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Space Making as Artistic Practice: The Relationship Between Grassroots Art Organizations and the Urban Political Economy of Development

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ABSTRACT

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Standard narratives on the relationship between art and urban development detail art networks as complicit agents in processes of upscaling and gentrification connected to the political and economic elite. My thesis challenges the conventional narrative by investigating the relationship between grassroots art spaces, tied to local, community-based interests, and the urban political economy of development in the Chicago neighborhood of Pilsen. Using archival, ethnographic and interview methods, I investigate three art networks—mainstream, do-it-yourself and Latinx—to contrast the construction and role of grassroots and mainstream art networks within the context of gentrification. While mainstream art networks create prime areas for top-down processes of urban change, grassroots art networks strive to represent marginal group identities, interests and reframe dynamics of power. By allying with longtime residents, community organizations and other art spaces, grassroots art organizations form an urban social movement that is aimed towards redefining the goals and function of urban space. My findings indicate that heterogeneous art networks interact with the urban political economy differently and grassroots art networks serve as legitimate forces influencing urbanism in opposition to top-down development.

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Acknowledgments

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In order to convey a sense of the spaces, activities and artistic representations in Pilsen, I rely on images that I found online, as well as my own photography. Online images are mainly drawn from the art spaces themselves and are meant to illustrate the types of people, behaviors and artistic items I observed. They are not literal representations of what I witnessed in the neighborhood, but closely reflect my own observations and draw from events that I attended.

Introduction

Laura ushered me into her dining room, where I saw her table covered by delicate, rectangular, black-framed ornaments that enclosed collaged paint chips. The pieces, once part of an iconic mural on the walls of Casa Aztlan, a community center in the Chicago neighborhood of Pilsen, were scrapped off before a condominium developer repainted the wall in the summer of 2017. Along with a cohort of protestors, Laura illegally hopped a construction fence and salvaged what she could find. "It will be really meaningful for people to have a piece of Casa Aztlan," she told me. "The ornaments remind us of our community center. It is really sad that we are losing those spaces. I want the art to represent the community against the destruction of our art and culture." After more than 40 years as the neighborhood's community center, Casa Aztlan ceases to exist as a physical entity, but the spirit and symbolic significance of the murals on her façade persist.

Pilsen, a neighborhood three miles southwest of the Chicago downtown loop, has existed as a predominately Mexican-American working-class neighborhood since the mid 20th century. The area has more recently experienced gentrification pressures. Between 2000 and 2016, median rents increased from $483 per month to $871 per month, contributing to the exodus and decline of Pilsen's Latinx population by more than 5,000 residents. Public spaces, such as Casa Aztlan, are being transformed by developers into exclusive, private residences and businesses. Community members mourn the loss of their spaces and worry that "our Barrios are no longer our Barrios" (Belanger 2017).

The sociological literature on the relationship between art, gentrification and urban development largely views art as a catalyst for gentrification (Deutsche & Ryan

1984; Lloyd 2010; Smith 1996; Wherry 2011; Zukin 1988; 2010). Artistic activity, as a form of cultural capital and a symbol of upper-class leisure taste, attracts increased neighborhood investment by developers and politicians into otherwise fringe areas. Wealthier citizens then view those areas as more desirable, leading to changes in the neighborhood's real estate market, demographics and branding. The local art scene adapts to cater to new middle class tastes, consumer habits and lifestyles. Art production becomes more homogenous, as an aesthetic product, created by and accessible to wealthier populations and connected to larger, established institutions and funding streams.

However, Laura, and other longtime-resident, Latinx and informal artists like her in Pilsen, do not fit the conventional narrative on the relationship between art and urban development. Rather than altering their artistic practices in line with increased neighborhood investment and changing demographics, these artists are trying to represent the Mexican working-class character of Pilsen, preserve the neighborhood, unite the community and oppose gentrification through their art. In defying expectations, their work arouses questions. Who are these artists? How do they define themselves, their practices and spaces? How are they connected to the urban political economy? What is the impact of their work on the neighborhood?

In order to account for new, socially-engaged artistic practices, sociology must develop a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between heterogeneous art organizations and the urban political economy. My thesis explores the work of grassroots artists in Pilsen to understand the connection between their practices and the neighborhood's development. What is the relationship between grassroots art

organizations and the political economy of urban development in Pilsen? Can grassroots artists exert an influence on urban development in Chicago? If so, how? Can artists ally with long-time residents and community groups to participate in new social formations that collectively act as a legitimate urban force? If so, with what consequences?

Literature Review

Sociologists have studied processes of change and the nature and meaning of artistic communities within urban contexts. The most influential perspectives focus on top-down processes of change analyzed through an economic lens. Top-down processes include dominant class initiatives such as "growth machine politics" (Logan and Molotch 2007). Control over land, money, labor relations and legal decisions provide the means for "the machine" to dictate patterns of investment, land use and city construction. The machine restructures class relationships, modes and means of production and the built environment in favor of their understandings of urbanism, often in favor of financial accumulation (Castells 1984; Davila 2012; Harvey 2008).

Many top-down development strategies that benefit the political and economic elite fall under the umbrella of "neoliberalism". Neoliberal policies promote state deregulation and the privatization of services to foster individualism and free-market logic (Davila 2012; Harvey 2008). As a result, public resources and spaces can be limited when they do not favor gains for the political and economic elite. Gentrification occurs when politicians, developers and/or economically mobile residents reinvest capital into socially marginal neighborhoods, leading to their conversion for middle-class use (Smith 1996; Zukin 1988; 2010). Gentrification contributes to upscaling, increased cost of living and higher-class reputation of previously marginal communities, and the subsequent displacement of one group by another of a higher social or socio-economic status within a neighborhood (Brown-Saracino 2009). Neoliberal development, including gentrification, upscaling and displacement, all represent top-down "growth machine" strategies of urban change. The political and economic elite benefit from increased privatization and

monetization of resources and spaces, while other groups feel increasingly uncomfortable with and excluded from those spaces (Hwang 2016).

A dominant strand in the sociological literature analyzes art as a resource to promote "growth machine politics". Culture functions as a driving force of development. Artists, in conjunction with politicians, real estate developers, business owners and middle class residents, participate in the transformation of lower and working class spaces into middle-class locales. (Smith 1996). Prominent case studies that support this relationship include Sharon Zukin's (1988) work on the development of post-war Soho, New York and Richard Lloyd's (2010) study of Wicker Park in post-industrial Chicago. Beginning in the mid 1960s, the enhanced status of art, artists and artistic spaces amongst the middle class and the deindustrialization of working class areas led to increased attention to previously bohemian and fringe neighborhoods. Drawn by the symbolic freedom of space detached from the norms of the urban core and lower real-estate prices, artists moved into working class areas. The presence of local artists signified "a taming of the wilderness", refinement, civility, safety and cultural interest for middle class tastes, making artists the "middle class avant-garde" (Brown-Saracino 2009; Deutsche and Ryan 1984). Real-estate developers and middle class residents invested in the neighborhoods, attracted by the nostalgia of an industrial past, the "authenticity" of history, artistic activity and anti-capitalist sentiments.

In some cases, politicians and developers promoted artistic activity as a strategy to attract financial resources, spur gentrification and urban change. Tax incentives, zoning laws, building codes and artistic grants made working-class spaces attractive to artists. For example, in 1981, New York city began an Artist Homeownership Program in

the East Village to develop housing catered to artists as a first step in the government's neighborhood revitalization plan (Smith 1996). City governments included art as part of "improving the quality of life" plans and built alliances with artists. Institutional and political backers provided funding and work space to artists in exchange for service sector jobs, political donations and tax deductions (Zukin 1988).

Artists adapted their practices to capitalize on middle class habits and lifestyles, becoming implicit in top-down processes of change. Local art scenes became commercial, exclusive, and connected to institutional funding. They participated in an entertainment economy catered towards tourism and leisure indulgence (Deutsche and Ryan 1984). The new "Bohemian" and "Creative Class" of white collar professionals identified with values of freedom, originality, authenticity and liberal cultural consumption anchored to particular urban spaces and scenes (Florida 2012; Lloyd 2010). Art served as "useful labor", connected to growth machine politics and fed middle-class residents' imaginations about the character of place (Logan and Molotch 2007).

Art spaces structured activities and projects to produce symbolic representations of "authenticity", which linked their work to an area's imaged historic past, while catering to an audience within their own or gentrifying networks. As David Grazian (2010) describes, the "authenticity" of cultural activity relies on "staging" and "performing" artistic and cultural production. "Backstage" or privatized areas of activity, such as a painter's studio or a chef's kitchen, become sites that aestheticize and legitimize a craftperson's work (Grazian 2010; Ocejo 2017). The process of creating art and the "scene" of art spaces serve as consumable products. For example, in 1968, the "Downtown Ten" art show and walk around Soho gallery lofts showcased artists' studios

as an exciting site of consumption (Zukin 1988). Gritty images of the urban poor coupled with historic preservation projects, and overlaid with new developments, produced the facade of rooted production, updated and controlled for middle class sensibilities (Grazian 2010; Lloyd 2010; Zukin 1988; 2010). The appeal of cultural activity in a gentrified context derives from the mixing of local, global, poor, wealthy, high and low symbols to produce elitist spaces camouflaged as naturalized fixtures of a local community. People within artists' own networks or middle-class consumers constitute the main inhabitants of gentrifying art scenes. In this way, art contributes to the separation and disjuncture between newer, gentrified populations and a community's traditional inhabitants (Brown-Saracino 2009; Hwang 2016).

Art in ethnic communities can contribute to growth-machine development in a similar way (Davila 2004; Wherry 2011; Zukin 2010). When packaged as marketable culture, ethnic identity and artistic activity drive gentrification by appealing to the same values of authenticity, history and cultural interest. For example, Frederick Wherry describes a coalition between Latinx artists and the commercial sector in Philadelphia that contributed to the gentrification of the city's Latinx neighborhood (2011). Art organizations coordinated with upscale businesses to enrich the commercial life of the neighborhood, benefiting from increased status, publicity and financial resources. Consequently, artists and community members dealt with the displacement of lower class residents and the burden of ethnic performance in order to maintain the reputation of the neighborhood and status of their art. The local, ethnic art scene adapted to privatization, profit and consumption mantras, rather than focusing on community cohesion, equality

and expression (Davila 2004). As in Philadelphia, sociologists have found evidence to support the use of art and culture as catalyzers and tools of the growth machine.

The majority of sociological literature accounts for a homogenous, mobile class of artists and middle-class consumers that work in conjunction with top-down reformers to transform urban space. However, not all artists benefited from and cooperated with such processes of change. Previous work does mention groups such as "Artists for Social Responsibility", who pushed against political and developer interference, but pays little or no attention to their structure or influence (Deutsche and Ryan 1984; Smith 1996). Diane Grams, in *Producing Local Color* (2012), develops a more nuanced relationship between art and urban development by identifying different types of artistic networks that relate to urban processes. She details and contrasts "aesthetic", "autonomous", "problem-solving", "gentrification" and "empowerment" artistic networks. "Empowerment" and "problem-solving" art scenes build alliances with politicians and downtown financial resources, but retain control over artistic processes and spaces. These networks contrast with "gentrification" art scenes that are hijacked by development agendas, insular "aesthetic" networks, focused on artistic merit, and "autonomous" networks, focused on creative control.

Grams recognizes heterogeneity in artistic activity and opens the door for a more complex relationship between art networks and urban systems. However, she does not account for the possibility of artists to restructure their practices in response to development. Few studies within urban sociology have focused on bottom-up processes of urban change and empowerment (Castells 1984; Fine et. al 2016). No sociological research has investigated local art's role as an urban influencer or accounted for

situations in which ethnic communities leverage art in opposition to top-down neighborhood development.

Theory and Hypothesis

The standard sociological literature on urban theory and artistic activity does not adequately explain the practices and roles of artists in Pilsen. Heterogeneous artistic communities do not all serve as catalysts and instruments of the political and economic elite. A more nuanced understanding of the relationship between art and urbanism is required to account for the diversity of artistic engagement in urban contexts.

Borrowing from Howard Becker (1982) and Diane Grams (2012), I analyze artistic production in Pilsen based on networks to show how different art spaces exhibit a variety of goals, collaborations and connections to the political economy. My thesis focuses on three art networks in particular (further detailed in the research design section): mainstream, do-it-yourself (DIY) and Latinx artists. Mainstream artists consider art to be a vocation. They view their artistic activities as part of a professional art world and their art appeals to a broad, commercial audience. In contrast, DIY and Latinx artists exist as types of grassroots artists who do not consider their activities to be part of a larger, professional apparatus or career ark. Their artistic practices remain community-focused and catered to a more localized and intentional audience.

Drawing on the past literature, theories of symbolic community construction, art worlds and social movements, I theorize that (1) the presence and activities of mainstream artists promotes gentrification trends in Pilsen, while (2) the presence and activities of grassroots artists can serve as resources to represent, legitimate and empower marginal, local actors in opposition to gentrification and (3) grassroots artistic networks can ally with longtime residents and community organizations to act as an urban social movement and legitimate urban force.

These theoretical intuitions imply a specific set of hypotheses that I plan to explore.

Art Connected to the Growth Machine

The standard sociological literature identifies artists as agents and beneficiaries of gentrification. Artists maintain ties to the political and economic elite as both groups can benefit from upscaling and expanding the value of local resources (Grams 2012). Artists focus internally on their own practices and skills. Developers commodify their activity as cultural capital, marking an area as "unique", desirable and appealing for middle class tastes. Thus, artists serve as complicit actors in development agendas that create exclusive spaces, enforce class boundaries, devalue ethnic culture and spur the influx of wealthier populations into a neighborhood. In Pilsen, I expect mainstream art organizations to be tied to gentrification trends. More specifically:

> *Hypothesis 1:* The spaces, practices and representations of the mainstream artist network will reflect their connections to the larger urban political economy, specifically, their connection to the financial interests of developers and the aesthetic preferences and fantasies of middle class consumers from outside of Pilsen.

In Pilsen, I expect mainstream artists to function in line with previous literature that describes art as linked with gentrifying groups. Mainstream artistic activity will appeal to middle-class patrons, other artists and commercial art collectors, creating an opportunity for outside financial resources to flow into Pilsen. Art will be shown in a more traditional setting with an emphasis on caliber, technicality, training and skill. Engagement will be focused within the professional art world and amongst artists. The structure of mainstream art spaces will align with gentrification trends towards increased privatization and a focus on individualism. Authenticity will be performed through the

presentation of backstage areas, aestheticizing of gritty images and historic restoration projects. These spaces may represent marginal identity characteristics as an artistic endeavor, but will remain separated from the broader Pilsen community.

Art Reframing Dynamics of Power

In contrast to the dominant strand of literature, I theorize that grassroots artistic activity in Pilsen can serve as a resource for local, marginal social actors to oppose gentrification pressures by reasserting presence and reframing dynamics of power. In contrast to the literature on art and urbanism that identifies ethnic art as contributing to growth-machine politics, literature on ethnic community construction identifies art and culture as assets that can contribute to community vitality and control (Davila 2004; Suttles 1972). Ethnic communities, understood and defined by symbolic representations of their culture, use symbols such as art in their self-construction (Davila 2012). Cultural symbols heighten the boundaries between ethnic locales and the rest of the city, separating those neighborhoods from the urban core, its associated politics and spatial practice. Residents can leverage artistic production to create place-based connections, validate their interpretations of space and history and increase their stakes and power in a niche ethnic economy. History and spatial symbols contest powerful actors and give visibility to cultural and political claims that contend with the interests of the political and economic elite (Fine et al 2016).

I surmise that grassroots art spaces in Pilsen can function similarly to Saskia Sassen's (2011) description of "the global street". Sassen asserts that presenting alternative meanings and uses of urban space can counter powerlessness and shape space in opposition to top-down hegemony. Citizens, even if only temporarily, construct

alternative meanings of the city by engaging in protest. Art can contribute to the creation and definition of local, ethnic communities in opposition to normalized urban spaces, spatial usages and hierarchies.

If these intuitions are valid, I expect to see evidence of them in the perspectives, messages and activities of grassroots art organizations. More specifically:

> *Hypothesis 2:* The spaces, practices and representations of the grassroots artist network will reflect their connections to the larger urban political economy, specifically, their connection to marginalized groups, especially local residents of Pilsen.

I expect grassroots art organizations to reassert presence and value by actively highlighting minority, racial and ethnic identity characteristics and maximizing the public use and accessibility of space. They will create spaces that contrast with gentrified and developed areas of the neighborhood in terms of the symbols deployed, behaviors performed and characteristics of people present. This might take the form of art that incorporates images of black, brown and/or queer people, languages other than English, patterns drawn from indigenous cultures and socio-political themes in favor of the current working-class population's interests in Pilsen. Grassroots art spaces will work to reverse trends associated with gentrification, such as increased homogenization and privatization, through increasing the publicity and accessibility of spaces and opportunities. I expect grassroots art organizations to host free or pay-what-you-can public events catered to the local community. The practices of grassroots art organizations would be participatory, rather than performative or consumable, and I expect artistic engagement to include uniting communities of both artists and residents.

Art Networks as an Urban Social Movement

I further theorize that art networks can act as a social movement allied with local neighborhood groups to serve as a legitimate social actor in the political economy. In doing so, I seek to bring together Howard Becker's classification of "art worlds" and Manuel Castells's idea of grassroots social movements to account for the ways in which grassroots artistic activity can influence urbanism.

Becker (1982) analyzes artists as working in networks, or cooperative webs of activity, governed by trust and reciprocity, in the shared interest of creating art. Art exists as the product of the network's activity based on agreed upon characteristic conventions. Artistic production is a synthesis of the actions of a community of individual actors, each with a specific role in the art making process. By using Becker's framework of art worlds to classify "grassroots art organizations" in Pilsen, I can analyze the shared goals, cooperative and collective activities and understandings of networked organizations and individuals engaged in the arts.

Becker's "art worlds" cannot fully describe art activity in Pilsen because he does not consider the relationship between art and the political economy. Becker focuses on detailing structures of power and processes of change within art worlds, but not in relation to larger socio-political contexts. He describes how revolutions in "art worlds" occur when power shifts lead to some social actors within a network losing their ability to perform their roles. Redistributions of power exist as insular processes, reliant on the restructuring of artistic conventions and communal understandings of how to produce art. When new forms of cooperation become embedded into networks, lasting change occurs. Shared knowledge and the structure of cooperative activity within a network shape power dynamics, status hierarchies and interpersonal interactions, but do not connect with larger

social or material conditions. Becker's framework accounts for expressions of power and agency within an art network, but cannot describe the dynamics between art organizations and the urban political economy.

In contrast, Castells (1984) analysis of urban space and social movements does directly relate to the political economy. According to Castells, cities contain a temporal and a spatial element. A city is the material, spatial and social product of urban meaning, form and function accepted within a historical moment. Urban meaning relates to how citizens think of and interpret the goals of urban space. Urban function exists as the organizational means of using space to perform the goals assigned by urban meaning. Urban form constitutes the symbolic expression of urban meaning and function within the built environment. Thus, social actors express, actualize and build cities through their activities and goals, which are directly tied to the political and economic order.

When social actors do not accept roles imposed by institutionalized norms and work collectively to redefine new goals for urbanism, they form a social movement, according to Castells's viewpoint. Social movements develop new goals for urbanism by challenging the dominant political and economic ideas about and organization of city space. They maximize democratic uses of space, create autonomous cultures and increase local governance in opposition to "the machine". Social movements develop "alternative cities" based on their own articulation of urban meaning and associated practices that affect the time and space dimensions of urbanism.

However, Castells's focus on the political economy of urbanism leads him to conclude that social movements become obsolete when their alternative meanings fail to influence the economic order. He concludes that grassroots social movements influence

urban meaning, but not form or function. The "alternative city" exists as a utopia, not a reality. The political and economic elite remain the only actors who can reshape function and form. Thus, for Castells, it is challenging for social movements to be influential outside of a total restructuring of the political economy.

On their own, neither Castells's nor Becker's frameworks can explain case studies such as Pilsen due to their over or under emphasis on the political economy. Borrowing from Becker, I hypothesize that the cooperative nature of artistic production and power structures within art worlds will be influential in legitimizing and coordinating grassroots activity. Borrowing from Castells, I surmise that art networks, when they share goals, cooperate and engage in collective activity and meaning-making that expresses a specific interpretation of the time and space dimensions of urbanism, can function as a social movement. Synthesized together, I speculate that artists, in connection to local groups, will use artistic activity to collectively imagine, express, advance and realize new goals for urbanism. Only by bringing Becker and Castells together is it possible to make sense of neighborhoods like Pilsen and the role of artistic activity in generating new types of urban spaces and possibilities. By uniting insights from Becker and Castells, I embed artistic activity within an urban context and "art worlds" enter the city as legitimate social actors in urban processes.

If these intuitions are correct, I expect to see evidence of them in the ways in which grassroots art organizations work in collectives to express and practice new goals for urbanism. Specifically:

> *Hypothesis 3:* The grassroots art network, working as a member of coalitions with other artists, longtime residents and community groups, will act as an urban social movement and a legitimate social actor in urban development to express and create an alternative meaning of the city.

If my hypothesis is valid, I would empirically expect to observe the use of art as a tool and artistic practice as a space to develop and actualize alternative meanings of the city. Art organizations would work in cooperative webs of activity based upon shared goals and understandings of urban meaning. Art would express a new understanding of urban meaning by engaging with the time-space dimensions of urbanism, which may include creating art that depicts historical and futuristic themes and using art spaces as communal resources and gathering places for the Mexican-American, working-class population. Art organizations would work as core members of neighborhood coalitions, allied with other art spaces, community organizations and residents, to advance their interpretations of the goals of urbanism.

Art networks would serve as legitimate, urban social actors by using artistic space and practice as a socio-political tool for neighborhood collectives to bring their alternative meanings of urbanism into being and influence urban function. Art spaces would participate in politically engaged meetings and protests on topics such as rent-control or affordable housing. Art would depict socio-political themes, such as politicians in a stylized fashion. Through the creation of art, education and community oriented programs, grassroots art organizations would create infrastructure that can broaden and maintain their visions. These spaces would cater to the comfort of marginal identity groups, rather than gentrifying populations. The recreation and reclamation of city space for use by grassroots artists and community members will compose “the alternative city” in favor of the interests of the Mexican-American, working-class population.

Methodology

Empirical Methods

In order to evaluate the validity of my ideas about the relationship between local artistic communities and the urban political economy, I require data on how grassroots and mainstream artists talk about, engage in and promote their practices in relation to Pilsen's development. Analyzing the self-image and depictions of art spaces will provide data on how art spaces think about and represent themselves. Observing the structure of artistic practices and spatial uses will provide information on how organizations engage with different development strategies and create new usages of and meanings for urban space. Information on the funding, branding and promotion of art organizations and their socio-political activism will allow me to analyze how they are connected to the neighborhood's political economy and various neighborhood stakeholders.

The information I require is well suited to be collected through ethnographic, interview and archival methods. The activity of art spaces is broad; thus, survey data could not account for the full complexities in their structures, agendas and spatial usages. Newspaper or print sources alone could not provide adequate data because many local art groups do not receive consistent or substantial media attention. Through ethnography, I can collect information on how artists describe their role in the neighborhood, engage with the local community, construct and use space and make decisions to inform their actions. Ethnographic, interview and archival methods allow me to analyze the goals, structure, depictions and spatial practices of grassroots art organizations in comparison to mainstream artists.

An optimal, extensive ethnography would provide insight into the perspectives and practices of grassroots organizations, as well as a range of neighborhood stakeholders over time. Observations would be conducted across the neighborhood in a range of sites, allowing a comparison between grassroots art spaces with spaces that are predominantly used and constructed by different social actors. In addition to grassroots artists, I would interview a broad sample of neighborhood stakeholders, such as developers, politicians, business owners, longtime and new residents, to understand how outside groups view and respond to the work of grassroots artists. Research would be longitudinal in order to evaluate the influence of grassroots organizations as the neighborhood changes. This methodology would provide a holistic view of the work, perception and impact of grassroots artistic organizations from insiders and outsiders.

The scope and longevity of my ethnography will differ from the ideal methodology given time and resource limitations. I will carry out ethnography within selected grassroots artistic sites and case studies within the neighborhood.

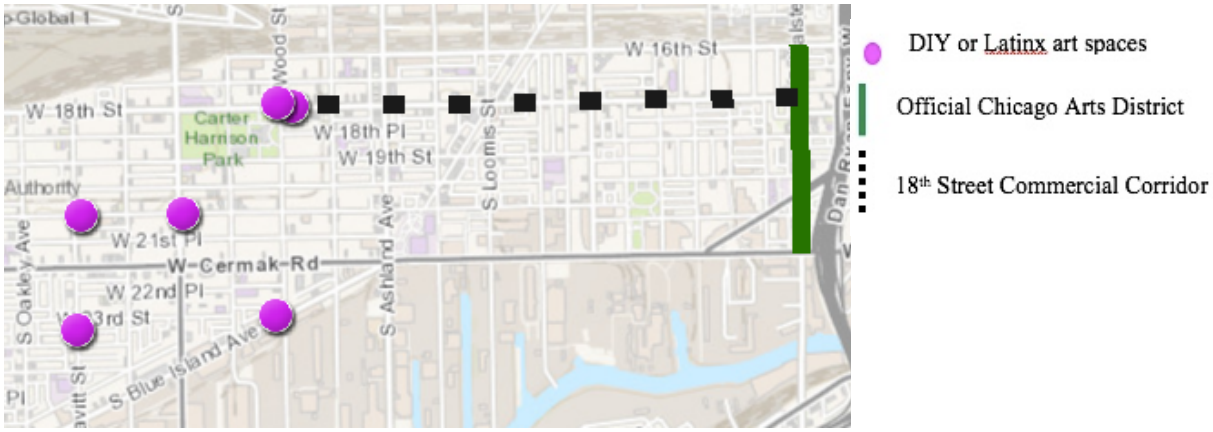
Site and Case Selection

Pilsen is a rich and appropriate site for explaining the relationship between artistic networks and the urban political economy. Art in Pilsen follows a course of uneven and heterogeneous development. Multiple art networks formed, making the art scene far from homogenous or harmonious. Art played a critical role in the construction and reputation of the neighborhood. The creation of large scale, public murals as part of the Chicano/Chicana movement in the late 20th century marked the neighborhood as artistically and culturally unique (Ramirez 2011). As a vibrant Latinx neighborhood

undergoing gentrification pressures, Pilsen serves as an ideal site to study the relationship between art and urban change.

The neighborhood contains institutional and established art organizations, connected to political funding streams with broad, affirmed reputations. The National Museum of Mexican Art, opened in 1987, cements the neighborhood as a Latinx and artistic area. The museum contains an international reputation, displays a rotating crop of international artists and receives grant and city monetary support. Institutional organizations, such as The Chicago Public Art Group, work in the neighborhood through the support of grant funds and connections to government, non-profit and philanthropic platforms. Numerous high profile artists, who conduct work on a global scale, also reside within the neighborhood.

Figure 1: Map of Pilsen Art Spaces



East Pilsen's art district.

The multiple artistic communities in Pilsen are territorialized into different sections of the neighborhood. "The Official Chicago Arts District", created in 2002, exists in Pilsen's eastern half along Halstead Street (figure 1) (Betancur 2016; Grams 2012). The Podmajerskys, a family of Czech immigrants, became interested in amassing

Pilsen properties in the mid to late 20th century as both a financial pursuit and to preserve the neighborhood from "deterioration" as working-class Mexican-Americans moved in (Betancur 2005). John Podmajersky bought properties along the neighborhood's eastern edge, acquiring about 300 units by the end of the century in the name of Podmajersky Inc. The small, modestly-priced manufacturing spaces suited well for artists. Podmajersky focused on marketing the area as an "artist colony", advertising to artists as "ideal tenants" and attracting bohemian art school graduates, international transplants and mobile artists able to afford increasing rents (Betancur 2016; Grams 2012; Isaacs 2009). In 2002, a change in zoning laws solidified the status of Halstead Street properties as workspace galleries and contributed to the creation of "The Official Arts District". Podmajersky Inc. began to host a monthly art walk, "2nd Fridays", catered to middle-class tourists and tastes.

The Podmajersky real estate dynasty continues to control extensive galleries and artist live-and-work spaces along Halstead Street and host the 2nd Friday event. I label the art spaces in the Official Chicago Arts District as a network of "mainstream artists". These artists represent "mainstream artists" because they have received artistic training and intend to pursue art production as a career (table 1). They hail from around the city or country and moved to Pilsen due to the neighborhood's artistic opportunities and reputation. The conveniently clustered galleries participate in 2nd Fridays, open late to display and sell their art, while serving up wine, cheese and a "cultured atmosphere" (Isaacs 2009). The event coordinates with a network of business oriented art shops and spaces that line the main commercial corridor, 18th Street, and receives support from the

neighborhood's alderman. These art spaces seem to function in-line with the literature on the ties between real-estate owners, politicians, gentrifying groups and art spaces.

I include observations during the 2nd Friday Event within the numerous "Official Arts District" galleries as representative of the nature and structure of mainstream artistic activity in Pilsen. The district along Halstead Street is the most commonly known and advertised feature of the art scene in Pilsen. Within the district, the 2nd Friday event is the most publically promoted, attended, long-held and regular event. A significant number of rotating galleries participate in the event, providing ample opportunity for observations within multiple mainstream spaces.

Art in west Pilsen.

In the western half of the neighborhood, known as the "more Mexican", less gentrified and affluent side, multiple Do-it-Yourself (DIY) and Latinx art organizations exist (figure 1). I study the DIY and Latinx networks because these are the most numerous and active types of grassroots art spaces working within the neighborhood. DIY spaces define themselves as separated from established funding streams, and cultural and economic hierarchies associated with the formal art world. In Pilsen, most DIY art spaces are run by artists who identify with minority identity categories such as being black, brown, queer or disabled. Local Latinx art spaces also define themselves as distinct from prevailing racial, economic and class norms. Spread throughout a more residential and less dense half of the neighborhood, these networks often collaborate to host events and publicize each other's work. In contrast to the Art District's 2nd Friday event, the western half of the neighborhood hosts the monthly "Pilsen Art 1st Friday" event and annual "Pilsen Open Studios" event, to showcase DIY and Latinx, local artists and

immerse visitors in more Mexican and lower class areas of the neighborhood (Feldman 2008). Grassroots art organizations, such as the DIY and Latinx networks in Pilsen, function and interact with the neighborhood differently than the galleries, shops and institutions in east Pilsen and remain unaccounted for within the predominant sociological literature.

My research focuses on two types of grassroots art organizations, namely DIY and Latinx-oriented networks. Within each type of network, I selected three specific organizations for a total of six case studies. Three organizations were selected from each network to account for variation amongst local groups and to allow maximum opportunities for observation within the timeframe of the study. The six-case study organizations were selected based on their centrality and representativeness within the DIY and Latinx art networks, level of activity, connectivity to other local art organizations and identification as DIY or Latinx. I determined the centrality of an art space based on the frequency of its promotion and publicity by other art organizations within the same network. I determined the representativeness of each art organization based on consistencies I observed attending art events throughout the neighborhood. The organizations are located towards the western half of the neighborhood, separated from the official arts district. Three spaces, The Dojo, AMFM and Revolutionary Lemonade Stand, describe themselves as DIY and vary in their level of publicity and length of establishment (table 1). The remaining three spaces, CAPA, Plus Gallery and Pilsen Outpost, identify as Latinx oriented and are run by local artists of Mexican-American heritage (table 1). Based on my method of site selection and the connectivity between

networked art spaces, my findings are generalizable to the nature of grassroots art spaces within Pilsen.

Table 1: Pilsen Art Spaces					
	Art Space	**Network**	**Year Founded**	**Size**	**Example of work or event**
Mainstream Network	Official Chicago Arts District	Mainstream	2002	Includes more than 40 art galleries and creative businesses along Halstead Street and art residency programs of 10-15 artists	2nd Friday art opening featuring works of by art students
Grassroots Network	AMFM (Arts, Music, Fashion Magazine)	DIY	2017	Storefront gallery run by one artist with a three-artist residency program	"Soul Sundays" art and healing event
	Dojo	DIY	2015-2017	Organization of six post-college Chicago artists that operates out of a home	"Afrilogy before Feminsaty" multidisciplinary show and exhibition
	Revolutionary Lemonade Stand	DIY	2005	Storefront shop attached to the home of the sole artist and owner	Screen prints that say "Capitalism got us into this" and a picture of a pickle
	Pilsen Outpost	Latinx	2014	Storefront gallery and shop operated by two artists. One artist is the founder of 1st Fridays and an organizer of Pilsen Open Studios	1st Friday opening featuring works by a local Mexican artist
	Plus Gallery	Latinx	2016	Storefront gallery founded and run by two Chicago artists	"Construct that shit disrupt that shit: gentrification", exhibition and performance
	CAPA (Concilio de Artistas de Pilsen Alliance)	Latinx	2017	Organization of community members run and founded by one resident artist connected to Pilsen Alliance	"Action Performance Show" with a creative movement performance

Data Collection

Ethnographic methods were informed by symbolic interactionism as I paid close attention to the dynamics between artistic activity, cultural symbols, spatial patterns, community formation and meaning-making in the social world. I was a participant observer at art and community related events that the grassroots organizations and/or mainstream artists hosted or participated in from June, 2017 through January, 2018. Almost all selected sites hosted public events, as well as posted art on social media for public viewing. Additionally, I attended politically oriented events hosted at an art space or that artists participated in, such as marches, protests, teach-ins and community meetings. These events provided information on the relationship between local artists, art spaces, techniques and broader neighborhood issues related to development. At each event, I kept track of the types of art presented, the type of space the event occurred in, the people who attended, the presentation of artwork and any agenda the event had related to neighborhood engagement and development. My final data includes observations from eighteen events (table 2 in appendix), as well as independent visits to each art space.

I conducted and recorded in-depth, semi-formal interviews with one to three DIY and Latinx artists associated with each organization for a total of thirteen interviews (table 3 in appendix). Interviews with artists allowed me to understand how artists' practices, roles in the neighborhood and ideas about community development informed their artistic and community engagement. Semi-formal interviews gave subjects the freedom to expand upon their perspectives without priming responses and provided rich data on the goals, activities and work of the selected art spaces. Three interviews were

conducted with individuals associated with the mainstream artist network, which allowed me to contextualize the work of the DIY and Latinx sites in relationship to other forms of artistic activity and networks. Additionally, data was drawn from informal conversations with artists, art appreciators, community activists, business owners and residents.

Representations of the art spaces in the media and on online platforms supplemented ethnographic work. Archival data includes media posts, pictures, videos and interviews. The personal websites, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube accounts of the art organizations provided data on how each organization portrayed themselves to the public and how appreciators responded online. Platforms such as *The Chicago Tribune* and *DNA Info* provided media reports and interviews as data about the neighborhood, artists and spaces. While I did not interview, or observe all stakeholders within the neighborhood, print sources allowed me incorporate a broader range of responses to neighborhood changes and artistic activity. These methods provided me with the necessary data to analyze the nature of representation of grassroots art organizations and how they engaged in creating alternative meanings of the neighborhood and city within the context of the neighborhood's gentrification.

Data Analysis

I thematically analyzed and coded transcribed interviews, field notes, archival and media data to address all hypotheses. I also analyzed journalistic and print sources based on the portrayal of each space, goals, angle and source of the data. To address hypothesis 1 and 2, I looked for similarities and differences between networks in the nature of representation at art spaces, including how artists described their practices and goals and the spatial structure of each site. To address hypothesis 3, I analyzed the relationship

between the different art spaces and their visions of urbanism, as well as their connection to other neighborhood actors and engagement with issues related to the neighborhood's development. I analyzed to what extent grassroots artists expressed and practiced alternative interpretations of the time-space dimensions of urbanism and how they coordinated activity to realize their goals for urban space.

Archival and quantitative data supplemented qualitative research and provided information on the development of Pilsen and relationship between the neighborhood and Chicago's urban political economy. Research from the University of Illinois Great Cities Institute and census data contextualized the work of local artists within the social and material conditions of the neighborhood since the latter half of the 20th century. I used GIS software to analyze the relationship between the location of artistic networks, development projects and socio-economic conditions. My conclusions are based on my observations on the structure of art spaces, how artists talk about their work and roles, their engagement in the neighborhood and the implications of their actions in relation to the neighborhood's development trajectory.

Empirical Analysis

Pilsen, the Growth Machine and Gentrification

Struggles between working-class interests, local, ethnic populations and the political and economic elite have long shaped Pilsen over the course of the 20th century. Pilsen is located approximately three miles south-west of the Chicago downtown loop (figure 2). The neighborhood's official boundaries extend just past freeway-90 to the east (figure 3). The southern boundary runs along the Chicago river and expressway-55, encompassing a once industrial area of railroads and manufacturing. S. Western Avenue marks the neighborhood's western edge, in a more residential section. To the north, 16th Street borders University Village, an expansion of the University of Illinois Chicago campus. Today, Pilsen consists of a total of 2.799 mi^2, 11 census tracts and maintains a population of 32,998 residents.

***Figure 2**: Pilsen in Chicago

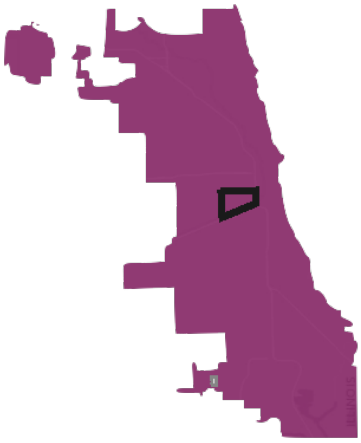
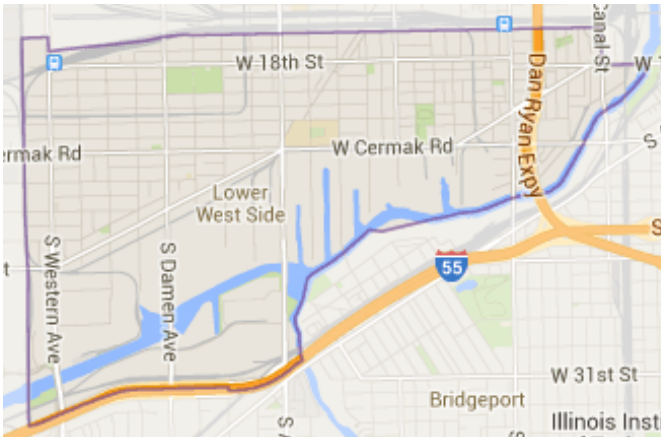


***Figure 3**: Map of Pilsen



***Source:** City of Chicago neighborhood boundaries, 2017

Originally a Czech-Bohemian area, a working-class Mexican-American community has dominated Pilsen since the latter half of the 20th century. Beginning in 1955, the construction of the Eisenhower Expressway and the expansion of the University of Illinois Chicago campus led to the displacement of Mexicans settled around Chicago and their relocation to Pilsen. The neighborhood's employment opportunities and existing small, Latino population made it an attractive area for Mexican-Americans to relocate. In the eyes of politicians, developers, business and real-estate owners, the influx of the Latino population in Pilsen changed the character from an "orderly and well-maintained working-class, European, ethnic area" into a neighborhood designated as "slum and blight", making it a target for urban renewal (Betancur 2016).

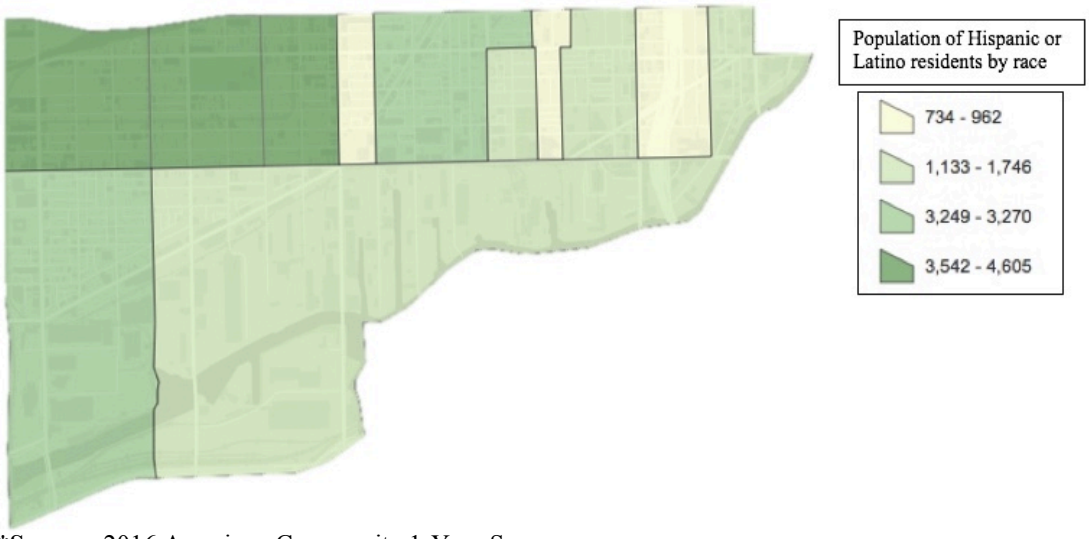
In 1973, The Chicago Central Area Committee, a group of influential business and civic leaders, created the Chicago 21 Plan in response to white flight, deindustrialization and suburbanization. Pilsen's proximity to downtown and "blighted" characterization made the area prime for redevelopment. The plan intended to upgrade public facilities, streets, transportation, business and residential buildings. At the same time, the federal government cut public housing funds. Thus, the plan relied heavily on privatization tactics and catered to upper class interests and residents to secure funding. In response, working-class residents in Pilsen and neighboring communities formed the Coalition of Central Area Communities, later called the Coalition to Stop Chicago 21. They protested the plan as a method of displacing the urban poor in favor of financial interests. The group succeeded in indefinitely stalling the project. Pilsen residents remained politically-active, consistent with a legacy of Mexican-American struggle as part of the Chicana/Chicano movement (Ramirez 2011).

By 1980, the population in Pilsen reached a total of 44,951 residents, 77.6% of which were Mexican-Americans (University of Illinois 2016). As the decade progressed, de-industrialization and the decline of railroads contributed to the growth of the neighborhood's service industry and abandonment of old manufacturing spaces. In 1982, the city of Chicago designated Pilsen as one of six "enterprise zones" in order to "stimulate economic growth and neighborhood revitalization" (City of Chicago). The program offered tax incentives, such as sales, real-estate and utility exemptions and job tax credits, to businesses located within the neighborhood. Financers and entrepreneurs saw Pilsen's open space, close proximity to downtown and generous tax structure as a lucrative opportunity for development. The appointment of a pro-business alderman, Danny Solis, by Chicago's mayor in 1995, expansion of University of Illinois in the neighborhood's eastern half in 1997 and the designation of Pilsen as a Tax-Increment Financing District in 1998, further attracted wealthy residents, investors and businesses (Betancur 2016; Sternberg and Wilson 2012). Median rents increased from $326 per month in 1990 to $483 per month by 2000, a nearly 50% increase in ten years (Betancur 2016; University of Illinois 2016). As neighborhood changes ensued, local residents formed a Community Congress for Pilsen to develop a plan to advocate affordability for existing residents and business owners. Part of the plan included the creation of Pilsen Alliance, a social justice organization that represents the interests of the working-class population of the neighborhood.

The year 2000 marked the height of the Mexican-American population in Pilsen, comprising 88.9% of the neighborhood's total population (University of Illinois 2016). Since then, the population and Mexican-American community in Pilsen have declined,

while land prices and income inequality, signs of gentrification, have increased (Hwang 2016; University of Illinois 2016). As of 2016, 77.8% of Pilsen's population identified as Latino. Of the Latino population 96% resided in the western half (figure 4).

****Figure 4**: Hispanic or Latino population by race, 2016



****Source:** 2016 American Community 1-Year Survey

In the western half, median rents ranged from $661-881[1] per month, whereas in the eastern half median rents reached $1,119. Land values differed from approximately $170,000 on the western side to $250,000 on the eastern side to (figure 5).

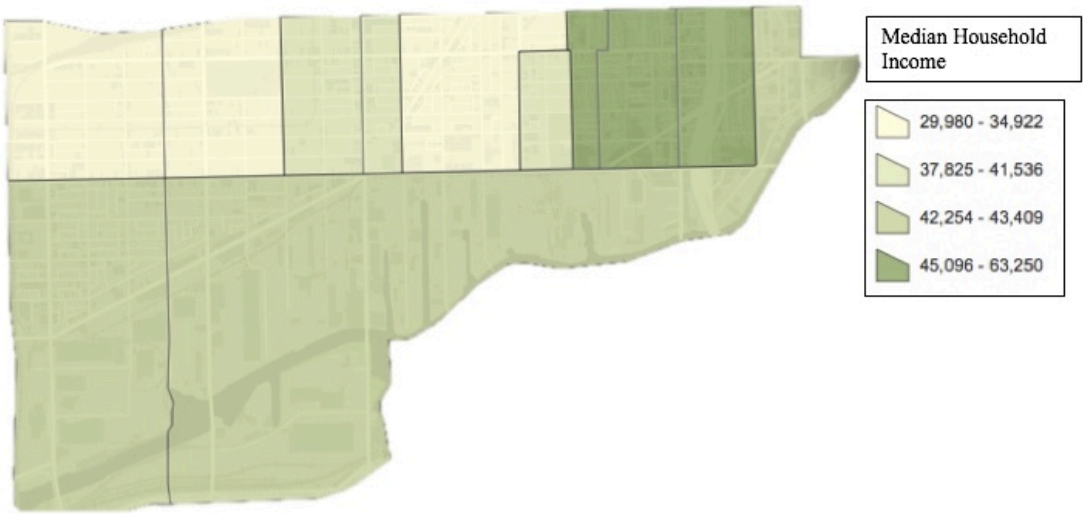
[1] All dollar amounts are adjusted based on 2016 inflation rates to represent the neighborhood in 2016.

Figure 5: Median home value in inflation adjusted dollars, 2016

Source: 2016 American Community 1-Year Survey

Western and central areas showed median incomes of $29,980 and $32,315, while the median income reached $63,250 in the wealthiest census tract in the east (figure 6).

Figure 6: Median household income in the past 12-months in inflation adjusted dollars, 2016



Source: 2016 American Community 1-Year Survey

In the 21st century, gentrification has changed the economic conditions in Pilsen, notably raising real-estate values and concentrating wealth in the neighborhood's eastern edge.

During the course of the study, issues about gentrification, control over space and public resources persisted. Pilsen Alliance remains the most active organization in the community representing the interests of the Mexican-American, working-class population. The group's current agenda includes instituting rent-control, promoting affordable housing, expanding and enforcing a minimum development requirement of 21% affordable units, increasing voter registration for the next aldermanic election and blocking new residential developments that do not provide resources for the longtime community. In the last year, struggles occurred over the creation of "The Paseo Trail", a bike lane through the neighborhood, the building of ParkWorks, an 8-acre mixed-use residential condo and commercial development along the trail, and most contentious, the development of the neighborhood's longtime community center, Casa Atzlan.

Developers from the company City Pads bought the building of Casa Atzlan and intended to convert it into ten four-bedroom residential units. In the process, the developers painted over historic murals on the building's façade and interior that were created in the 1970s by prominent Mexican-American artists (figure 7). The original images represented the Mexican-American population and depicted figures such as the famed artist Frida Khalo and labor organizer Rudy Lozano. The Pilsen community, including artists like Laura, mobilized in defense of the building, the importance of the community space and representation of their culture. Actions included a vigil, continuous protests and public programming hosted on site, graffiti spray painted on the blank façade and petitions sent to the alderman and developers. Pilsen Alliance, representing the

greater community, met with the developers to negotiate a plan. In the end, the developers agreed to pay local artists to recreate some of the murals, as well as to fund a youth arts program for the community.

Original murals, Spring 2017

After developer painted the building, Summer 2017

Figure 7: Casa Atzlan building, 2017
Source: Chicago Tribune

Mainstream Art Network

Hypothesis 1: art connected to the political economy of development

The totality of my data lends a great deal of support to hypothesis 1. In the eastern half of the neighborhood, the mainstream art network maintained connections to gentrifying forces and functioned similarly to art spaces that promoted growth-machine development as described in the past literature. Mainstream art organizations constructed "authentic" and private spaces. Art appeared as an aesthetic, commercial or technical pursuit. It promoted an understanding of community amongst artists, individual status, and appealed to gentrifying groups. The mainstream network, tied to developers,

politicians, new businesses, established art organizations and the media, made Pilsen attractive to educated, upper middle-class tastes and lucrative for financial gain.

Mainstream art organizations constructed spaces that appeared as "authentic", naturalizing their role in urbanism and connecting to gentrifying trends. Galleries and art spaces were housed inside renovated manufacturing buildings constructed in the 20th century. The largest gallery building along Halstead Street, Fountainhead Lofts owned by Podmajersky, was built in 1900 and houses over 40 creative artists and businesses (figure 8). The building is advertised as combining "the character and charm of the historic structure with sharp modern interiors" (LoopNet). The building's high ceilings, large hallways and freight elevator hint at its industrial past, while renovated wood floors, white painted walls, wall sized windows and over-head lighting provide modern updates. The preservation ethos of The Official Arts District connects it to an imagined, nostalgic history of the neighborhood. Artists working within the district identified as part of a unique and specific cultural community. Artistic activity and the district appeared natural and legitimate in face of urban change, disguising the links between art and urbanism.

Figure 8: Fountainhead Lofts Interior
Source: Podmajersky

Galleries remained private and restricted during and outside of the 2nd Friday event, using space solely for artistic production or display. None of the galleries held regular opening or viewing hours outside of the event. Galleries could be visited "by appointment" or during scheduled openings that occurred on average one to four times per month. During openings, artwork hung along periphery walls, while back or middle sections of galleries stored materials, such as easels, computers and paints. Figure 9 shows paints stored on a table towards the back of a gallery, while art decorated the rest of the room. Spaces were private and protected. Two security guards sat by the door of Fountainhead Lofts and patrons required a key to access the bathroom. By holding irregular gallery hours and blocking off portions of space for private use, mainstream art spaces gave glimpses of "backstage" areas, again legitimizing the "authenticity" of artistic activity, while maintaining privatization. The structure of mainstream art spaces aligned with neoliberal trends towards increased privatization and performed authenticity.

Figure 9: Fountainhead Lofts Gallery and Workspace, 2nd Friday Event 2017
Source: 2nd Friday Event

Mainstream art organizations interpreted their immediate community to include other artists working within the neighborhood and understood community engagement as advancing artistic collaboration. When describing how artists "supported each other", artists consistently referenced activity that aided formal artistic pursuits and practices. Artists attended or advertised each other's shows, volunteered to help at each other's performances or exhibitions or provided a specific skill set, such as graphic design or music production, to enhance another artist's project. They shared resources, such as insights on how to apply for grants, teaching opportunities at art schools or offered critiques of each other's work. Shared goals included producing and enhancing artistic production. Such collaboration and cooperation created a "warm and supportive" community amongst artists. The mainstream network's understanding of their immediate "community" did not include people disengaged from their art world. Community consisted of people who shared the same occupation, skills, artistic interests and goals.

Art spaces valued the neighborhood of Pilsen as an interrelated, but separate community. Artists did not express support for growth-machine politics or disregard the negative effects of gentrification, upscaling or neighborhood change. Organizations occasionally hosted events for the broader community. When outreach events occurred, the community of Pilsen temporarily mingled with the mainstream network and accessed their space. A representative of the residency program The Chicago Art Department described a community day they intended to host yearly:

> In years past, we didn't do one this year, but we… have done like a Pilsen community type day where we invite in neighbors from the community and have food and celebrate the neighborhood in a free and open event. So, we acknowledge that Pilsen has been really special to us and helped us become the artists that we are and the organization that we are and try to do anything that we can to authentically connect

> with the people who make up this community and give them access to our space and our resources.

The Chicago Art Department participated in one reoccurring partnership with a Pilsen elementary school, as well as maintained consistent educational partnerships with charter and elementary schools outside of Pilsen. Thus, the organization did not specifically connect with the Pilsen community. Joint initiatives were discussed as inviting another community in, rather than uniting to form one community. The rhetoric about and engagement in isolated partnership programs highlight the weak ties between the Pilsen community and the mainstream network.

Similarly, another residency program, High Concept Lab (HCL) hosted a dinner through the Chicago Community Trust to facilitate dialogue with the local Pilsen community. A representative recalled that about 8-9 people showed up for the lunchtime event, in which more than half of attendees were HCL artists. While HCL tried to engage with the neighborhood, a disconnect between the organization and Pilsen community members limited the success of the event. In contrast to the small attendance of the community lunch, when HCL hosted a mixer for artists working at established galleries, residencies or schools within the neighborhood, more than 40 artists attended. Thus, mainstream artists more effectively connected to people within their own networks than with the community of Pilsen.

Noted divides between the neighborhood's eastern and western sides, emphasized the disjunction between the mainstream network and the broader neighborhood. While mainstream organizations described their attempts to initiate joint projects, grassroots artists and community members did not interpret outreach as genuine. A Latinx artist and resident commented that "there is really nothing in the outreach in the sense of working

together or projects … It really sucks because…we are talking about sides." Overall, mainstream organizations sought to engage with people outside of their networks, however, the inability for Pilsen neighbors to feel comfortable in eastern sections of the neighborhood and for the organizations to unite with the local community limited the capacity of mainstream artists to provide space or resources for the local population. Thus, although unintentional, artistic activity continued to promote insularity based on network, class and geographical east/west divides.

Mainstream artists attended professional training programs and/or worked for or exhibited at established, formal art spaces, granting them recognized, artistic status and legitimacy. Many artists received a BFA or an MFA in fine arts and/or held teaching positions at professional art schools, most commonly The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC). For example, inside Fountainhead Lofts, the gallery LITHIUM was created by four SAIC alumni. Their 2nd Friday exhibition, "Alternating Currents", included the works of four SAIC MFA students. A network of teachers and students largely composed the audience at the opening. In other instances, artists' biographies reported personal connections to institutions such as The Chicago High School for the Art's Associate Council, The Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art, The Intuit Center for Outsider Art, Columbia Dance Center and Links Hall. Connections to formal art spaces and schools legitimized artistic production within the professional art world and allied mainstream artists with a broad network of career artists.

Artists cared about the caliber, technicality and complexity of their art to gain merit within the formal art world. The Chicago Art Department and High Concept Labs (HCL) stressed the caliber of their artists and exhibitions as an organizational strength.

They determined the caliber of artistic activity based on recognition from formal art organizations, awards and an increase in artistic opportunity. The Chicago Art Department described their roots as a space for "contemporary fine artists". High Concept Labs selects their resident artists through an advisory council of 12-15 established artists and academics from across the country. The board evaluates artists largely based on the quality of artists' past work and selects residents that hail from across the city and country. Both programs emphasized the importance of including diverse mediums when selecting a cohort of artists to showcase a range of techniques. A representative of High Concept Lab described: "If you see an artist has been sponsored by HCL [the art world] will be like oh yah, they must be doing good work. It gives significance to [an artist's] work or project." The organization produced artists who achieved status and recognition in the art world. For example, the resident group Manuel Cinema toured internationally and The Spectral Quartet were nominated for a Grammy award. Mainstream art networks focused on activity within the professional art world to gain skills and prestige.

Exhibitions and items were often conceptually driven and abstract, emphasizing aesthetics and artistic merit and catering to an educated audience. Artists wrote long and theoretical statements posted inside galleries as part of exhibits. For example, in the "Alternating Currents" exhibit, one artist displayed a video piece that cut between animated black, white and gray spaces with occasional glowing figures. An excerpt of his artistic statement described:

> By displaying these animations without the possibility of encountering the original, my work seeks to collapse the dichotomy of the handmade and the digital, the real-world and the digital world. Drawing attention to the equal potential of the constituent apparatus that facilitates modes of rendering,

> distinctions might disappear and allow for a democracy of form in which the materials are subordinate to the experience.

During a 2nd Friday opening, another artist displayed a Tonka Truck next to a sand pit that contained clear or solid white boxes marked with a black question mark. The artist described how he intended for the boxes to represent "good" and "bad" options. He tried to include a direct political message by putting the face of a politician on some of the boxes, but thought "it took away from the display". He believed that including such a direct message made the piece into a "political cartoon," rather than a work of art. He wanted viewers to be able to project their own interpretations onto the piece. According to the artist, the vagueness of the piece qualified it as art. Art intended to represent universal and ambiguous viewpoints. Artists valued the aesthetic and conceptual product over communicating a socio-political message.

Other 2nd Friday spaces focused on producing technical, decorative and aesthetic art, also disengaged from specific social or material conditions. For example, Mary Lou Steward, a Fountainhead Lofts gallery owner, prioritized surface and pattern in her work (figure 10). She created abstract collages that were "less about a final pre-planned image" than technique, materiality and aesthetics. The shop and gallery Great Lakes Home described their brand as "historic modern". They sold crafted items, such as household ceramics and wood carvings, restored antiques and vintage items. The shop, Elko Hardwoods, created wooden furniture and stressed their superior technicalities. They "preserve the knots, shape and imperfections of every log" to "honor its natural beauty" and all production occurred in house (figure 11). Such items again carry an aura of "authenticity" due to craftsmanship and historical connectivity. Artistic production appealed as a naturalized and decorative fixture within the urban environment.

Figure 10: Mary Lou Stewart Art
Source: Mary Lou Stewart

Figure 11: Elko Hardwoods Product, $9,400
Source: Elko Hardwoods

The 2nd Friday event incorporated businesses and focused on facilitating sales, highlighting their commercialization and connection to wealthier classes. Some participants in the 2nd Friday event, such as Elko Hardwoods, Great Lakes Home, Pilsen Community Books and SK Kitchen Design, functioned as craft businesses, rather than art galleries. In these spaces, all displayed products are for sale and organizations sustained themselves solely through costumer sales. More traditional gallery spaces posted prices next to the art displayed during openings. Art prices ranged from $25 for on-sale, post-card sized drawings to $10,000 for a work by a professional artist who received international recognition in a juried exhibition (figure 11). Patrons included art collectors and middle-class professionals, who discussed works technically and expressed interest in buying art worth multiple hundreds of dollars. The mainstream network attracted and made Pilsen an area of interest for wealthier populations.

Patrons enjoyed the 2nd Friday event as a comfortable and leisure activity. The majority of 2nd Friday openings conveniently occurred within the Fountainhead Lofts building and supplementary storefronts or warehouses along the adjacent blocks of Halstead. The event required little walking outdoors. Some visitors dressed up for the

event, in high heeled boots, dresses and collared shirts. The typical audience at mainstream art events hailed from middle class backgrounds, including university or art students, young or middle-aged professionals and art dealers. Galleries often served snacks, such as cheese, crackers and alcohol. Fountainhead Lofts operated a cash bar on the ground floor. Unless personally connected to an artist, visitors browsed each gallery in five to ten minutes. The event served as a recreational and tourist attraction for patrons, marking Pilsen as a desirable, cultural hub for more mobile populations.

The mainstream network maintained ties with the political and economic elite, connecting them to gentrification forces, regardless of artists' political intentions. Podmajersky Inc. rents all spaces along Halstead, such as Fountainhead Lofts. Podmajersky showed support for Pilsen's local government and alderman. Since 1999, Podmajersky has donated to the neighborhood's alderman campaign ranging from $500 to $10,000 (Illinois Sunshine). Similarly, the developer who owns a renovated warehouse turned art space near the southern end of the arts district donated $5,000 to the alderman's latest campaign. Thus, even if the artists themselves resent growth-machine politics, their monetary alignment with Podmajersky Inc. and real-estate developers connects their capital flow to the growth-machine. In the early 2000s, the alderman moved his office to the east side of the neighborhood. He continues to approve loft conversion projects and the necessary zoning changes for new developments.

Developers use "The Chicago Arts District" as leverage to advertise to middle class renters, branding artistic production regardless of the goals of the mainstream network. For example, Podmajersky described east Pilsen on his website:

> SOHO in Chicago. Fountainhead Lofts is an exciting turn of the century 5 story loft building with over 40 creative businesses in residence. The building's space

> combines the character and charm of the historic structure with sharp modern interiors. High ceilings, cast iron columns, warm wooden floors, large and unique windows with sophisticated urban views. The epicenter of the Chicago Arts District in Pilsen East.

Podmajersky rents spaces for $15-19 per square foot. Most properties rent between $1,000-$3,000. Similarly, the development company, the Flats, renovated a building in the neighborhood in 2017 and advertises to potential residents by describing Pilsen as "a cultural hub of offbeat vintage shops, independent coffee houses and Mexican bakeries and grocers. Public murals and storefront studios give Pilsen a spirited, artful vibe". Properties at The Flats start at $1,695 for a 1 bedroom apartment, a rent that the working-class population cannot afford. Real-estate owners advertise artistic production in Pilsen to appeal to potential residents and visitors outside of the neighborhood.

The mainstream art network coordinates with new businesses in Pilsen. The map and brochure handed out at 2nd Friday events advertises a list of restaurants on 18th street such as Dusek's, Pl-zen, Skylark Bar and Simone's Bar and Grill (figure 12). Latinx and DIY artists and Pilsen residents consistently identified these businesses as agents of gentrification. None of them are operated by longtime, community members, serve Mexican food or represent the demographics of the broader neighborhood. One Pilsen resident described an experience in which the owner of Dusek's fired a Mexican-American Pilsen resident after he participated in a march against the neighborhood's gentrification. The owner of Simone's Bar and Grill identified condo construction and signs of development in Pilsen as a reason for choosing the location. The businesses maintain ties to Pilsen's alderman. The owner described: "if they (the local government) need the money, we give it to them and they help whenever we have problems with a license or something." New businesses, real-estate owners and the political elite formed a

coalition connected to the mainstream network that supported the neighborhood's gentrification.

Figure 12: 2nd Friday Map, 2017
Source: 2nd Friday Event

The media promoted the mainstream art network as a leisure and tourist attraction, increasing Pilsen's appeal to outsiders and financial investment. The mainstream network was listed on TimeOut Chicago's Pilsen Neighborhood Guide, The Chicago Tribune's guide on "What to eat, drink and do in Pilsen" and as one of the

Lonely Planet's top Chicago attractions. Additionally, The Atlantic featured the art walk in a spread about the Pilsen neighborhood. The article described Pilsen as a "haven for young artists in need of affordable studio galleries". None of these articles or platforms mentioned Latinx or DIY art spaces or organizations. Although the mainstream art network did not seek to support growth-machine politics, the branding of artistic activity connected to the development agenda of the political and economic elite and naturalized processes of urban change.

Grassroots Art Networks

Hypothesis 2: art connected to the Mexican-American, working-class population.

My evidence overall lends support to hypothesis 2. Grassroots art spaces supported and represented the interests and identities indicative of the longtime, Mexican-American, working-class population in Pilsen. Grassroots organizations strove to center and provide resources for non-mainstream identity groups outside of the formal art world. Artistic events broke down barriers to participation in the arts and incorporated a broad understanding of community. Art aimed to function as a public and accessible resource in opposition to privatization and gentrification.

Artists within the grassroots network tried to eliminate obstacles associated with exclusive and established galleries in order for space to serve as a public resource. DIY organizations used common items to construct their spaces in contrast to traditional gallery settings. An artist described the nature of DIY events: "it is just doing stuff at home without a budget." Each organization owned a storefront gallery attached to a residential unit. Leading artists often resided onsite above or behind the gallery room. Artists hosted events inside front rooms or throughout entire homes, using private space

for public use. For example, artists at the Dojo described the process of clearing out a bedroom every week for events. Their professional set-up was minimal: "really just a microphone and speakers and moderately clean white walls" (figure 13). They maintained a colorful aesthetic, using wall art and fairy lights to decorate living space, kept snacks in the kitchen and placed a home-made dance floor in the living room made from stapled together wood tiles. The space felt distinct:

> A lot of visual artists don't really feel like they fit into traditional spaces. Places that may feel a little more like an MCA (Museum of Contemporary Art) or AIC (Art Institute of Chicago). [The Dojo] feel[s] a little more like a home.

The organization intended to make people feel welcomed and space accessible. One artist described: "at Dojo, I always did the door. When people came, I would always say hi, how are you, what is your name because I wanted people to feel welcome." AMFM also prioritized creating a "homey" feel by serving food at events and fostering warmth and interpersonal interactions between and amongst patrons and artists. By creating comfortable and welcoming environments, art organizations broke down barriers associated with elitist or commercial spaces.

Figure 13: Inside of The Dojo, 2017
Source: The Dojo

Latinx organizations relied on homes and shared space to maintain their practices, emphasizing the importance of public over private space. Pilsen Outpost started as a tent at the community farmer's market. The owners began doing a "shares" model after a friend asked if he could leave some of his art on their table for a portion of sales. In the winter, the owner of a local café offered the artists space to set up a table in the back of her business. The owner of Pilsen Outpost described that "we wanted to pay her for the space… she was like just give me a percentage of your sales, whatever you want, 10-15%. Just do 10." The owners of Pilsen Outpost relied on the support, generosity and sharing of space offered by the community, in contrast to maintaining exclusivity or privatization.

Currently, CAPA does not have its own space. The group uses a mix of public and private community spaces to carry out its work. Members meet at Pilsen Alliance, coordinate with Plus gallery or use residents' homes and garages for projects. Similarly, during the 3-day Pilsen Open Studios event, Latinx artists displayed their work in their homes because they did not have access to galleries. By creating displays in spare bedrooms or living rooms, artists opened their homes to the public and blended public/private divides. During the event in 2017, many Latinx artists served food, such as homemade cookies, chips and salsa, or kale chips, in their living rooms or kitchens, again prioritizing hospitality and creating a "homey" atmosphere. For the grassroots network, space served as shared and public resource aimed to diminish social divides.

Grassroots art organizations gave less weight to the status associated with trained artistic production, orienting artistic activity away from elitism and obstacles to participation. Whether or not DIY or Latinx artists had formal art training was irrelevant

to their acceptance within those networks. A DIY artist remarked that a lack of formal connections or art training actually promoted creativity and the possibilities of artistic production:

> I think it is interesting when you become amateur about it and there are no rules. So, you can create whatever you want… you could go there and you could do anything that you wanted.

In some cases, the networks offered opportunities specifically for artists without formal training. For example, Plus runs a residency program for artists without an education and Pilsen Outpost hosted a gallery opening for local high school students. For grassroots organizations, art and art making intended to be accessible to all people, regardless of formal skill, merit or status.

Art events intended to be participatory, creating a broad definition of artist as maker, without regard for artistic norms or individuals' backgrounds. An artist at The Dojo emphasized that "everyone has the ability to create" and the organization tried to remove obstacles to artistic production. The artist stated:

> in the world, the things that are stopping you are money and status and security… whereas DIY all of those barriers are broken…There is no class, there is no race, there is no gender, there is no religion, there is none of that in art. Yah, it might be represented sometimes, but in general it doesn't matter who the fuck you are, you can do it.

Art events integrated and engaged patrons, rather than served as passive, indulgent or aesthetic activities. AMFM hosted events, such as a coloring book activity on the walls of the gallery and monthly open mics, which centered around audience participation. At events, patrons stayed for more than an hour and socialized with one another after viewing an exhibition. The Dojo purposefully did not have a bar or serve alcohol. They were "trying to have a dialogue about something" and "be more than just a place that

people drink and hangout". The owner of The Revolutionary Lemonade Stand expressed that she tried to make her items very "visual", "playful" and "fun" to attract people regardless of their background (figure 14). When she partnered for events, she wanted them to be engaging, like the event "Microtheater and Lemonade Meet and Greet", aimed to foster patron participation and meld activism with interactive theater.

Figure 14: "Help Wanted Revolutionaries" Revolutionary Lemonade Stand T-Shirt Design, 2017
Source: Revolutionary Lemonade Stand

The Latinx art spaces also stressed the accessibility and participatory nature of their events, incorporating people outside of the art world. Organizations kept events informal. People sat on the floor, freely walked through space and paid donation based entry fees. At multiple events, people made name tags and artists or organizers directly greeted guests. The owner of Pilsen Outpost strove for inclusivity. She remarked: "everybody is an artist for me". Planning meetings for Pilsen Open Studios, 1st Fridays and CAPA are open to anyone who wishes to attend. Just like the DIY network, art events included audience participation. For example, Pilsen Outpost hosted open mics

and a writing workshop. At Plus gallery, events included “Aqui Mande El Pueblo”, an art making party and volunteer sign up to make a music video, “The S+hings”, a 1st Friday event catered towards creative opportunities for youth and “T-Pop art-making”, an art-making event for a future art market (figure 15). At CAPA, community members played a central role in facilitating projects from start to finish. The organizer remarked that “if someone comes and says I want to do X, we see what ideas they have and if we can support them”. In grassroots organizations, projects tailored towards and included the involvement of community members and patrons. The organizations challenged mainstream understandings of artists and limitations based on status, technicality or training. While mainstream art events served as technical, aesthetic or leisure activities, grassroots events included active and community-based pursuits.

Figure 15: Plus Gallery Art Making Event, 2017
Source: Plus Gallery

Grassroots art spaces centered and prioritized the identities of marginalized groups to represent and legitimize their experiences. At grassroots spaces, exhibits, events, programs and audiences united and featured black, brown, queer, disabled and indigenous populations. AMFM's mission included the goal of "giving a voice to voices that aren't necessarily as heard… prioritizing artists of color, queer artists and women artists." Art events focused on representing those identity groups. Examples of events included "EXPOSURE", a photograph exhibit by black photographers who centered the black experience, and "Black Magic. Woman // A night of music and poetry", featuring the works and experiences of black female artists. Similarly, The Dojo expressed their goal of providing a platform for non-traditional artists and a space for people regardless of their identity characteristics. An artist stated: "cis straight white men…get the platform wherever the fuck they go. They rule the world". Events, such as "Afriology before Femininasty", "Latinx World", "Brown Skins Ladies Summer Sessions" and "Queendom Come", focused on highlighting the experiences of non-mainstream populations. Art and events intended to bolster and "uplift" marginal groups.

Within the Latinx network, exhibits centered Latinx, as well as other non-mainstream identity populations. Art featured folk styles, such as Day-of-the-Dead skulls and colorful geometric patterning, and incorporated the Spanish language. Exhibitions such as "Oiskerlino" centered indigenous rituals and ceremonies from Mexico. Similarly, the exhibit "Tamed" featured works such as "Gallina y Huevos", an image of a chicken to represent Mexico and stereotypes of Mexican-American inferiority (figure 16). In Plus gallery's mission statement, the organization states that they strive to "center and amplify the voices of people of all ages who are black and brown, living with disabilities,

immigrants and migrants, non-binary and LGBTQIA+, women and femmes, working class and poor." Their logo, the + sign, and name, "Plus", represent the intersection of identities. Exhibitions, such as the photo series, "Sustainable Confidence", centered femme identified people of color and aimed to show struggles with class, gentrification, racism, sexism and xenophobia. Other events such as "T-Pop" (T for Trans) featured works by only trans identifying artists. Shows intended to represent artists, their culture and identity, rather than promote the gallery. The owner of Pilsen Outpost stated: "galleries think how are you going to represent me or what will your work do for me. We are completely the opposite. It is what can we do for you (the artist)." In contrast to mainstream art spaces, grassroots art spaces intentionally served as a resource for minority populations. At events, patrons connected with others, validated their identity and experiences and expressed agency over spatial use and artistic representation.

Figure 16: Gallina y Huevos shown at Pilsen Outpost, 2017
Source: Ricardo Angeles

Grassroots art spaces interpreted community in a broad sense, leading to increased identification and integration with the neighborhood of Pilsen. Art spaces strove to build

relationships and reach out to the community before they opened, as well as through a continuous process during their operation. The owner of AMFM lived in Pilsen and worked at multiple Latinx cultural organizations for over a year, building relationships with local residents, businesses and artists. Now, when she hosts events, she makes sure to place flyers around the neighborhood and directly invite neighbors free of charge. Events, such as a community forum, incorporate neighbors into her business model. An artist at AMFM remarked:

> A lot of the time the goal of art is to make money, you want to sell your art because you have to eat, but are you also feeding the community? Feeding yourself is important but you also have to make sure that the community is fed.

Organizations felt a responsibility to grapple with challenges associated with gentrification, displacement and the neighborhood's development. The Dojo tried to be mindful and connect with people in the broader neighborhood to "build the gentrification debate into [their] future". Local community members attended events for free and could use the space for their own events. For example, outside groups hosted an art therapy session and a benefit for Mexico and Puerto-Rico. An artist described:

> we give space for the Latin community. Folks are welcome here. We do tons of fundraisers for Puerto-Rico and Mexico and stuff like that… At least twice a month we have shows that are Latin focused. It isn't us going out and cherry picking, it was outside curators from the community who lived in Pilsen coming to us like, hey we have this idea can we do it?

The owner of Revolutionary Lemonade Stand recalled achieving integration with Pilsen's existing neighborhood organizations and artistic community:

> It is a real honor that I got vided with the respect. Because I am not Latina, those kinds of respectful invitations have meant a world difference... 1st Fridays and also Open Studios and then the art committee of Pilsen Alliance.

Organizations felt connected to the neighborhood and identified with issues afflicting longtime, Mexican-American residents. They strove to offer space for community needs admits the changing availability of space due to privatization and gentrification.

Latinx organizations felt a particularly strong responsibility for the wellbeing of longtime, lower-income, Mexican-American residents, making neighborhood issues the central focus of programming. All of the Latinx art spaces had signs posted that identified their spaces as "sanctuary for our people" against immigration raids. The founder of CAPA started the group to play a "supporting role for the community". The organization deals with residential issues outside of the realm of art, like domestic abuse, gun and gang violence. The owners of Pilsen Outpost expressed goals, such as helping to open a community center and teach youth art programs, to provide communal resources. A founding artist stated that she believed artistic work should be incorporated within the community: "It is like a pay your dues type of thing… I believe it should be part of an artist's history that they have done some type of community project." When grassroots art spaces hosted "community" events, they intended for people within their artistic network, as well as local residents to attend (figure 17). In this way, art spaces served as an asset, gathering place and representation of the greater lower-income, Mexican-American Pilsen population.

Figure 17: Local Children at Plus Gallery Event, 2017
Source: Plus Gallery

Grassroots spaces prioritized affordability, accessibility and cooperation over profits. They exhibited no ties to the political and economic elite or gentrifying groups. All DIY spaces stressed their separation from traditional funding streams. The owner of AMFM acquired her space through a go-fund-me campaign. She described the space as "funded all by the people" and "run by the people. As long as the people want the space, then the space will be here." She tried "to keep it affordable. Like $5 a show or free where people can come through out of love." She takes only 2% of sales from products. When she believes in the "mission or vision" of an artist, she hosts pro bono events.

The Dojo wished to operate separately from the market system. A founder described the organization as "anti-capitalist" and supported by "communist ideals". It preferred not to participate in branding or advertising and did not have a logo until 1 year after it began operating. The founder described: "we by no means make a profit… we have literally no money. It is below a nonprofit." Similarly, The Revolutionary Lemonade Stand expressed remorse when events felt increasing oriented towards financial pursuits or attracted audiences that commodified artistic activity:

> With gentrification in Pilsen, it means that there is more and more compromises and corporate run events…you are talking about a situation in which to be a vendor used to be that you give your vendor fee to a community organization. Now you give your check to a group called Star Events which is a corporate maître d'. It is so different. Those people go from festival to festival and don't give a shit about what happens to the money or the neighborhood before during or after… The people literally used to pay $50 to participate in Mole-de-Mayo and then it became $100 and then $150 and then $200 and then $250 and then I think it became $325… this is an example where an event loses its mission and soul. People said…that the costumers would buy but sometimes they are drunk and disrespectful and fetishize.

Grassroots art spaces did not promote artistic activity for financial gain or consumption-oriented goals. Instead, they valued community oriented and ethnic cultural projects.

Latinx organizations disliked when art programming prioritized profit over community engagement and disregarded monetary pursuits. For example, the 1st Friday event is self-organized and relies on a volunteer base. Plus uses a sliding scale for its residency program and space rental. It automatically offers cheaper rates for Pilsen community artists or organizations and take into account individuals' ability to pay. The organization described its artists as "reluctant participants in capitalism and unfortunate citizens of an oligarchy" and committed to remaining a community funded, limited liability company, rather than align with "growth-machine" wealth. Pilsen Outpost remarked that its gallery model is unique because it does a 60/40 split with artists, whereas most formal galleries do a 50/50 split. Unlike other galleries, Pilsen Outpost stated that it did not prioritize sales when curating exhibits:

> If you don't already have some kind of established history, whether even if it's like two shows behind you, [larger galleries] are not going to work with you because they are going to count on sales versus what we do… If the work is good, the work is good.

Rather than create competing programs or focus on self-promotion, Pilsen Outpost preferred to support other artists and art businesses in the neighborhood. The founder

recalled an incident in which a representative of Yelp tried to encourage her to start hosting a sip and paint event:

> [he asked] do you guys ever do painting workshops where it is a sip and paint... And I am like oh, well we used to, but our neighbor two blocks away, they do that now. And [he was] like, then you should want to promote more that you do it too. And I am like, no you don't get it, why are we are going to do that if there is already a service doing that. We help promote them. He was just so boggled by that.

Art spaces actively advertised each other's events on social media. The Latinx art spaces tried to function as a cooperative, rather than competitive network. Grassroots art spaces did not maintain any "growth machine" ties or funding streams. They allied with working-class, minority residents and separated themselves from wealthier populations and actors that promoted gentrification and upscaling.

Hypothesis 3: art networks as social movements to reimagine and reinvent urban space.

My data lends support to hypothesis 3. Grassroots art organizations worked as core members of coalitions that used art and art spaces as resources to form an urban social movement that influenced urban meaning and function. By engaging with past and future dimensions of time, socio-political content and marginal identity representations, grassroots art organizations crafted a new vision of the city and narrative for Pilsen's development. Artistic displays, events, programs and actions articulated and communicated values of equality, public accessibility and minority representation and agency. Working as part of neighborhood coalitions, they focused on creating educational programs, holding and maintaining control over neighborhood spaces and building infrastructure that could shape urban function and support their alternative meanings of urbanism. Grassroots art organizations formed an urban social movement through their

coordinated activity with residents, longtime community members and community organizations to act as a legitimate social actor in processes of urbanism by influencing and controlling the goals and usages of urban space in Pilsen.

Artists within the grassroots organizations reformulated the time-space dimensions of urbanism in the process of redefining urban meaning. The "use" value of grassroots art existed beyond the artistic sphere, to depict inspirational and liberating images. The owner of Revolutionary Lemonade Stand stated:

> I really try to make my art visionary rather than cautionary. I don't think that in these times we need more people pressing the panic buttons. We need more people strengthening people's confidence and visions and building unity… I think a lot of political art commemorates past things but it doesn't make more demands. [Art] is a player in the struggle. It is not just stylish.

Art served as a mechanism to craft future possibilities for the social world. For example, The Revolutionary Lemonade Stand created an inspirational design around the motto of "adelante", or moving "ahead", as an effort to inspire actions that will benefit the community into the future (figure 18). An artist from CAPA described that when planning projects "we usually think about what we want to see in the community and what we want to see from artists". Plus described how through its work it is "striving for a more equitable world, starting with ourselves, our neighborhoods and our city." Grassroots spaces consistently hosted workshops and youth art classes intended to promote skills that could bolster the broader community into the future. By structuring art, events and programs around future goals and visions, art spaces engaged with the future dimension of time. They used art and art activity to depict and practice a utopia that centered goals of equality, freedom, representation and validity for marginal groups.

Figure 18: Revolutionary Lemonade Stand
"Adelante" Design, 2017
Source: Revolutionary Lemonade Stand

Artists pursued historical projects to engage with the past in the process of rearticulating urban meaning. The Dojo compiled an archive to document the organization's history as a record of its existence, educational resources and model of its development. Plus gallery worked on creating an altar to commemorate the ancestors of non-mainstream populations who were excluded from conventional historical narratives. The organizer of Pilsen Open Studios discussed the importance of documenting art spaces in flyers and booklets for the event. She described the significance of denoting the event in 2017 as a "Quincenera" for its 15th year, to celebrate the history of the event in the community. A resident artist at AMFM discussed historical content in her art:

> one of my strengths is content, being able to look at the past and relate it to the present... I give history lessons… I want to create a podcast that doesn't just entertain, it also educates, it also inspires, it also moves and activates people to do something, to change the things that they can't accept…[I] give history lessons so that people can examine where we have been and then look at how that relates to where we are now. Where we have been has gotten us where we are now and how we are acting now will affect us in the future.

Engagement with history served as an educational and radical tool. Through the act of documentation and creation of art that represented Mexican-American, women or other minority populations' histories, art focused on crafting a development narrative that

granted marginal groups more agency and legitimacy. By redefining the historical moment as connected to a past and future that centered and empowered the Mexican-American, working-class population, art spaces promoted a new, multidimensional narrative of the neighborhood to rearticulate the temporal dimension of urbanism.

The use of public space by grassroots art organizations as a resource for marginal groups and separated from traditional norms constituted their articulation of the spatial dimension of urbanism. As discussed earlier, grassroots art organizations used space to unite people, welcome diverse populations, break down barriers to accessibility based on financial means or status, and offer space freely to community members. The spatial usages of grassroots art spaces contrasted with the spatial goals of neoliberal development and gentrification. Grassroots art spaces constituted a public utility, rather than a private or consumable good. In this way, art organizations used their practices to demand, envision and craft new types of spaces that could actualize goals of equality, accessibility and acceptance.

Art organizations specifically created spaces separated from developed areas of the city and mainstream norms. For example, The Dojo constructed "new worlds" in their space for every show. During the event, "Space Dance Party", an artist described the fantasized interior and narrative component:

> the basement was considered the rocket ship and the whole show was us floating in space. As each band came on, another thing happened and it was like we are in orbit when this band Zito Femme came on and then when we crash landed onto earth that is when Ono played…. Upstairs we had like balloons and glow sticks and planets and floating giant rocket ships and UFOs in our gallery... People dressed up as aliens and space men and stuff like that.

The Dojo actively tried to create a space that allowed people to reinvent their identities and reimagine possibilities unrestrained by conventional social structures. Artists

described the space as “changing and moving” by “encouraging people to create, encouraging people to do good”. Similarly, Plus Gallery hosted an anniversary event entitled “Disrupt that shit construct that shit: gentrification” intended to celebrate and bolster the community’s work against displacement and gentrification. “Disrupting” referred to the goal of inhibiting the ambitions of developers, real-estate owners, politicians and businesses that upscale the neighborhood. “Constructing” referred to the goal of creating new spaces and resources that welcomed and supported the lower-class through artistic practice, promotion of equity and acceptance (figure 19).

Figure 19: Disrupt that Shit Construct that Shit Event, 2018
Source: Plus Gallery

The specific expression of the historical moment and spatial usages of grassroots art organizations rearticulated and actualized new interpretations of the time-space dimensions of urbanism, to express an alternative meaning of the city as a social

movement. The social movement centered goals and ideals of equality, accessibility and legitimacy for non-normative populations.

Grassroots art organizations mobilized and connected their understanding of urban meaning to socio-political issues to promote, spread and support their goals for urbanism. Residents and community members used art spaces and projects as a resource to achieve political ends. Art ignited socio-political engagement, strengthened mobilization and aided community actions, protests and projects against gentrification. For example, the Dojo held an event "Chiresists DIY Town hall + Let's make a plan", that focused on discussing and informing interested parties about issues afflicting working-class residents and creating signs for upcoming protests, including a protest to save Casa Atzlan. The Revolutionary Lemonade Stand described its items as "politically fresh and in season". The artist centered working-class issues, intending for her art to be a tool for social organizing, rather than just "accessorizing" or "allying" the struggle. For example, one popular design showcases a pickle and reads "Capitalism got us into this pickle" (figure 20). Other items she made, such as ornaments containing pieces of the old mural on Casa Atzlan and necklaces with a capsule containing dirt from the location of the May Day battles, commemorate working-class struggles and invigorate socio-political energy. An artist at AMFM described how she hoped that her art would "create activists" by engaging with socio-political issues and extending beyond the point of production:

> a lot of times the goals of entertainment is used to sedate the people. It is used to take accountability off of the viewer and art often doesn't really do anything. You are putting your thoughts on paper or you are putting your thoughts in audio or on video and you aren't really, like what are you doing after that, what are you doing beyond that. So, I think that the role of an artist shouldn't end once the art is created and it shouldn't end at hoping that people who take in your art are going to do something. You really have to take responsibility as an artist to say this is my expression of what the issue is and this is my expression of what I believe

> needs to be done and beyond that expression this is what I am doing beyond creating art.

CAPA structured its programming to "bring social awareness to art" by making art "direct" and associated with specific actions and goals. For example, at a May Day protest for worker's rights CAPA made a Hydra sculpture that incorporated representations of multiple political motives (figure 21). The organizer described:

> [the] Zapatista Hydra is like a monster with a lot of heads. But each head of the monster was the head of a politician and the body looked like a serpent to signify oil pipes because at that time we were also involved in South Dakota with No DAPL (Dakota Access Pipeline).

Art referenced causes that grassroots organizations intended to confront and served as a demonstration tool in the process of realizing their expression of urban meaning.

Figure 20: Revolutionary Lemonade Stand Design, 2017
Source: Revolutionary Lemonade Stand

Figure 21: Zapatista Hydra Head, CAPA 2017
Source: CAPA

Artists centered gentrification and "growth-machine" political struggles within their practices to place a stake in processes of urban change. They aimed to use art to support affordable housing and protect resources and spaces like Casa Atzlan. In 2017, the Pilsen Open Studios event engaged with the theme of gentrification. Promotional

artwork depicted the gentrification conflict over Casa Atzlan (figure 22). The organizer described the image:

> If you notice there it has got Casa Atzlan in the middle. It shows the kids, you know they are painting. When you look at it you can't tell, are they painting over it or are they painting something new on it because it has got a blank slate. And then there is just like each of the characters… you have the hipsters, you have a diverse group of people in there. You have from what looks like a student to an art person to you know an old timer.

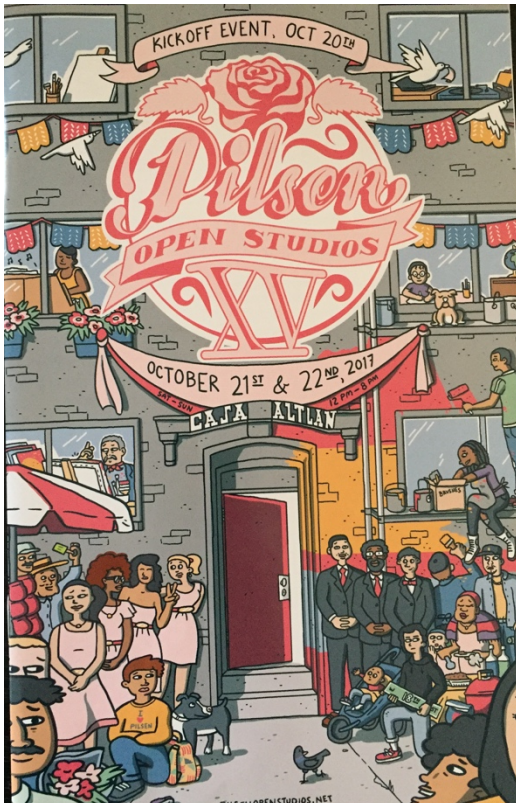


Figure 22: Pilsen Open Studios Poster, 2017
Source: author

During the event, Casa Atzlan was a location on the brochure of gallery spaces. The organizer described:

> we did that on purpose because we wanted to bring attention to that location. We worked in partnership with Chiresist and she worked with the Pilsen Alliance to come up with programming for the weekend which was centered around information having to do with gentrification.

At Casa Atzlan, activists handed out educational information about gentrification and the history of Pilsen, collected contact information to stay updated about community issues and meetings and patrons signed petitions in favor of rent-control and affordable housing. Additionally, CAPA made paper-mâché painted heads of local politicians, such as the mayor and the alderman, to use during a march against gentrification (figure 21). At the march, protestors directed speeches towards the figures as if voicing their complaints and demands to the physical political leaders. Such demonstrations contributed to raising awareness to, igniting new conversations about and validating the concerns of Pilsen's working-class population. The group created other art that showed the alderman's last name, Solis, spelled with a dollar sign for the "S", to represent political greed (figure 23).

Figure 23: CAPA Artist, 2017
Source: CAPA

The organizer described images that detailed processes of gentrification:

> pictures showed developers giving money to the alderman and then the alderman down-zoning a building and a bulldozer coming into a house and families running away.

Plus explicitly described their aim to counter forces associated with gentrification and displacement as well:

> The neighborhoods we exist in are rapidly gentrifying, and the people at risk of displacement are our highest priority. Pushing against systems tied to our survival, is a privilege and a risk that we take seriously. Your trust and support mean everything to us. As reluctant capitalists™, we have created a space that strives for equity.

On their website, they list the price for space rentals as "$2,000,000 for gentrifiers and stop calling the police". At events, Plus actively raised money to purchase community land trusts and support affordable housing initiatives. Grassroots art spaces set themselves up in direct opposition to "growth-machine" politics to actualize their own goals for urbanism aligned with the interests of the Mexican-American working-class population.

The ability of grassroots art organizations to form alliances and build infrastructure to sustain their alternative meanings of urbanism may be construed as evidence that they formed a social movement connected to the broader neighborhood to act as a legitimate social actor and influence urban function. The art spaces worked as part of coalitions with longtime residents, community organizations and other art spaces. All of the art spaces remained intertwined. The owners of Plus gallery worked as part of the board for CAPA. The owner of The Revolutionary Lemonade Stand attended and hosted CAPA meetings in her home. Five of the groups consistently participated in 1st Friday and Pilsen Open Studio events and planning boards. Art spaces collaborated, hosted events with and advertised the agendas of the most active community organizations, Pilsen Alliance and Chiresist. For example, representatives from multiple spaces attended a community meeting on gentrification hosted by Pilsen Alliance for

community residents and organizers. The meeting included breakout sessions, in which one group discussed artists' responsibility within the community, the role of cultural workers and "artists as renegades" in socio-political struggles. Artists consistently participated in protests and marches along with local residents. The groups did not collaborate with or maintain ties to groups associated with "the growth machine". The organizer of CAPA described how the alderman and "those benefiting from gentrification" do "not like what we are doing".

All of the groups focused on building infrastructure to support their future ideals and oppose gentrification. Art spaces effectively preserved control over space in opposition to development and gentrification pressures. For example, the Dojo identified their space as a community resource in which "the community built it," rather than the individual group or artist. The Dojo considered how it "can…use this space to continue its history of being a sort of community center" and keep it as "one less building taken by outsiders" in the face of gentrification pressures. In December 2017, the Dojo closed its physical location, as the organizers/artists moved on to more stable living situations. The space transferred from being "The Dojo" to being "The Light Haus", another DIY art space run by two queer black artists. By giving the space over to The Light Haus, The Dojo strove to continue the space's legacy as an arts and community resource for underrepresented identity groups. The successful transfer of space from The Dojo to the Light Haus represented an instance of grassroots organizations helping marginal groups maintain control over neighborhood space.

Artists intentionally tried to "conserve" neighborhood spaces by publically occupying and maintaining spatial control. A Latinx artist described:

> it is important for us who have been here for a long time to show that we have been holding space here. And it is about holding space because right now, it's not about what is yours what is mine, it's about just holding space and keeping something as pure I guess as you can.

Grassroots art spaces successfully "held", maintained and grew their spaces. In 2017, AMFM expanded to include a larger residency component for black and brown artists. The Dojo broadened their platform to include over 5,000 followers and supporters in two years. In 2017, Pilsen Open Studios had forty-six participating spaces and local artists, the most in the events history. By the end of 2017, Pilsen Outpost booked a schedule of exhibitions through 2019 due to increased demand. In the beginning of 2018, Plus opened up a second satellite location, +house. The growth in the art spaces and coalitions signifies their ability to control usages of neighborhood space and enliven support for the socio-political agenda connected to their understanding of urban meaning.

Art played a role in community actions to negotiate the future of community spaces, particularly during the struggles over Casa Atzlan, highlighting the role of art in influencing development decisions. In the summer of 2017, a Joyful Resistance March for the community center involved multiple grassroots artistic projects (figure 24). The Dojo hosted sign making events for the march. CAPA artists performed a street theater piece detailing the effects of gentrification outside of Casa Atzlan and used their paper-mâché hydra heads during the protest.

Figure 24: Joyful Resistance March, 2017
Source: Pilsen Alliance

The owner of Revolutionary Lemonade Stand made red bandanas that showcased the original doorway of the center with a Phoenix bird rising from fire (figure 25). Attached to the item was a list of the community's demands and background about the history of the building. She recalled:

> I was able to make the bandanas because I knew that, I was connected to the struggle already and I was able to participate in the struggle to know that bandanas are sometimes needed for a demo[nstration].

Figure 25: Revolutionary Lemonade Stand
Casa Atzlan Bandana, 2017
Source: Revolutionary Lemonade Stand

In the Fall of 2017, as the community engaged in discussions about converting another building into a new community center, she again used her art to help the neighborhood's agenda (figure 26):

> [I] made a new poster… that felt like the way to participate was to give [the struggle] a visual voice. I did a lottery ticket… it is yellow and black and it says "El Corazon", the heart, but instead…of being an actual heart it's a community center. It is again visionary of what could and should be in this instance.

Figure 26: Revolutionary Lemonade Stand
"El Corazon" Poser, 2017
Source: Revolutionary Lemonade Stand

The use of art as a protest tool and the participation of art organizations in the mobilization against the development of Casa Atzlan contributed to getting the developer to agree to meet with the community. The successful negotiation between the community and developer to achieve a youth arts program and gain funding for new murals represents how grassroots organizations worked as part of coalitions that influenced the actions of the political and economic elite. The new murals on Casa Atzlan reincarnate the old community center's representations of the Mexican-American population, their history and presence in Pilsen, and tangibly change the physical and visual environment in the neighborhood (figure 27).

Figure 27: Repainted Casa Atzlan Murals, 2017
Source: Chicago Tribune

The art spaces focused on creating sustainable resources for the community to reinforce their goals of urbanism and limit growth-machine development. Educational pursuits served as consistent programs that could bolster the local population. In 2018, Plus gallery started new initiatives, including two youth programs and an artists-in-residence program in order to "create experiences that go beyond an evening or exhibition." The organization aimed to build a movement and use personal skills and volunteers as resources:

> moving forward, we will ask for deeper commitments from artists and visitors of our space to devote time, skills, or resources towards the movement for equity, and will continue to adjust our actions to reflect our mission and vision to the best of our ability.

Grassroots organizations strove to support the local community through their behaviors. They promoted locally owned small businesses by using their products for tasks such as catering or printing. They purposefully supported traditional community spaces, rather than new businesses associated with gentrifying populations or forces. Through their actions and alliances, grassroots art organizations not only rearticulated urban meaning,

but influenced urban function by actively using space and resources to perform and spread the goals of their understanding of urbanism. Their expression of urban meaning did not just represent a utopian future. Grassroots art organization could realize new interpretations of urban meaning through the projects they pursued, alliances they formed, engagement and influence in the broader neighborhood.

Discussion

My analysis of the data I collected provides a range of evidence that supports each of my three hypotheses.

In regards to hypothesis 1, my research adds a new case study to the existing literature about the connection between mainstream art and neoliberal development. Along with the current literature, I found that mainstream artists held ties to the political and economic elite and gentrifying groups in 21st century Chicago. The commercialization of artistic activity encouraged an influx of social and economic resources, bolstering top-down development and branding of the neighborhood. While mainstream art organizations occasionally hosted exhibits that featured art or artists from marginal identity groups or partnered with organizations from Pilsen, outreach activities were not integrated with the fundamental goals and decision making processes of mainstream artists and spaces. Community members in the neighborhood felt disconnected from the mainstream art scene, limiting the success of collaborative projects. Joint programming aided the reputation and diversity of events for the art organization, rather than served as a sustainable or reliable resource for marginal groups. Thus, mainstream artists formed an insular "art world" and not an intentional social movement.

My findings add to past research on art and urban change that focus on detailing the role of art after a neighborhood experienced upscaling or gentrification. By documenting how mainstream artistic activity aligned with the interests of the political and economic elite as Pilsen underwent development, my research strengthens the idea that there is a connection between mainstream art, gentrification and neoliberal growth.

Throughout the process of urban change, mainstream artists served as agents of gentrification by naturalizing artistic activity and development, and making the neighborhood attractive to educated, upper middle-class tastes and financial pursuits. Thus, the traditional, insular "art world" connected with neoliberal political goals.

It is worth noting that the actions and ideologies of mainstream artists presented a conundrum for them. While they theoretically opposed conservative and neoliberal political projects, their activity permitted and promoted development. Mainstream artists expressed a desire to build connections with the broader neighborhood, but background, status and geographic differentials prevented their successful alignment with community members during the course of this study. As mobilization and education about gentrification in Pilsen persists, mainstream art organizations have become more aware of the significance of their presence and the trajectory of the neighborhood's development. They feel a more urgent motivation to scrutinize the implications of their artistic engagement, alliances and activity in relation to the political economy. For example, The Chicago Art Department looks to incorporate "artists as makers" or "artists as community builders" in future residency cohorts and started an open forum series in 2018 to discuss the works of the black, feminist writer and activist, Audre Lorde. The reorientation of the network's goals highlights the dynamic nature of art worlds. Additionally, it exemplifies the success of grassroots activism in Pilsen in communicating and spreading its perspectives and socio-political orientation. However, during the course of the study, community engagement by mainstream artists existed as an aspirational and future goal, not an active or fundamental pursuit.

My analysis also turns up evidence that validates hypothesis 2 by showing how art spaces represent and connect with the interests of the Mexican-American, working-class population in Pilsen. Grassroots art spaces actively structured themselves in opposition to development goals and gentrifying groups. Through their artistic activity and representations, grassroots organizations supported and represented marginal groups' interests and opposed neoliberal trends towards privatization, commercialization and individualism. My findings complement the existing literature by detailing a new role for art in an urban context. Art cannot be analyzed as a homogenous urban force. Different structures and types of artistic activity exhibit various connections to the urban political economy.

Additionally, I found that not all grassroots art networks function in the same way. While I interpret my data to support new connection between both DIY and Latinx organizations and the political economy, the networks did exhibit important differences that could impact their future trajectories and socio-political alignments. Latinx organizations remained the most embedded within the neighborhood, committed and connected to longtime residents and the Mexican-American population. In contrast, the DIY network strove to center marginal group interests, which included Latinx populations, as well as black artists and patrons. For example, AMFM and The Dojo held exhibits that dealt with themes such as police brutality and Black Lives Matter, while Latinx organizations did not. Thus, DIY spaces did not exhibit as strong of a connection with the Pilsen community, which could affect their long-term alliance with community groups to specifically oppose gentrification in Pilsen.

Artists from DIY spaces, in particular, worked across networks, which could compromise the future separation between mainstream and grassroots spaces and interests. The founder of AMFM held a residency at The Chicago Art Department and artists from AMFM and the Dojo sometimes had "gigs" with established spaces. However, connections did not serve as the prime motivation for any of the grassroots artists nor influence their politics. They prioritized community oriented pursuits over formal collaborations, maintaining their status as "grassroots". When artists did get opportunities outside of their networks, they consistently tried to use those opportunities as a resource for underprivileged artists and populations, remaining consistent with their fundamental goals. For example, when an artist at AMFM got an opportunity to organize an event on the west side of Chicago with The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, she used the platform to enlist local community artists and organizers from that neighborhood to host the event. Rather than promoting her own career, she worked as a liaison to provide opportunities for other artists with less access to artistic opportunities. Therefore, her actions remain consistent with the overall goals of grassroots organizations. Differences between the DIY and Latinx networks highlight the dynamic nature and evolving boundaries between art worlds. During the course of this study, grassroots sites flirted with the boundary between the "mainstream" and "grassroots", but remained structurally and fundamentally committed to grassroots goals.

Grassroots art networks could not completely isolate themselves from corporate sponsorship or financial resources. While grassroots art networks did not prioritize economic motives, they admittedly could not operate independently of the economic sphere. Grassroots spaces emphasized the importance of finances for sustainability and

often relied on sales and cover charges to pay their rents. When available, groups sometimes accepted corporate sponsors. For example, AMFM hosted an event in a northern neighborhood connected to the development company, The Flats. After AMFM participated in that event, community members from Pilsen came to the gallery and voiced their concerns with the partnership. The organizer recognized the event as a mistake, took accountability for the implications of her actions on Pilsen residents and apologized to the neighborhood.

The occasional connection between grassroots art spaces and economic resources should not be used to blur the analytical line between the grassroots and the mainstream. Ties between grassroots art spaces and financial resources occurred on irregular occasions and did not affect the fundamental goals of the organizations. When artists accepted sponsorships, they used them to provide visibility and opportunities for other artists, rather than advance their own careers or commercialize their art. When partnerships did not align with their essential goals, such as when AMFM partnered with the Flats, the artists identified the connection as "a mistake". During the course of the study, grassroots art spaces did not sustain any regular or structural ties with "growth-machine" forces.

Lastly, my evidence supports my 3rd hypothesis. Grassroots art spaces coordinated activity with longtime residents, community organizations and other local art spaces to form an urban social movement that could influence processes of urbanism. Coalitions redefined urban meaning in favor of the Mexican-American, working-class population's interests and practiced new goals of urbanism through artistic activity and community engagement. Art not only served as a tool to redefine urban meaning, but also impacted

urban function as artists and patrons actively reshaped space and broadened awareness in support of their interpretation of urban meaning.

Grassroots art networks remained integral actors and representatives of the broader Pilsen community and did not act as radical or fringe social groups. The grassroots art spaces consistently worked in alliance with the most active community group, Pilsen Alliance, respected by local residents. During neighborhood meetings and forums, artists from the grassroots network spoke as valued community voices. Longtime-residents expressed support for grassroots artistic activity. Residents regularly visited all of the art spaces and openings and expressed pride in the 1st Friday and Pilsen Open Studios events. Thus, I interpret my evidence to support hypothesis 3 and find that grassroots art networks acted as central and legitimate actors within the neighborhood.

In order to contextualize and analyze the influence of grassroots artists in Pilsen, I synthesized ideas from both Becker and Castells to nuance their analyses. In contrast to Becker's isolated "art worlds", I find that art networks in Pilsen serve as legitimate social actors in processes of urbanism. The coordinated activity of artists and community members and broad understanding of artist as maker shows how art worlds can influence spatial usages, practices and community formations beyond insular groups. The connection between mainstream artists and neoliberal development indicates that even "art worlds" that do not form social movements cannot be understood or operate independently of socio-political agendas.

Adding to Castells's framework of social movements, my findings indicate that social movements can be influential without revolutionizing the political and economic order. By depicting and practicing alternative meanings of urbanism, grassroots art

organizations formulate new possibilities for urban space, which legitimizes the perspectives and interests of marginal groups in opposition to the political and economic elite. In contrast to the dominant literature that depicts artists as instruments of elite groups, artistic communities act as core members of grassroots social movements. They are capable of imaging "alternative cities" and using artistic practice and neighborhood coalitions to bring their visions into fruition.

Conclusion

Laura's ornaments of enclosed paint chips from the original Casa Atzlan murals represent not only the old community center, but also the longtime, Mexican-American, working-class population of Pilsen and their relationship to the urban political economy. The significance of her artistic activity extends beyond the construction of a single art product or the commemoration of an old building. Laura served as a member of a social movement, consisting of artists, residents and community organizers, who used artistic representations and practices to construct alternative interpretations of urban space.

My thesis investigated the relationship between grassroots art organizations and the urban political economy of development in the Chicago neighborhood of Pilsen. Through archival, ethnographic and interview data from six grassroots sites and one mainstream network, I researched the practices, structures, goals and role of artists, like Laura, in the neighborhood. By focusing on grassroots art spaces, my thesis shows that local, urban, artistic activity has evolved beyond what the dominant sociological literature describes. In doing so, I recognize the role of heterogeneous art networks in urban change and insert grassroots art networks as legitimate urban forces into the sociological literature. While previous literature and conclusions focused on mainstream art, I find that grassroots art spaces participate in new social formations, allied with longtime residents and community organizations, to support the Mexican-American, working-class population's interests as an urban social movement to influence urban processes. My research fills a practical and theoretical void in urban sociology about the links among urban space, bottom-up social movements, localized cultural networks, the political economy and construction of place.

Many opportunities for future research exist based on the limitations of my study and the dynamic nature of art worlds and urban systems. My research centered the outlooks and activities of artists. My data does not include robust information on the perspectives of other neighborhood actors such as community residents, developers, politicians or business owners. Without data on a range of neighborhood actors, I cannot determine the full impact and role of artists within the neighborhood. For example, if residents expressed a view of grassroots artists as "radical" compared to the broader community, artists' actions would not be indicative of the greater lower-income, Mexican-American population. However, if developers expressed hostility towards the artists as obstacles to their development goals, the relationship between artists and the interests of the Mexican-American, working-class population would be strengthened. Future research should include the perspectives of multiple neighborhood actors to probe the validity of my claims.

Evaluating the full impact of grassroots art spaces in processes of urbanism requires further, longitudinal research. My preliminary findings indicate that grassroots art networks can maintain spatial control in opposition to top-down development, however my data is limited and anecdotal. Future data needs to investigate how the activities of grassroots art spaces might impact the trajectory of the neighborhood's development beyond a six-month time span. It is yet to be known if all grassroots organizations will be able to continue to maintain control over their spaces, if organizations will reject ties to mainstream resources, when presented and/or if mainstream artists will join coalitions of grassroots artists. Grassroots organizations remain in a precarious position. Lack of financial resources threatens the ability of art

organizations to sustain their rents and spaces, while accepting financial resources threatens to transform grassroots art spaces into mainstream art spaces. While grassroots art spaces talk about "pulling people up" as they ride the line between marginal groups and the political and economic elite, the success and impact of their efforts to provide platforms for marginal populations is not yet clear. Currently, grassroots art spaces most effectively influence urban meaning and function within the western and central areas of the neighborhood. The true sustainability and impact of their social movement depends on the ability of art spaces to remain embedded within neighborhood coalitions that can influence urban form throughout the totality of Pilsen.

The structure and role of art networks in novel contexts and the nuances between art networks should also be included in future research. By selecting prominent and central case study spaces, my methodology ensured that grassroots and mainstream art spaces were representative within the Pilsen neighborhood. However, my data does not reflect neighborhoods that exhibit different internal structures or external ties. The differences I noted between the Latinx and DIY networks gesture towards important variations in artistic network participation, construction and use based on race, ethnicity and other identity categories. Future research should include a nuanced attention to racial, ethnic, socio-economic and network distinctions to account for the heterogeneity in artistic and communal activity. The diversity and dynamism of art networks and urbanism requires continual scrutiny in order to understand the relationship between grassroots activity, urban processes and the possibilities of creating and realizing "alternative cities".

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Appendix

Interview Questions

Note: all interviews are semi-formal. Questions are meant to spark discussion and allow for open-ended answers. The exact order and wording of questions will vary based on subjects' responses.

Interview with DIY space:

Background:

1. What is your background in the art world?
    a. Do you have any formal training?
    b. Have you been a part of other art programs or organizations?
    c. When did you start working in the art world?
2. How did you start working in Pilsen?
    a. When did you start working in the neighborhood?
    b. When and why did you open your space?
    c. What draws you to Pilsen? Could you tell me your favorite things about Pilsen?
3. Could you tell me about your artistic practice and space?
    a. Do you consider yourself to be an artist?
    b. What do you hope to accomplish through your work at the gallery?
    c. Could you describe a time in which you worked to accomplish a goal through art?
4. How are you/your organization funded? Is it your primary occupation or do you work any other jobs?

DIY specific:

5. Could you describe what DIY means to you?
6. What does it mean to you to self-identify as a DIY space?
7. Could you describe the role of DIY spaces in the community?
    a. Do you see any advantages in being a DIY space?
    b. Do you see any disadvantages in being a DIY space?

Community Engagement:

8. If you were talking to a friend, how would you describe the community at your art space?
    a. Could you describe how you envision that community in the future? Any growth and/or changes?
9. Could you describe what you think about when someone says "the community of Pilsen".
10. Could you describe the people, places and/or fixtures you think about when someone says the "art in Pilsen".
11. Could you describe an event you hosted recently?

    a. Why did you host it? Who attended? How often do you host events? Was it typical/atypical?
12. How do you think other people would describe your work?
    a. Could you describe a time someone reacted to your work in person, the media or online?
    b. How did you feel about their reaction?

Networks:

13. What other organizations do you work with in Pilsen, Chicago, nationally and/or globally?
    a. How do you decide what organizations to partner with?
14. Could you describe a time and/or a project in which you worked with other organizations?
15. How would you describe the "art scene in Pilsen"?
    a. How would you describe your role in that scene and in relation to other local art spaces?

Accomplishments and future goals:

16. Could you describe a time you felt successful or a project that you considered a success?
17. Do you feel as if you/your organization is successful in Pilsen? Why or why not?
    a. What would make it more or less successful?
18. Could you describe any worries you have about the future of your art space and Pilsen?
19. What are your biggest obstacles?
    a. How do you intend to overcome them?
    b. Could you describe a time you faced a large obstacle?
20. What are your future goals? Could you describe how you envision your art space and practice in five years?

Interview with Latinx space:

Background:

1. What is your background in the art world?
    a. Do you have any formal training?
    b. Have you been a part of other art programs or organizations?
    c. When did you start working in the art world?
2. How did you start working in Pilsen?
    a. When did you start working in the neighborhood?
    b. When and why did you open your space?
    c. What draws you to Pilsen? Could you tell me your favorite things about Pilsen?
3. Could you tell me about your artistic practice and space?
    a. Do you consider yourself to be an artist?
    b. What do you hope to accomplish through your work at the gallery?
    c. Could you describe a time in which you worked to accomplish a goal through art?
4. How are you/your organization funded? Is it your primary occupation or do you work any other jobs?

Latinx specific:

5. Could you describe a project that incorporated cultural elements?
    a. Why did you choose to incorporate those elements?
    b. Is that typical of your work?
6. How would you describe the "culture of Pilsen"? Could you tell me about a time in which you felt particular connected to the culture of Pilsen?
7. Could you describe the role of art in your culture?

Community Engagement:

8. If you were talking to a friend, how would you describe the community at your art space?
    a. Could you describe how you envision that community in the future? Any growth and/or changes?
9. Could you describe what you think about when someone says "the community of Pilsen".
10. Could you describe the people, places and/or fixtures you think about when someone says the "art in Pilsen".
11. Could you describe an event you hosted recently?
    a. Why did you host it? Who attended? How often do you host events? Was it typical/atypical?
12. How do you think other people would describe your work?
    a. Could you describe a time someone reacted to your work in person, the media or online?
    b. How did you feel about their reaction?

Networks:

13. What other organizations do you work with in Pilsen, Chicago, nationally and/or globally?
    a. How do you decide what organizations to partner with?
14. Could you describe a time and/or a project in which you worked with other organizations?
15. How would you describe the "art scene in Pilsen"?
    a. How would you describe your role in that scene and in relation to other local art spaces?

Accomplishments and future goals:

16. Could you describe a time you felt successful or a project that you considered a success?
17. Do you feel as if you/your organization is successful in Pilsen? Why or why not?
    a. What would make it more or less successful?
18. Could you describe any worries you have about the future of your art space and Pilsen?
19. What are your biggest obstacles?
    a. How do you intend to overcome them?
    b. Could you describe a time you faced a large obstacle?
20. What are your future goals? Could you describe how you envision your art space and practice in five years?

Interview with mainstream space:

Background:

1. What is your background in the art world?
    a. Do you have any formal training?
    b. Have you been a part of other art programs or organizations?
    c. When did you start working in the art world?
2. How did you start working in Pilsen?
    a. When did you start working in the neighborhood?
    b. When and why did you open your space?
    c. What draws you to Pilsen? Could you tell me your favorite things about Pilsen?
3. Could you tell me about your artistic practice and space?
    a. Do you consider yourself to be an artist?
    b. What do you hope to accomplish through your work at the gallery?
    c. Could you describe a time in which you worked to accomplish a goal through art?
4. How are you/your organization funded? Is it your primary occupation or do you work any other jobs?

Mainstream specific:

5. Could you describe the neighborhood of Pilsen?
6. What is it like to be an artist in the neighborhood?
    a. What is it like to participate in the 2nd Friday event?
    b. How do you feel it impacts your career?
7. Could you describe your career goals?

Community Engagement:

8. If you were talking to a friend, how would you describe the community at your art space?
    a. Could you describe how you envision that community in the future? Any growth and/or changes?
9. Could you describe what you think about when someone says "the community of Pilsen".
10. Could you describe the people, places and/or fixtures you think about when someone says the "art in Pilsen".
11. Could you describe an event you hosted recently?
    a. Why did you host it? Who attended? How often do you host events? Was it typical/atypical?
12. How do you think other people would describe your work?
    a. Could you describe a time someone reacted to your work in person, the media or online?
    b. How did you feel about their reaction?

Networks:

13. What other organizations do you work with in Pilsen, Chicago, nationally and/or globally?
    a. How do you decide what organizations to partner with?
14. Could you describe a time and/or a project in which you worked with other organizations?
15. How would you describe the "art scene in Pilsen"?
    a. How would you describe your role in that scene and in relation to other local art spaces?

Accomplishments and future goals:

16. Could you describe a time you felt successful or a project that you considered a success?
17. Do you feel as if you/your organization is successful in Pilsen? Why or why not?
    a. What would make it more or less successful?
18. Could you describe any worries you have about the future of your art space and Pilsen?
19. What are your biggest obstacles?
    a. How do you intend to overcome them?
    b. Could you describe a time you faced a large obstacle?
20. What are your future goals? Could you describe how you envision your art space and practice in five years?

Table 2: Schedule of Attended Events				
Network	**Event**	**Location**	**Date**	**Description**
Mainstream	2nd Friday Openings	Halstead Street Galleries	8/4/17	Art walk along Halstead street featuring 20-25 galleries
	2nd Friday Openings	Halstead Street Galleries	9/11/17	Art walk along Halstead street featuring 20-25 galleries
	2nd Friday Openings	Halstead Street Galleries	12/8/17	Art walk along Halstead street featuring 20-25 galleries
Grassroots	1st Friday Openings	West Pilsen	8/4/17	Art walk in western Pilsen featuring 6-10 galleries
	Tamed	Pilsen Outpost	10/6/17	The opening reception for an exhibition by the Mexican artist Ricardo Angeles
	2017 Pilsen Open Studios	Pilsen	10/20/17	Annual independent art walk in Pilsen featuring 46 locations
	DIY Townhall + Let's Make a Plan	Dojo	11/12/17	Discussion and workshop focused on inclusion, wellness and long-term sustainability
	Body + Botany	Plus Gallery	11/29/17	Experience that integrates performative movement and plant-based practices to inspire presence and curiosity
	Raices	Pilsen Outpost	12/1/17	The opening reception for an exhibition by Diske Uno inspired by indigenous cultures and ethnic groups of Mexico
	T-Pop	Plus Gallery	12/1/17	Market and art show featuring Trans artisans
	Fusion 99	Dojo	12/1/17	Art party and event featuring music, fashion, visual art and tarot card readings
	1st Friday Openings	West Pilsen	12/1/17	Art walk in western Pilsen featuring 6-10 galleries
	Holiday Market	Pilsen Outpost	12/3/17	Market and holiday celebration featuring Pilsen native artisans
	Soul Sunday	AMFM	12/3/17	Event featuring yoga, meditation, tarot, vegan food and wellness to relax and manifest good mental, physical and emotional energy

Community Meetings and Demonstrations	Community Meeting	La Catrina Café Pilsen	6/27/17	Community meeting hosted by Pilsen Alliance and attended by residents, artists and community leaders about issues facing the community
	Casa Atzlan Press Conference	Outside Casa Atzlan Pilsen	7/10/17	Announcements about the future of Casa Aztlan made by community leaders and artists
	Casa Atzlan Community Meeting	La Catrina Café Pilsen	7/20/17	Community meeting hosted by Pilsen Alliance and attended by residents, artists and community leaders about becoming politically involved and current efforts to fight gentrification in the community
	Joyful Resistance: March For Our Hoods	Pilsen	7/29/17	Political march and rally against gentrification, the taking of homes and resources, whitewashing of culture and corporatization of black and brown communities

Table 3: Interview Schedule		
Network	**Interview Subject**	**Date**
Mainstream	Mainstream Artist	6/21/17
	Mainstream Artist	6/26/17
	Mainstream Artist	7/7/17
Grassroots	Pilsen Outpost Founder	6/30/17
	Dojo Founder	7/7/17
	CAPA Founder	7/10/17
	AMFM Founder	8/8/17
	CAPA Founder	11/17/17
	Revolutionary Lemonade Stand Founder	12/3/17
	AMFM Artist	12/6/18
	Pilsen Outpost Founder	12/13/17
	Dojo Artist	1/13/18
	Pilsen Outpost Artist	1/18/18

***__Note__: The organizers of Plus Gallery refused to be formally interviewed for this project because it did not directly align with their work to uplift black/brown and marginal communities. The organizers did participate in informal conversations and invite me to their space.