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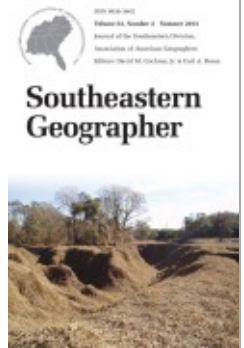
Displacement and the Racial State in Olympic Atlanta 1990–1996

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Displacement and the Racial State in Olympic Atlanta

1990–1996

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*Recent contributions to critical race theory and refugee studies can sharpen and extend analyses of urban displacement in aspiring global cities, especially with respect to how these cities demographically envision themselves. In the six years immediately preceding the 1996 Olympic Games, the city of Atlanta displaced many Atlantans from neighborhoods and public housing, while illegally arresting thousands more, thus moving many of the homeless to the city jail. Using David Theo Goldberg's *The Racial State* alongside the work of Peter Nyers in *Rethinking Refugees*, this paper proposes that Atlanta's municipal government and its civic allies, in a pursuit of "authentic" global city status, exhibited characteristics of an urban racial state predicated on the image of the displaced and their absence.*

*Contribuciones recientes a la teoría crítica racial y estudios de refugiados pueden pulir y extender los análisis de desplazamiento urbano en ciudades globales emergentes, especialmente con respecto a cómo estas ciudades se visualizan demográficamente. En los seis años inmediatamente precediendo los Juegos Olímpicos de 1996, la ciudad de Atlanta desplazó muchos pobladores de vecindarios y vivienda pública, a la vez que ilegalmente arrestaba miles más, a su vez, moviendo muchos habitantes de la calle a la cárcel de la ciudad. Utilizando *The Racial State* de David Theo Goldberg junto con el trabajo de Peter Nyers sobre *Rethinking Refugees*, este ensayo propone*

que el gobierno municipal de Atlanta y sus aliados cívicos, en su afán por el estatus de una ciudad global "auténtica", exhibió características de un estado urbano racial predicado sobre la imagen del desplazado y su ausencia.

KEY WORDS: displacement, urban development, racial state, Atlanta

PLABRAS CLAVE: desplazamiento, desarrollo urbano, estado racial, Atlanta

"Did you happen to see any of those 'guides to Atlanta' they published for the Olympics? Big, thick things, some of them, regular books, and I couldn't believe it at first. It was as if nothing existed below Ponce de Leon other than City Hall and CNN and Martin Luther King memorabilia. The maps—the maps!—were all bobtailed—cut off at the bottom—so no white tourist would even think about wandering down into South Atlanta. They didn't even mention Niskey Lake or Cascade Heights."

"I'm not too sorry about that," said Roger.

"I'm not either," said Wes, "But you get the picture, don't you? How do you segregate white tourists from black

*people in a city that's 70 percent black?
You render the black folks invisible!"*

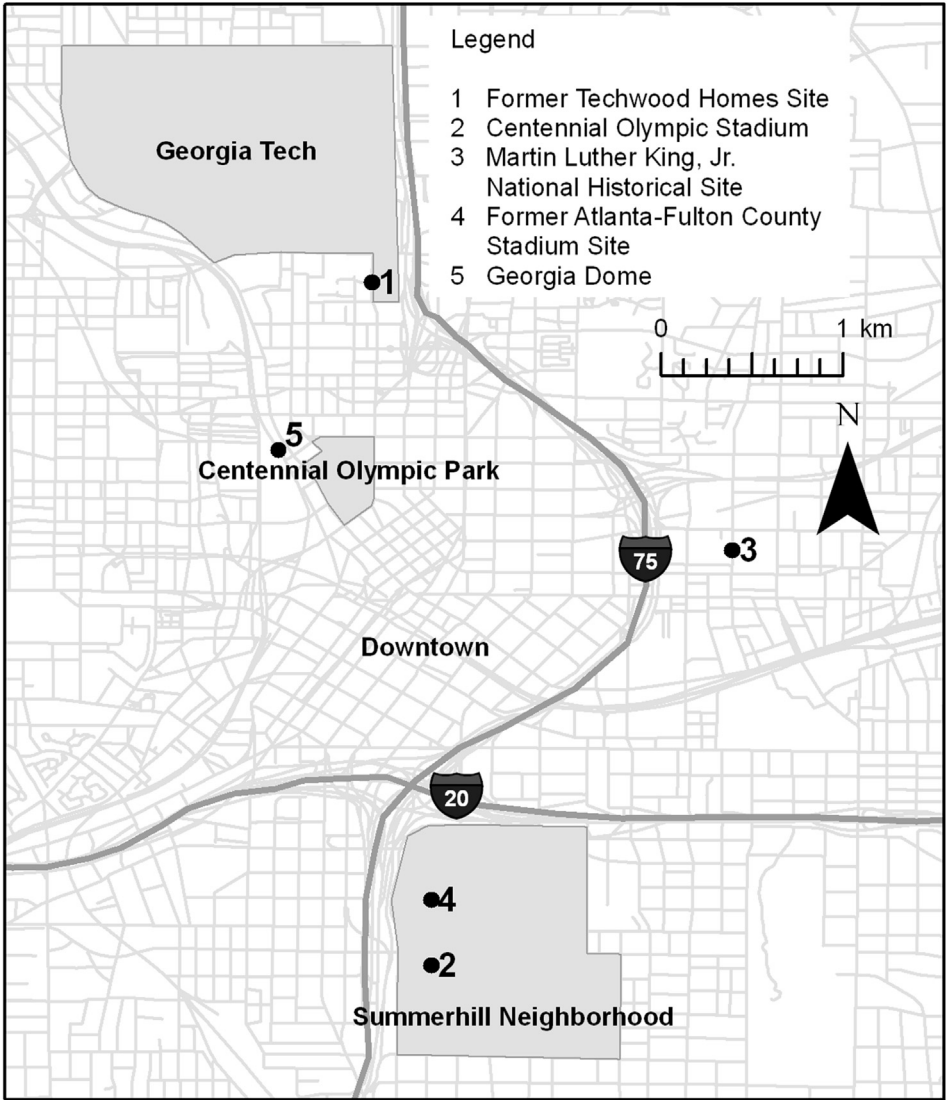
—Tom Wolfe, *A Man in Full*
(1998, p 185)

INTRODUCTION

On April 3, 1991, Atlanta City Council President Marvin S. Arrington publicly announced a plan that called for the demolition of Techwood Homes, the United States' oldest federally subsidized housing project. After over four years of contentious political wrangling and the displacement of Techwood's residents, on 12 May 1995, Atlanta Housing Authority officials began demolition amid protest from former residents and despite a projection by some protestors that Techwood could last another sixty years (Keating and Flores 2000; Beaty 2008). In addition to Techwood, city leaders during these years targeted several other areas near the city's center for a dramatic overhaul in preparation for the impending 1996 Summer Olympic Games. In these instances, dramatic overhaul meant the destruction of other large public housing projects to make room for Olympic venues, to *clean up* the city's neighborhoods around venue sites and to remove the city's homeless population from the emerging Olympic landscape (see Figure 1). Forced evictions and destruction of affordable housing presented an acute problem for the city's thousands of poor residents, no less than the removal of homeless Atlantans via unlawful arrest and detention or one-way bus rides to locations outside the city limits, yet these efforts can be argued to have been part of the Olympic preparation. In all, roughly 30,000 Atlantans were evicted or displaced by other means between 1990

and 1996, and approximately 9,000 illegal arrests of homeless people occurred in 1995 and 1996 (Beaty 2007). Olympic projects and preparations, as well as urban redevelopment projects more generally, significantly altered Atlanta's urban culture, neighborhoods, and the lives of its inhabitants (Davis 1996, 2008; Eisinger 2000; Roche 2000; Andranovich and Heying 2001; Beaty 2007, 2008; Burbank et al. 2000; Center for Housing Rights and Evictions 2007).

The goal of the Olympic projects, however, was not simply to upgrade old infrastructure with new, as is a common stated goal of many Olympic cities. Instead, I argue here that the Olympics-related displacement worked to create a particular demographic image of the city, one without the homeless, public housing residents, and other low-income Atlantans who were also predominantly racial minorities. It was only by strategically displacing these residents from Olympic areas of downtown that Atlanta could create an image of itself as a prosperous, authentically global city. In some ways, this displacement is tragically unsurprising because Atlanta is among many global cities who have used Olympic-related appropriation of urban space to displace unwanted inhabitants; indeed, estimates of the displaced and forcibly evicted as a result of Olympic development since the Seoul Olympics of 1988 now numbers over two million, with the 2008 Beijing Olympic preparations alone adding an additional 1.5 million (COHRE 2007a). Adding to research and scholarship on urban mega-event crises is the burgeoning body of global city literature that mass displacement is often an integral part of global city formation (e.g., Sassen 1991; Brenner



*Figure 1. Some of Atlanta's Olympic geography and other landmarks.
 Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Georgia Department of Transportation.*

1999; Marcuse and van Kempen 2000; Purcell 2003a; Short 2004; Massey 2007; Gonzalez 2009). Furthermore, while Atlanta's municipal government and its civic allies have a long history of displacing its residents through urban redevelopment initiatives, the 1990–1996 Olympic historical moment is unique in that Atlanta's governing regime had not yet combined displacement with their explicit desire to become a global city (Greene 1996; Grady-Willis 2006).

The argument of this article is that one goal of the processes and logic of strategic displacement in aspiring global cities is the production of a constituency visible to visitors that has particular demographic characteristics. In Atlanta, displacement was less about removing people entirely from the city, and more about relocating them out of particular Olympic related areas of town. Rather than relying on classic urban studies of displacement to interpret the Atlanta case, I turn to displacement in other contexts to shed new light on the logics of urban displacement. In particular, I rely on the literatures of refugee studies and critical race theory to illuminate the case of Olympic-related urban displacement in Atlanta between 1990 and 1996. Though their work operates at the level of the nation state and is concerned with topics typically unassociated with urban displacement, Peter Nyers' *Rethinking Refugees* (2005) and David Theo Goldberg's *The Racial State* (2002) are both useful in reconsidering urban displacement in terms of refugees and racial hegemony.

Much insightful urban scholarship critiques the problems of anti-homeless sentiments, displacement via gentrification, uneven development and grievous out-

comes of capital accumulation, and the disproportionate allocation of urban redevelopment projects on marginalized urban populations, even in Atlanta (e.g., Smith 1994; Rutheiser 1996; Smith 1996; Keating 2001; Ley et al. 2002; Mitchell 2003; DeVerteuil 2006; Harvey 2006; Walk and Maaranen 2008). My argument, however, unbundles displacement from other social processes and notes how cities use it to create particular constituencies. Global cities not only represent themselves to visitors through these constituencies, but they also demographically actualize the narratives of prosperity, cosmopolitanism, and multiculturalism that accompany global city formation.

The paper unfolds in several sections. First, I discuss my methodology before I argue that Goldberg's *The Racial State* and Nyers' *Rethinking Refugees* present a compelling framework for understanding the logics of displacement in urban settings. Secondly, I empirically show how the displacement of some Atlantans from Olympic spaces was intimately related to the idea of Atlanta becoming a global city. Finally, I conclude the paper by suggesting future implications of this research and framework, including a reflection on other Olympic cities, the future of mega events and displacement, and, briefly, some of the outcomes of those displaced.

A BRIEF STATEMENT OF METHODS

The goals of my research were to learn how Atlantans involved in the Olympic-related displacement thought of their city as a spatial construct during the Olympic years, especially with respect to Atlanta being a global city. This paper attempts to account for how displacement became an

integral part of the city's search for authentic global city status. I conducted research on the Atlanta Olympics from spring January 2008 to early January 2009. In the twelve to eighteen intervening years between the 1990–1996 Olympic preparations and my research, many of the key politicians, Olympic organizers, activists, and other significant figures had moved from Atlanta and even from Georgia. This made contacting potential informants difficult, but I was able to conduct twenty interviews with various stakeholders living in and around Atlanta. I asked mostly open-ended questions about their experiences and memories. Because the twelve to eighteen years had no doubt changed how my interviewees remember the Olympic moment, triangulating their interviews with primary source documents from 1990–1996 was particularly important. I augmented these interviews with historical research, drawing on personal and public archives, including those of activists and homeless advocates, as well as the extensive archives located at the Atlanta History Center. The online archives of the Atlanta *Journal-Constitution* also proved to be quite helpful.

THE RACIAL STATE AND RETHINKING REFUGEES

My contention here is that cities use displacement to produce a constituency with particular demographic characteristics. Urban displacement is often neither an accident nor a simple consequence: it is an intentional project of the racial state with its own set of overlooked consequences and outcomes. Producing the displaced through racial projects creates a particular demographic that corresponds to the aspirations of a state (or city in this case). Gold-

berg's and Nyers' respective analyses illuminate similar patterns of displacement initiated by cities.

Goldberg argues that the idea and practice of nation-statehood is dependent on racial categories; that every nation-state is "a state or set of conditions that assumes varied racially conceived character in different sociospecific milieus" (2002, p 2). In a further explication, Goldberg notes:

that race is integral to the emergence, development, and transformations (conceptually, philosophically, materially) of the modern nation-state. Race marks and orders the modern nation-state, and so too state projects, more or less from its point of conceptual and institutional emergence. The apparatuses and technologies employed by modern states have served variously to fashion, modify, and reify the terms of racial expression, as well as racist exclusions and subjugations (2002, p 4).

Race, then, is a demographic marker of those who properly belong and do not belong to the state. Similarly, Omi and Winant (1994) also note the importance of racial projects in state formation. These projects create the makeup of the state itself as it manages, polices, and creates racial categories. The goal of these racial categories is a particular demography that modern states hotly pursue by "squeezing out the different, the very heterogeneity which modernity's logic of spatio-temporal compression has been instrumental paradoxically in effecting" (Goldberg 2002, p 250). Racial projects—whether actualized through urban planning, law, public health practices, educational initiatives, or any other state project—aim to administratively create a particular racial polity.

Though he focuses on race throughout *The Racial State*, Goldberg explicitly notes that the state's interest in demography is more than racial and extends to other social categories. (Goldberg 2002). In other words, the racial state is not simply racial, but instead is interested in a range of demographic traits. Other critical race scholars have noted that state projects managing race are co-articulated with class, gender, and other categories (Haneý Lopez 1996; Roediger 1999, 2005). Cazenave's recent work (2011) catalogues the machinations of the *urban racial state* in some 20th century U.S. cities, noting that municipal governments have long regulated and racialized a range of social interactions within their boundaries. These works emphasize that varying qualities of state racial projects are historically and geographically contingent, meaning the expressions of demographic ideals vary widely. The state's interest in demography is beyond simple racial categorization and is instead an image of all bodies properly included in the constitution of the state itself at a particular place and time.

Nyers' *Rethinking Refugees* (2005) compliments Goldberg's argument by illustrating the contingency of producing particular demographics in the context of refugees, while also clarifying how Goldberg's logic of the racial state is practically enacted. He focuses particularly on how the category of 'refugee' is intimately bound up with establishing state power. Nyers, drawing largely upon Agamben, writes:

[T]he relationship between the refugee's identity and political subjectivity is not merely oppositional; the refugee is not simply excluded from the political realm. Rather, the refugee's rela-

tionship to the political can be described as a kind of "inclusive exclusion." Refugees are included in the discourse of "normality" and "order" only by virtue of their exclusion from the normal identities and ordered spaces of the sovereign state. . . . To banish is also to capture, according to the logic of the sovereign relation of power (2005, p xiii).

A person rendered unfit for belonging in the state is not simply excluded, as is commonly thought, from political realms. Instead, certain demographically marked persons that are made to be refugees are actually useful to the state because their exclusion ultimately serves to reinscribe state power. Displacing these persons, then, can actually be seen as part of the demographic logic that drives state power.

In relation to the racial state's pursuit of a particular demography, the displacement of refugees is a state project of managing social categories *par excellence*. The very category of *refugee* not only implies displaced persons, but also creates the categories of belonging in the state's body politic. This does not mean that the image is only one category or another. It instead is predicated on a host of intersecting categories and identities. The exclusion of particular demographics, while including others, produces a desired demography and Nyers' point is that displacement is a means by which a state achieves such a demographic constitution.

To be clear, I do not wish to assert that persons displaced in Atlanta as a result of the 1996 Olympics were refugees *per se*. There are, of course, important and incommensurable differences between refugees and displaced Atlantans. The *refugee*

is a category created by international governance organizations and NGOs and is usually reserved for those displaced by war, famine, and other international issues. My argument instead is that the same logic of displacement noted by Nyers was used in Atlanta. The state produced a particular demography via displacement, though in Atlanta it was done for global city ambitions. This urban demography was complex; indeed, it was predicated on paradoxical notions of biracial cooperation, multiculturalism, unity, and prosperity. Though Atlanta's white business elite, black elected officials, burgeoning black middle class, and prosperous white suburbs are together uncommon among major U.S. cities, belonging to these niches was essential for demographic inclusion in the Olympic spaces and places. Those Atlantans not having these demographic characteristics—mostly (though not exclusively) black public housing residents and the homeless—often faced erasure from the urban landscape via displacement, eviction, and unlawful imprisonment.

ATLANTA AND THE OLYMPIC MOMENT

In the years leading up to the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, the city embarked on several redevelopment and construction projects that involved directly and indirectly displacing residents. I argue that these projects were not only racialized like many others in Atlanta's history (Omi and Winant 1994; Rutheiser 1996), but also aimed to produce a specific urban demography for the Olympic moment. Atlanta's politics and demographics had long been driven by an uneasy biracial governing regime (Stone 1989), but the Olympic

preparations represented a shift both in how the city presented itself to visitors and how the city constituted its own demography. Through a dramatic intensification of the closure of public housing, the busing of homeless persons out of the city, anti-homeless ordinances, forced evictions and displacements, and the construction of Olympic infrastructure, the city of Atlanta shaped the image of its demography to fit a carefully crafted image of prosperity, progress, and pluralism. This image was made possible by the erasure of particular Atlantans from the landscape.

A heightened emphasis on civic image, however, was not a novelty for Atlanta. These central districts of Atlanta had been highly contested for decades; thus, the city's attempts to remake the space were not novel. Historically, boosters relied on the re-naming of the city from Marthasville to Atlanta to conjure coastal images of a trade port on the Atlantic Ocean, invoking hyperbolic phrases like "The City Too Busy to Hate" and "Among the Trees There Grows a City" to characterize the political economy and ecology of the growing metropolis, and the city booster's nostalgia for the antebellum lifestyle as depicted in *Gone with the Wind* (Rutheiser 1996). Furthermore, politically powerful African-American leaders like Andrew Young and Maynard Jackson, drawing on the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King's Atlanta roots, helped the city promote itself as racially harmonious, yet too often concealed were the racial projects made possible by a biracial alliance of the city's black political elite and white business elite (Stone 1989). Newman (2002) notes that Atlanta's downtown redevelopment, stretching from the 1960s into the 1990s, typically resulted in a negative outcome for the city's black residents, especially among

the lower and middle classes. These racial projects included bulldozing neighborhoods to make room for freeways, the continual redevelopment of city blocks to attract tourists, the architectural redesign of downtown buildings to isolate those privileged with access, and the regular refusal of residential loans to black borrowers, among others (Newman 2002). Inwood (2010), too, writes more specifically that particular redevelopment projects in Atlanta have commodified and radically altered an historically African-American commercial district in the city. Given this history, the emerging centrality of the demographic image and perception of the city during the Olympic moment is not surprising. The years immediately preceding the Olympics, then, represented a continuation and heightening of the imaged-based and booster-led urban growth in Atlanta.

What was novel about this chapter in Atlanta's history, though, was the incessant branding of Atlanta as an authentically global city. While non-global imaginaries had been used to justify previous racial projects in the city, the notion of Atlanta as a global city in the Olympic moment invigorated the biracial governing regime. It was not only the city's governance structure that was biracial, however; the city had adopted an image of a prosperous and harmonious biracial demography, predicated on the absence of poverty and racial division. The city of Atlanta remade its highly visible areas into a complex demography—biracial, prosperous, and cosmopolitan—so as to prove the authenticity of its global city image.

Much like Berlin's growth machine projected an image of globality through the redevelopment of Potsdamer Platz (Lehrer

2006) or Milwaukee's attempt to embody the "genuine American city" (Kenny and Zimmerman 2003, p 74), Atlanta projected an image of globality through the urban redevelopment and creation of Olympic spaces of downtown Atlanta. The elite business world had been promoting Atlanta as an international city since the mid-1970s, but hosting the Olympics ratcheted up the global city rhetoric to unprecedented levels (Rutheiser 1996). President Jimmy Carter and U. N. Ambassador Andrew Young elevated the status of Atlanta during this time, as did the rise of Ted Turner as a media and business mogul and the increasing prominence of Hartsfield-Jackson airport as a hub of global air travel.

Beyond these few examples, however, many saw Atlanta as decidedly un-cosmopolitan. Though transnational capital had surely transformed the city's built environment, "the globalist hype is so far ahead of the facts on the ground that even the shamelessly boosterish *Atlanta Constitution* has had to concede that the city is not *really* international" (Rutheiser 1996, p 4). With the glaring lack of evidence for an international city, constructing and projecting an image of such a city became even more essential for the regime's success. As one prominent Atlantan said, the regime spouted "the biggest lie they could possibly think of and [ran] around the world telling everybody about it until it [came true]" (quoted in Rutheiser 1996, p 66). The Olympic-led global hype was unrelenting and it provided reason to displace particular groups of Atlantans from strategic locations throughout the city. Homeless persons and residents of public housing projects and low-income African American neighborhoods all became targets for displacement and eviction.

DISPLACEMENT

Displacing the Homeless

The first of the two methods of displacement affecting the homeless population of Atlanta involved passage of anti-homeless ordinances and the subsequent arrest of those who violated these laws. Passed in the years between the awarding and hosting of the Olympic Games, Atlanta city ordinances concerning the homeless included prohibitions of public urination, panhandling, public camping, reclining in particular places, loitering, blocking sidewalks, busking, and other activities city officials associated with homeless populations (Lenskyj 2000, p 136). Making life more complicated for the homeless in Atlanta was the fact that the city had no public toilets and an Olympic-related initiative to create them had been sidetracked in 1995 (Davis 2002). Up until 1995, "remaining in a parking lot" was prohibited by Atlanta city ordinance (Lenskyj 2000, p 243), while the state legislature in 1993 attempted to forbid removal of any item from a public trash container (Lenskyj 2000, p 139). "Spitting on a sidewalk" or "being in an abandoned building" also became legal infractions during this period of preparation (Lenskyj 2000, p 138).

These pernicious ordinances enabled the city to displace the homeless from the city at-large to the new city jail, also constructed during this time. Because of the arrests of homeless persons, the City received a Federal Court Order resulting from *Williams v. City of Atlanta* to "'cease and desist' the pattern and practice of arresting homeless people without probable cause" (Beaty 2007, p 4). Furthermore, Atlanta police carried mass-produced tickets with the pre-printed words "African

American, Male, Homeless," indicating a demographic specifically targeted for displacement (Beaty 2007, p 32). This is a notable practice of displacement because the timing correlated with that of the visits of international Olympic officials (Beaty 2008; Davis 2008). Homeless advocates around the city began to notice periodically marked drop-offs in the number of meals served at soup kitchens and free clinics (Davis 2008; Loring 2008). This continued for months; after comparing experiences, advocates noticed that these drop-offs nearly always occurred in the days leading up to a visit from out-of-town Olympic officials. The displacement of homeless persons to jail meant that there would be no visual evidence of their presence for the officials, thereby using displacement to produce the image of the global city for the visiting class (Eisinger 2000).

The second of the two methods for the displacement of homeless people was to bus them out of the city. Local government officials used thousands of public dollars in collaboration with Project Homeward Bound, a Fulton County-funded non-profit organization, to provide one-way tickets for the homeless out of the city (Beaty 2007, p 32; Lenskyj 2000, p 139). "Calls came to the [Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless] from Birmingham, Alabama, and towns in Florida asking why homeless people were arriving in those places asking for help and saying they had to leave Atlanta" (Beaty 2007, p 32; Beaty 2008). The collaboration of local governments with locally based non-profit groups makes the displacement even more insidious because of the decentered power behind the displacement and veneer of community-support backing the displacement.

Displacing the Housed

For those impoverished Atlantans who did have a residence prior to the Olympics, public housing often presented the only viable alternative to homelessness. Thousands of these residents were displaced when three of Atlanta's oldest public housing developments, Techwood Homes, the neighboring Clark Howell Homes, and East Lake Meadows, were demolished in preparation for the Olympics. While these public housing projects were considered by some to be derelict, unsafe, and crime-ridden (Day 1998), other research showed that Techwood/Clark Howell was a viable community characterized by longevity of residency and social support networks (Keating and Flores 2000). The average residency for Techwood residents was nearly eight years and roughly one-third of families stayed there for longer than eleven years. Most residents of Techwood wanted their community to be preserved. Although Techwood had very serious problems with drugs and violence, residents valued their community ties with one another.

Immediately south of Techwood Homes and Clark Howell Homes was a seventy-acre (28 ha) commercial area known as Techwood Park. Though viewed and referred to as a "slum" by many corporate interests and local officials, the district was actually an economically and culturally vibrant location. "Of the ninety-seven buildings in Techwood Park, only one was dilapidated beyond repair, and only ten were deteriorated. More than seven-eighths of the buildings were in good condition. According to the Urban Design Commission, at least five had historic value. . . . Forty percent [of the businesses] were business-support enterprises, serving businesses and workers in the CBD" (Keating 2001, p 188). Furthermore, Tech-

wood Park contained more than ten percent of Atlanta's homeless shelter capacity along with low-income housing (Rutheiser 1996, p 260–263).

Removing Techwood Park and its economic functionality and necessary support services for some of Atlanta's most vulnerable and least welcomed residents resulted not only in the removal of these residents from a central location, but also the creation of an Olympic space catering to an entirely different demographic. After Techwood Park was razed, the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG), a public-private partnership established to manage the Olympics for the City, constructed Centennial Olympic Park, which consisted of numerous corporate sponsored spaces, an 8,500-seat amphitheater, a television studio, and other various entertainment and advertising features. The formerly public place where some of the estimated 20,000 homeless Atlantans found shelter prior to Olympic development had been transformed into a private, Epcot-esque landscape with inadequate compensation for the previous users. In addition, Rutheiser notes, "ACOG announced that the Centennial Park would be surrounded by a fence, 'to control the crowds and keep out the riffraff.' Olympic security chief Bill Rathburn was quite clear about the nature of the space: 'This will not be a public park. We will establish conditions of admission'" (Rutheiser 1996, p 268). Once displaced, the former occupants and users of Techwood Park became among those not permitted to access this space.

ACOG officials interpreted Centennial Olympic Park as a uniquely important space in producing Atlanta as an authentically global city. ACOG also selected Dr. Sherman Day, former interim president of

Georgia State University, to lead the construction of the Olympic Park. Day has referred to the Olympic Park as “the World’s Gathering Place,” and referred to Techwood Park as “underdeveloped, underutilized, and burned out” (Day 1998). On the supposed international space that Centennial Olympic Park embodied, Day said:

. . . the first place [international visitors] want to go is the Park. We talk about Atlanta being an international city; if you go to the Park, you see real internationalism. You’ll see flags of all the nations, and the exhibits of those who participated in the Games [and] those that hosted the games. You see names that we can’t spell or say who won medals from a variety of countries. I think it truly became international; the rings and their Olympic significance. So, I believe it is helping Atlanta be seen as an international city; as a place where international visitors all want to go. . . . So, I think [the Olympic Park] will continue to even be a greater asset to Atlanta (Day 1998).

Here, Day, as an agent of the state who oversaw the razing of Techwood Park and the creation of Centennial Olympic Park, argues that the Centennial Olympic Park is an integral part of Atlanta’s global city character. This park is not, however, just a simple substitution of a park for a poor neighborhood. Instead, his juxtaposition of neighborhood poverty against the globality of the park indicates that the erasure of the neighborhood is intimately related to the new park itself. The production of this so-called international space—a space that, in the minds of its creators, characterized Atlanta as an authentically global city—of course required physical displacement of Atlantans

who used Techwood Park. More than this, though, the discursive power of the state to name a place as underdeveloped, underutilized, and burned out provides the rationale for displacement. While these kind of sentiments rest on assumptions of development and utility, they also frequently represent a coded sentiment toward those who occupy these spaces—often (and in this case) poor, racial minorities.

The remaining major Olympic project related to displacement was the erection of the Centennial Olympic Stadium in the midst of the Summerhill neighborhood (Newman 1999). In 1965, Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium was built in the midst of these neighborhoods and a location adjacent to the older stadium’s site was chosen for the new Olympic Stadium, which was to be given to the Atlanta Braves baseball team at the end of the Olympic Games. These redevelopments in Summerhill resulted in the gentrification and later displacement of low-income residents of these neighborhoods. “[T]he construction of new townhouses and single family homes and the renovations of street fronts led to an increase in land values and the displacement of 60 households. While some of these residents were evicted, their homes remained empty during the Olympic Games” (COHRE 2007b). This rapid gentrification of the area surrounding the Stadium represented not only a major disruption for neighborhood residents, but also the removal of poor, predominantly minority residents from a highly trafficked and Olympic-related area.

CONCLUSION

More than simple displacement for the sake of capital accumulation, the produc-

tion of particular urban demographics via displacement reveals the urban state's interest in its own demographic constitution. By using scholarly literature examining the displacement of refugees and other state theory linking state formation to racial categories, urban demographics take a central role in how the urban state not only perceives itself, but also how it wishes visitors, investors, and even its own denizens to perceive it. Atlanta's Olympic moment resulted in a complex but specific demography that was allowed to be seen in the city and that conformed to a biracial, prosperous, and harmonious vision of itself.

This framework for understanding displacement exposes a new facet to state-led urban displacement. State projects of displacement are, of course, not limited to world regions or situations popularly associated with *refugees*. From a Marxist urban studies perspective, for instance, the connection between displacement and urban redevelopment seems clear: displacing bodies from a location allows for capital investment and redevelopment of the now unused space. This interpretation conforms to *The Limits to Capital*, in which Harvey (2006) notes that both the geographic dispersal and concentration of capital relations works to the advantage of capital accumulation. Displacement of people is interpreted as one step in the drive for capital accumulation. Harvey's point explains a necessary element in the geography of capitalist accumulation and urban redevelopment. This particular explanation and others like it, however, focus on displacement as an effect, byproduct, or necessary precondition of capitalism rather than a state project of establishing its demography. It is not only to traditional polit-

ical economy that this intervention applies: a tendency among urban scholars is to treat displacement as only an unfortunate and unjust byproduct or necessary precondition of other social formations, like racism, war, or a host of other causes.

Gentrification, for instance, is one form of displacement variously attributed in urban studies to the growth machine, to the cultural preferences of young urban professionals, to the logics of capital, or other various processes and institutions (e.g., Ley et al. 2002; Fraser 2004; Heidkamp and Lucas 2006; Garcia Herrera et al. 2007; Walks and Maaranen 2008; DeVerteuil et al. 2009). This is not to say that the literature on gentrification is monolithic; indeed, it is quite diverse in how it approaches the rationale, origins, and outcomes of gentrification. The point here, though, is to show that the gentrification literature typically understands urban displacement as something other than a project essential to the demographic constitution of the city itself. Other frameworks also approach the question of displacement by focusing on the remaking of public space (e.g., Jacobs 1993 [1961]; Dear 2002; Mitchell 2003). Much like the gentrification literature, these other perspectives are diverse in how they theorize privatization. My approach here, though, augments the existing urban displacement scholarship, including gentrification studies and privatization of public space literature, by focusing on the role of the racial state and the particular bodies of those displaced.

The implications of this argument push urban scholars to reconsider projects of displacement as those intimately related to the state's demography. The notion of racial projects takes on new meaning, too, as

the projects become tools of statecraft and demographic management. While this paper has focused on a relatively brief moment in Atlanta's history, it should be noted that the Olympics were an important chapter in the city's history of racialized politics (Bayer 1996; Kruse 2007). In 2010, Atlanta became the first major U.S. city to eliminate all non-senior-citizen public housing projects within its borders. Seen in this context, the Olympic moment was only a segment of a longer historical trajectory of Atlanta's racially-inflected attempts to reinvent itself.

This long history is not lost on the activists, homeless, and poor of Atlanta who have for years been involved in resisting displacement. While this account of Olympic Atlanta has attempted to trace the processes and logics of displacement in an aspiring global city, what is not present here is a fuller account of the perspectives, experiences, and tactics of those who resisted displacement and from the displaced themselves. This is an obvious gap and it risks further marginalizing those already marginalized in the historical moment in question. To be certain, the resistance to the city's attempts to displace Atlantans was fierce, creative, and had some notable successes. Some scholarly literature has considered these perspectives (e.g., Rutheiser 1996; Burbank et al. 2000) and some activists have published their stories in their own words (Gathje 2002, 2006; Beaty 2007). These volumes are remarkable for their clarity and for the profoundly moving and enlightening histories they reveal. Future work will consider the motivations, actions, and struggles of these displaced Atlantans and their advocates during and after the Olympic moment.

One of the difficulties in researching

displaced populations ranging from true refugee populations to displaced urban populations in Atlanta is the very fact that they are displaced. The displaced are often already living tenuously. Their literal displacement only complicates their living situations, as well as advocacy and organization efforts. Much less significantly, research about their lives is also more complicated. In this case, some interviewees speculated that many of the displaced stayed in and around Atlanta for the long term, though with their social support networks disrupted and having spent time in the county jail. Indeed, it was only because of their return to the city that the details of the displacements are known (Beaty 2008; Davis 2008; Loring 2008). Since the Olympics, Atlanta has closed nearly all of their public housing and is no longer required to rebuild replacement public housing units at a one-to-one ratio. As a result, some of my interviewees, especially those who worked specifically with public housing neighborhood organizations, estimate that many of the former public housing residents have now moved away from the city. Rutheiser (1996) notes that immediately before the Olympics, some public housing residents were offered section VIII vouchers or spots at other public housing locations, most of which have been demolished since his writing. Even though those displaced in Atlanta are not refugees as such, their displacement, dispersal, and reconfiguration of social support networks are comparable to the consequences of displacement, which are always severely disruptive regardless of time and place.

Displacement in aspiring global cities shows us that beyond the commonly understood links of competition, training, and discipline that characterize the rela-

tionship between human bodies and the Olympics, there exists a deeper and ultimately more significant facet to the relationship. This relationship consists of the intricate ties between the Olympic industry, global city development, and the logics of displacing particular bodies in Olympic cities in order to produce a particular urban demographic. Indeed, in nearly every Olympic city, one manifestation of the relationship between human bodies and the Olympics has been various forms of displacement. This relationship is even more pressing because of the increasing push for mega-events to be held in cities in the ‘developing’ world, where displacements have been especially egregious and where infrastructure and social services are minimal or non-existent. The 2010 World Cup hosted in South Africa, as well as the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, show that cities more peripherally located are using mega-events to boost their reputation and exposure globally. These developing world cities, like Seoul in 1988, for instance, have used these mega-events to attract the world’s attention and capital, but also for the purposes of large scale and highly controversial urban makeovers. For the most vulnerable populations subject to displacement and eviction related to these projects in cities everywhere, however, the question still remains: how will these events be used to further marginalize the already vulnerable? Distressingly, massive displacement is the precedent set by Atlanta and other cities. Without a significant change in how the Olympics are hosted—for example, by hosting the Games consistently in one city, by reimagining the meaning of belonging in cities, or other political changes—displacement and other exclu-

sionary tactics will disastrously characterize preparations and hosting of most mega-events for the foreseeable future.

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