could see it in my mind. And once it became a reality, and when the leaders of that project when they spoke - it was concrete. Then, all of a sudden, I'm just content with it. But at first, oh no, we don't need that. I was just absolutely wrong [emphasis added]. Yes, we do need that!

Our findings thus demonstrate that class-based tensions and multidirectional miscommunication between less affluent Black neighborhoods and more affluent Black neighborhoods surrounding the Hampton Beecher property serve to position the wooded greenspace as a contemporary boundary landscape, or “green wall” (Solecki and Welch, 1995). Changing demographics in neighborhoods leave many legacy residents frustrated with new residents, especially Section 8 residents, who become scapegoats for crime and community decay. Interviewed residents ultimately engage in a form of boundary work to differentiate themselves as the rightful inhabitants of the neighborhood in opposition to outsiders who do not belong in the neighborhood (Lacy, 2007; Wolch et al., 2014). These tensions moreover reveal long-term resident frustration with the failure of the state and city to provide much needed social services and neighborhood maintenance (i.e. community neglect and abandonment). Many residents also hold skepticism for greenspace redevelopment projects that seemingly disregard their interests and concerns, in particular projects that hold the potential to bring about gentrification and displacement of those on limited, fixed incomes.

5.2.2 Theme 2: Exclusionary Greenspace Decision-Making and Communicative Neglect

Interviewed residents and WAWA officials agree that local communities in southwest Atlanta often lack meaningful participation in environmental decision-making and greenspace management. Exclusionary decision-making processes in Atlanta manifest themselves primarily through the prioritizing of expert knowledge over grassroots community knowledge by Atlanta city officials (Jelks, 2008). Elderly community residents in southwest Atlanta thus often lack meaningful participation in environmental decision-making because they are discouraged by the

slow and unresponsive nature of the City of Atlanta bureaucracy and are not informed of pertinent meetings and events. Communicative neglect was often demonstrated by our participant observation.

For example, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Georgia Public Broadcasting and PNC Bank hosted a free community forum one evening during our study to discuss the controversy that can surround greenspace development. The event, although free, required tickets that eventually sold out online; it was located in an inconvenient, hard to navigate portion of midtown Atlanta (the second largest business district in Atlanta) during rush hour. Although at first glance this event appeared laudable in its goals to educate the public on “*Who decides whether a property becomes a park or a condo development? Who pays for creation and maintenance of green space? Who decides what amenities a public green space should have? How green is green enough?*”, it was actually superficial in its impact on community engagement. It was not accessible to many southwest residents.

Few residents living next to the Hampton Beecher property were notified of the forum. Many of the elderly residents we interviewed living adjacent to the preserve lack internet access and internet savvy, and announcements for the event were mainly broadcast through the internet. Moreover, the “panel of experts” provided for questioning at the forum only included a university biological scientist, the director of the Atlanta mayor’s office of sustainability, the chief operating officer of the Atlanta Beltline Inc., and the city manager for the city of Suwanee (a primarily White affluent city located in Gwinnett County and part of the Atlanta metro region). Painfully absent from the panel and audience were working class or elderly local

residents, grassroots community groups and environmental nonprofits. Thus, we could only conclude that the event, with preset questions for the panel, functioned more as a photo opportunity, symbol of the corporatization of conservation and perfect example of the communication deficit model of dialogue as opposed to an event truly dedicated to engaging “the public” in critical, multidirectional dialogue (Gilbert, 2014; Jelks, 2008; Nisbet and Scheufele, 2009).

It was also uncertain from our conversations with local residents if Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU) and neighborhood associations appropriately informed residents of proposed changes to greenspaces such as Hampton Beecher. During neighborhood canvassing, for example, local residents informed us that they had no idea that the Beltline trail was being built in their community until they heard the rumbling of trucks down their normally quiet neighborhood streets. One resident demonstrates this concern by stating, “Um...well I guess when you put it [the park] in the neighborhood, it’s for the community. But it can only be for the community if the community is notified. The community was not informed at all.” Additional comments from residents support this broader notion of fractured dialogue between stakeholders:

They’re [the various greenspace managers] not working together either! Like the PATH people were calling me telling me about having an opening on the 10th... and I was saying how I heard about this university event on the 20th.....The community is confused seeing all these different groups trying to do the same thing. And only now is anyone explaining to me that these groups are working together. You know, PATH, the Beltline and WAWA need to get together...some people are really upset about this because they didn’t know what was happening.... they’re old people... they don’t like change. You know they’ve been here for 30 years and they are used to having a quiet greenspace behind their house. But now there’s a path....my neighbors they’re worried about where people are going to park.

Many residents also indicated that they would prefer to receive phone calls or flyers in their mailboxes to inform them of changes to their local greenspace. Yet, it is uncertain as to who has the time, peoplepower or resources to institute these changes when local nonprofits such as WAWA also suffer from capacity issues. WAWA, nonetheless, refuses to focus on this perceived reality and instead devises strategies to increase stewardship of urban watersheds and greenspaces through volunteer power and educational events. According to one WAWA staff member:

I think a lot of times the common way that most organizations, city entities, and others do their community engagement is to go to Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU) meetings. The NPU attendees really represent a very small portion of the folks who are in our communities, and who are concerned about issues in our communities....in some cases, working with some of the local churches, you can figure out who has their fingers on the pulse of those communities. You can figure out who the decision-makers are, who the gatekeepers are, and who are the folks who can draw a crowd and gather people together.

Finally, WAWA staff/board members lament the need to institutionalize relationships and share resources between various entities that manage Atlanta greenspaces such as the City of Atlanta and various nonprofits. These entities today often compete for competitive environmental grants which can unfortunately favor larger, more organized, privately funded greenspace stakeholders that subscribe to a more neoliberal conservation ethic as opposed to a community environmental justice ethic (Smith and Floyd, 2013; Gilbert, 2014). Lack of coordination not only contributes to confusion amongst local residents but also perpetuates injustice towards smaller grassroots organizations when they are not duly credited for their work. This is evident by comments from a WAWA staff member:

We [WAWA] unfortunately haven't been working with them [the Atlanta Beltline Inc.]. Or, I should say they haven't been working with us, which is unfortunate. As much as we are able to accomplish in many ways, I think we're still perceived as just a small, community-based non-profit, and we are, but I... I'd say our reach far exceeds perceptions about our capacity. Very early on we actually advocated that there be a Beltline Spur that would connect this property to the Beltline. But when it came to fruition, there was no sort of circling back to WAWA to even say, hey, for thanks for that idea, it's a really good one!

From our interview data and participant observation at local events, we overwhelmingly gather that community influence on greenspace decision-making in southwest Atlanta is, more often than not, siloed, insubstantial, and nonexistent due to a lack of constructive dialogue between city officials and local residents (Jelks, 2008). As one WAWA staff member reflects,

The developers are waiting for people to die off and the city works for developers.... All of this is strategic, and they take advantage of the fact that the population doesn't communicate that way. Flyers and letters- they could have gone snail mail but they chose not to. And Wednesday night, the night of the Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU) meetings, is the night Ms. Johnson goes to church. The council members say they inform NPUs about information, but the NPUs aren't providing the information to the constituents.... People are so disenchanted with leadership. [Environmental decision-making] is not only fractured, its minimalist; we have to coalesce the silos.

6. Discussion, Limitations and Future Directions

"We aren't talking the language- how do I get my message to a 75-year-old woman? What does she want? We can't talk about communication until you know what people want to hear. WAWA has to be a pipeline, but we need capacity."- WAWA staff member

How do we increase local residents' spatial confidence, or sense of possession over space? How might greenspace management strategies best support local communities' control over environmental decision-making? These are questions that continue to need answers in southwest Atlanta. Our research suggests that answers to these important questions can be found through meaningful engagement and authentic multidirectional collaborative dialogue with local

residents. Our research discovered that a major barrier for park usage was a lack of knowledge of what was within the park and who the park was designed to serve. Many residents fear connectivity with neighborhoods and residents stereotyped as harbingers of crime, violence, and decreased property values. These findings support previous studies that explore women's and the elderly's geographies of fear and the potential for greenspaces to serve as "green walls" or boundary landscapes (Valentine, 1989; Solecki and Welch, 1995; Brownlow, 2006; Jorgensen and Anthopoulos, 2007; Hawthorne et al., 2008; Jorgensen et al., 2013). Multidirectional miscommunication and communicative neglect shape and amplify these fears and stereotypes.

Nevertheless, spatial confidence in local greenspaces can be improved through outreach strategies designed to enhance visibility of greenspaces and get people into these spaces. Our research findings also support results from previous studies that emphasize the importance of coupling improvements to the built environment (i.e. park design features to minimize impaired visual access and concealed/isolated corridors) with improvements to the social environment (i.e. initiatives that address neighborhood crime rates and build trust between community residents, NGOs, the police, and government agencies) (Troy and Grove, 2008; Seaman et al., 2010; Sousa and Kelling, 2010). We also uncovered the need to build local political and networking capacity and develop a community environmental justice ethic for democratized greenspace management (Jelks, 2008; Wolch et al., 2014). Capacity building for us refers to short and long-term activities that increase the abilities, skills and competencies of local residents and WAWA staff to engage in greenspace stewardship, planning and advocacy. Although recreationalists and other environmental interest groups such as mountain bikers generally comprise the backbone of

greenspace stewardship groups, WAWA cannot only or primarily be driven by these groups; WAWA has to ensure that it builds the capacity of all residents which include elderly Black women, upwardly mobile, young professional Black residents and less affluent Black residents. Hence WAWA, similar to other grassroots nonprofits, is challenged by the need to efficiently build organizational and community capacity, promote collaborative management of shared resources, and push against constraints such as limited grants.

In addition to these research findings, our community geography work with WAWA led to several practical community impacts designed to increase engagement and improve communication with multiple stakeholders. First, a preserve map kiosk was developed for the entrances of the space (see Figure 1) to replace a general map of a series of trails for the entire metropolitan area (see Figure 2). Second, several mapping-based walking and fellowship events were held in the space, as well as other preserves in southwest Atlanta. Third, a “walking buddies” program was developed to encourage communication and connections across the five neighborhoods adjacent to the preserve.

Figure 1. Updated, more user-friendly map of the Hampton Beecher property

Figure 2. Original map of the Westside Trail at the Audubon Forest entrance

Our study also demonstrates how important it is for community-based organizations to advocate for control in greenspace management in an era characterized by a corporate takeover of natural resources (Gilbert, 2014). Community-based organizations such as WAWA also work in a political environment in which sustainable growth and development rhetoric is more commonplace and acceptable for many municipalities. However, it is debatable whether or not this rhetoric actually promotes social justice and equity in natural resource management within urban cities around the world (Jelks, 2008; Wolch and Byrne et al., 2014). Injustice arguably occurs when city officials and corporate power players with development dollars fail to make room and provide resources for grassroots organizations to participate democratically and equitably in local environmental decision-making (Gilbert, 2014).

While our results demonstrate the complexity of greenspace accessibility in southwest Atlanta, our study does have some limitations. We were limited to a single study site and small population. In the future, this study could be built upon by interviewing key Atlanta city officials and other stakeholders on their strategies to engage local community residents, facilitate authentic communication and disrupt fears. Future work should also engage Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU) participants and interview NPU chairs on their strategies to communicate greenspace planning initiatives to local residents within a block or two radius of the park. In addition, there is opportunity for further work to engage more local residents and bridge the information gap faced by elderly Black communities surrounding the Hampton Beecher property through internet literacy workshops and trainings (Kellogg and Mathur, 2003). With more

resources spent on creating opportunities for honest, transparent and inclusive dialogue, and less resources spent on promoting technocratic or “expert” knowledge, stakeholders from public, private and volunteer sectors can actually democratize decision-making and, by extension, place-keeping within greenspace management. Multidirectional dialogue between city officials, various greenspace managers and diverse constituents has yet to be repaired and future work should aim to build these relationships further.

7. Conclusion

As our results demonstrate, greenspace accessibility includes social and physical access - this concept is therefore about more than just quantitative measures of walkability or connectivity (Pauleit et al., 2003; Seaman et al., 2010). Greenspace accessibility must be measured in a holistic manner, which includes measures of individual social cohesion, integration within neighborhoods and levels of communicative neglect. Although fears, confusion and negative collective memories can serve as a barrier to greenspace usage, these emotions can also serve as a starting point for generating iterative, authentic multidirectional collaborative dialogue (AMCD) about management strategies and democratized environmental decision-making (Finney, 2014). A community geography framework can help facilitate this more open and collaborative dialogue between state officials, community elders, and other greenspace stewards, as well as nurture opportunity for the transfer of knowledge between and amongst stakeholders for the creation of new knowledge.

Our research also highlights the potential for community-university partnership and research guided by community geography principles to increase the human capacity of under-

resourced environmental nonprofits and greenspace managers. Such partnerships are particularly suited to aid local capacity building and can redirect the conventional greenspace conversation to include time-sensitive community perspectives. Conducting oral history mapping projects with past and current residents to be placed on kiosks within the park and to be distributed via neighborhood newsletters could help residents feel greater affinity, attachment and stewardship responsibility towards the preserve. Coupled with park clean-up and volunteer maintenance days, these efforts can also facilitate “place-keeping” within urban preserves by ensuring that local residents will take an on-going interest in and affinity for the greenspace.

While increasing spatial confidence in local greenspaces is one meaningful opportunity for improving accessibility, we also recognize that greenspace accessibility is part of a broader discussion of exclusionary politics in Black neighborhoods. Communicative neglect must be improved in order to increase greenspace accessibility. Our findings show the impact of post-Civil Rights Black social mobility on fractured relationships between affluent and less affluent Blacks. Our work also shows the impact of multidirectional miscommunication amongst greenspace managers and local residents that contribute to “green walls.” Nonetheless, it is pertinent to note that communicative neglect, class divisions, and structural inequalities can be addressed and remedied through meaningful engagement with local residents and targeted policy changes.

Hence, greenspace accessibility in southwest Atlanta and other U.S. sites is a lot more complex than traditionally theorized and conceptualized. Parks are not culturally, socially, or economically neutral (Brownlow, 2006). We recommend that greenspace managers and

researchers pay closer attention to the nuanced ways in which power circulates in greenspaces and their associated communication networks. Place-making and “place-keeping” strategies employed by local residents often rest more upon bonds of attachment, memories, emotions, imagination and social interaction as opposed to claims of ownership (Byrne, 2012; Finney, 2014). By bearing witness, listening and communicating perhaps under-vocalized environmental traumas and joys associated with parks and other greenspaces, greenspace managers and local residents should be able to finally transform preserves such as Hampton Beecher from exclusionary “green walls” into more inclusive “green places.”

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